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SITTING DAYS—2005

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- ADELAIDE 972 AM
- PERTH 585 AM
- HOBART 747 AM
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FORTY-FIRST PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION—FOURTH 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 Henry 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 Kim 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. Mark Anthony James Vaile MP
Deputy Leader—The Hon. Warren Errol Truss 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 David Danby MP and Ms Jill Griffiths Hall MP

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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
The Hon. John Winston Howard MP

Minister for Trade and Deputy Prime Minister
The Hon. Mark Anthony James Vaile MP

Treasurer
The Hon. Peter Howard Costello MP

Minister for Transport and Regional Services
The Hon. Warren Errol Truss MP

Minister for Defence and Leader of the Government in the Senate
Senator the Hon. Robert Murray Hill

Minister for Foreign Affairs
The Hon. Alexander John Gosse Downer MP

Minister for Health and Ageing and Leader of the House
The Hon. Anthony John Abbott MP

Attorney-General
The Hon. Philip Maxwell Ruddock MP

Minister for Finance and Administration, Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate and Vice-President of the Executive Council
Senator the Hon. Nicholas Hugh Minchin

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and Deputy Leader of the House
The Hon. Peter John McGauran MP

Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Indigenous Affairs
Senator the Hon. Amanda Eloise Vanstone

Minister for Education, Science and Training
The Hon. Dr Brendan John Nelson MP

Minister for Family and Community Services and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Women’s Issues
Senator the Hon. Kay Christine Lesley Patterson

Minister for Industry, Tourism and Resources
The Hon. Ian Elgin Macfarlane MP

Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service
The Hon. Kevin James Andrews MP

Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts
Senator the Hon. Helen Lloyd Coonan

Minister for the Environment and Heritage
Senator the Hon. Ian Gordon Campbell

(The above ministers constitute the cabinet)
MINISTER for Justice and Customs and Manager of Government Business in the Senate
Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation
Minister for the Arts and Sport
Minister for Human Services
Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs

Minister for Revenue and Assistant Treasurer
Special Minister of State
Minister for Vocational and Technical Education and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister
Minister for Ageing
Minister for Small Business and Tourism
Minister for Local Government, Territories and Roads
Minister for Veterans’ Affairs and Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence
Minister for Workforce Participation
Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance and Administration
Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Industry, Tourism and Resources
Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Ageing
Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence
Parliamentary Secretary (Trade)
Parliamentary Secretary (Foreign Affairs) and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs
Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister
Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer
Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage
Parliamentary Secretary (Children and Youth Affairs)
Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Education, Science and Training
Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Senator the Hon. Christopher Martin Ellison
Senator the Hon. Ian Douglas Macdonald
Senator the Hon. Charles Roderick Kemp
The Hon. Joseph Benedict Hockey MP
The Hon. John Kenneth Cobb MP
The Hon. Malcolm Thomas Brough MP
Senator the Hon. Eric Abetz
The Hon. Gary Douglas Hardgrave MP
The Hon. Julie Isabel Bishop MP
The Hon. Frances Esther Bailey MP
The Hon. James Eric Lloyd MP
The Hon. De-Anne Margaret Kelly MP
The Hon. Peter Craig Dutton MP
The Hon. Dr Sharman Nancy Stone MP
The Hon. Warren George Entsch MP
The Hon. Christopher Maurice Pyne MP
The Hon. Teresa Gambaro MP
The Hon. John Alexander Lindsay Macdonald
The Hon. Bruce Fredrick Billson MP
The Hon. Gary Roy Nairn MP
The Hon. Christopher John Pearce MP
The Hon. Gregory Andrew Hunt MP
The Hon. Sussan Penelope Ley MP
The Hon. Patrick Francis Farmer MP
Senator the Hon. Richard Mansell Colbeck
SHADOW MINISTRY

Leader of the Opposition
The Hon. Kim Christian Beazley MP

Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Shadow Minister for Education, Training, Science and Research
Jennifer Louise Macklin MP

Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, Shadow Minister for Indigenous Affairs and Shadow Minister for Family and Community Services
Senator Christopher Vaughan Evans

Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate and Shadow Minister for Communications and Information Technology
Senator Stephen Michael Conroy

Shadow Minister for Health and Manager of Opposition Business in the House
Julia Eileen Gillard MP

Shadow Treasurer
Wayne Maxwell Swan MP

Shadow Attorney-General
Nicola Louise Roxon MP

Shadow Minister for Industry, Infrastructure and Industrial Relations
Stephen Francis Smith MP

Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade and Shadow Minister for International Security
Kevin Michael Rudd MP

Shadow Minister for Defence
Robert Bruce McClelland MP

Shadow Minister for Regional Development
The Hon. Simon Findlay Crean MP

Shadow Minister for Primary Industries, Resources, Forestry and Tourism
Martin John Ferguson MP

Shadow Minister for Environment and Heritage, Shadow Minister for Water and Deputy Manager of Opposition Business in the House
Anthony Norman Albanese MP

Shadow Minister for Housing, Shadow Minister for Urban Development and Shadow Minister for Local Government and Territories
Senator Kim John Carr

Shadow Minister for Public Accountability and Shadow Minister for Human Services
Kelvin John Thomson MP

Shadow Minister for Finance
Lindsay James Tanner MP

Shadow Minister for Superannuation and Intergenerational Finance and Shadow Minister for Banking and Financial Services
Senator the Hon. Nicholas John Sherry

Shadow Minister for Child Care, Shadow Minister for Youth and Shadow Minister for Women
Tanya Joan Plibersek MP

Shadow Minister for Employment and Workforce Participation and Shadow Minister for Corporate Governance and Responsibility
Senator Penelope Ying Yen Wong

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

Shadow Minister for Consumer Affairs and Shadow Minister for Population Health and Health Regulation
Laurie Donald Thomas Ferguson MP

Shadow Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries
Shadow Assistant Treasurer, Shadow Minister for Revenue and Shadow Minister for Small Business and Competition
Gavan Michael O’Connor MP
Joel Andrew Fitzgibbon MP

Shadow Minister for Transport
Shadow Minister for Sport and Recreation
Senator Kerry Williams Kelso O’Brien
Senator Kate Alexandra Lundy

Shadow Minister for Homeland Security and Shadow Minister for Aviation and Transport Security
The Hon. Archibald Ronald Bevis MP

Shadow Minister for Veterans’ Affairs and Shadow Special Minister of State
Alan Peter Griffin MP

Shadow Minister for Defence Industry, Procurement and Personnel
Senator Thomas Mark Bishop

Shadow Minister for Immigration
Anthony Stephen Burke MP

Shadow Minister for Aged Care, Disabilities and Carers
Senator Jan Elizabeth McLucas

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

Shadow Minister for Overseas Aid and Pacific Island Affairs
Robert Charles Grant Sercombe MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Reconciliation and the Arts
Peter Robert Garrett MP

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

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Defence and Veterans’ Affairs
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 Industry, Infrastructure and Industrial Relations
Bernard Fernando Ripoll MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Immigration
Ann Kathleen Corcoran MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Treasury
Catherine Fiona King MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Science and Water
Senator Ursula Mary Stephens

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Northern Australia and Indigenous Affairs
The Hon. Warren Edward Snowdon MP
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Tuesday, 11 October 2005

The SPEAKER (Hon. David Hawker) took the chair at 2.00 pm and read prayers.

BALI BOMBINGS ANNIVERSARY MEMORIAL SERVICE

Mr HOWARD (Bennelong—Prime Minister) (2.01 pm)—On indulgence, I confirm that a short memorial service will be held tomorrow morning at 9.15 to commemorate the third anniversary of the terrorist attacks in Bali in 2002. The ceremony will be held in the eastern formal gardens and I understand arrangements will be made for the House to delay its proceedings until 10 am to allow members and senators to attend if they wish to do so. The Leader of the Opposition and I will lay wreaths, as will the charge d’affaires of the Indonesian Embassy. I understand that representatives of the Newcastle community will attend as well. I have asked Reverend Joy Bartholomew from St Andrews Presbyterian Church to make some comments and lead a prayer of remembrance at the service. I can inform the House that arrangements for this brief memorial service have been worked out in close consultation with the opposition.

Mr BEAZLEY (Brand—Leader of the Opposition) (2.02 pm)—On indulgence, I endorse the remarks the Prime Minister just made, confirm the last comment he made and urge members to attend the ceremony. I am sure many will.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Workplace Relations

Mr BEAZLEY (2.02 pm)—My question is to the Prime Minister. I refer to comments made last night by Dr Peter Jensen, Anglican Archbishop of Sydney, about the impact of the government’s industrial relations changes on children, families and relationships, expressing concern about the:

... need for preserving shared time for children, families, relationships for all Australians ... That’s what life is about ... Without shared time we may as well be robots.

Given that community leaders such as Archbishop Jensen view his extreme proposals in this way, why doesn’t the Prime Minister just back off now and shred the bills?

Mr HOWARD—I have heard and read the remarks made by Archbishop Jensen. Let me say that I agree with him that relationships are far more important than money. I think Archbishop Jensen is a very fine archbishop of the Anglican archdiocese of Sydney and he is a very significant and fine community leader. I take the view that Archbishop Jensen’s concern for a right balance between family and work considerations is justified. In the view of the government and in the view of many people, greater flexibility will provide greater opportunities to balance work and family responsibilities. Whilst relationships and the close relationships within families are far more important than economic considerations, it is also the case that job security is very important to family security. Job security is built on a strong economy and a strong economy depends crucially on the right industrial relations policy, and that is what this government is about.

Avian Influenza

Dr WASHER (2.04 pm)—My question is addressed to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Would the minister inform the House what action Australia has taken to combat avian influenza in our region?

Mr DOWNER—First, I thank the honourable member for Moore for his question. As a doctor he knows only too well the issues that are at stake here. Australia has been leading the region to strengthen the defence of the Asia-Pacific region against avian influenza. We have been working within APEC
since 2001 to help the region prepare for pandemic threats, including avian flu. On 31 October Australia will host a meeting in Brisbane of the representatives of the 21 APEC economies who are responsible for pandemic and disaster management. It will also bring together experts from a range of international organisations such as the World Health Organisation, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations and so on.

Since 2003 the government have committed $180 million to combat the threat of avian flu, which includes $20 million under our aid program, to improve detection, surveillance, emergency preparedness and response capabilities in the Asia-Pacific region. Last week a high-level team of Australian senior officials visited Indonesia as part of our discussions with the Indonesians on avian flu. While I am in Indonesia over the next two days I will be discussing the outcomes of that visit with Indonesian officials, including with the President of Indonesia. I hope at the end of my visit I will have something to say about that, amongst other issues, depending on the discussions I have with the Indonesians. Let me also say that the government are working at a wider international level. We are a key member of the International Partnership on Avian and Pandemic Influenza, which brings together concerned states to develop global capabilities to respond to these threats.

We need to bear in mind that avian flu becoming a pandemic is of course not a certainty. Australia’s Chief Medical Officer has said that the probability of avian flu turning into a pandemic in the next few years is 10 per cent. It is one in 10. So there is no need to run around and suggest that the sky is falling in. The fact is that the government are getting on with sensible and practical measures not only for us to address the issue here in Australia but to make sure we contribute to the defences of the Asia-Pacific region.

Mr Rudd—Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Could the Minister for Foreign Affairs table the document from which he read, in its entirety?

The SPEAKER—Was the minister quoting from a confidential document?

Mr Downer—Yes.

Workplace Relations

Mr MURPHY (2.08 pm)—My question is to the Prime Minister. Prime Minister, I refer to the statement of the late Pope John Paul II, following his meeting with factory workers in Parramatta, that Australia’s industrial relations system has ‘helped to defend the rights of workers and promote their well-being, while at the same time taking into account the needs and the future of the whole community’. I also refer to Cardinal George Pell’s comments in the Sydney Morning Herald on 6 August that the test of the fairness of the government’s industrial relations changes would be the preservation of civilised conditions and family time. Prime Minister, is your only response to these views the one that you expressed on 7 August that:

There’s no such thing as a Catholic ... view on anything ...

The SPEAKER—Before I call the Prime Minister, I remind the member for Lowe that the use of the word ‘you’ in the question is not necessary.

Mr HOWARD—I will check precisely what I said on that occasion. As we were shown yesterday, you do not want to believe everything the opposition tells you in question time. Let me say this: I treat the member’s question very seriously, as I should. He is a serious member and he is a conscientious member. I am working on him. I think I might win him over eventually to our industrial relations policies. Can I just very seri-
ously say that the point I was making in that program was simply this: on any issue that is the subject of political debate in our community there will be conscientious Catholics who will take one view and conscientious Catholics who will take the opposite view.

In fact, you presumed in your question to refer to Cardinal Pell. I seem to recall Cardinal Pell some years ago making the point that there was no such thing as a Catholic position on a particular aspect of taxation. He was right. He made that point, I think, in the context of the 1998 election. I do not draw on my own authority to talk on matters relating to the Catholic Church. In fact, I invoke the authority of the leader of the Catholic archdiocese of Sydney—a person for whom I have an immense personal regard and who I think, like Dr Peter Jensen, is a great leader.

My view is this. I do not think the quality of this debate is improved by somebody trying to claim that the totality of a Catholic view is either for or against the government’s policy. I do not argue that. I do not invoke the authority of any of the Christian churches in this country for our policies. I will argue a policy on its own merits and I stand by what I said: there will be Catholics who will agree with us and Catholics who disagree with us; there will be Anglicans who will agree and disagree. That is how it should be in a nation such as this, which has a proper regard for the respective roles of the government and the church.

Distinguished Visitors

The Speaker (2.11 pm)—I inform the House that we have present in the gallery this afternoon a delegation from the Council of State Governments from the United States of America, led by Governor Ruth Ann Minner. Also present in the gallery are members of a delegation of Young Political Leaders from the United States of America who are visiting under the auspices of the Australian Political Exchange Council. On behalf of the House, I extend a very warm welcome to our visitors.

Honourable members—Hear, hear!

Questions Without Notice

Workplace Relations

Mr Broadbent (2.12 pm)—My question is addressed to the Treasurer. Treasurer, would you outline to the House the case for further reforming Australia’s labour market? Further, Treasurer, are there any other views?

Mr Costello—I thank the honourable member for McMillan for his question. I can inform him that the case for reforming Australia’s industrial relations law is that we can make the Australian economy more productive. If we make the Australian economy more productive and businesses more profitable, they will be able to employ more people at higher wages. We can make the Australian economy more productive by getting rid of six separate state systems and having one, by easing agreement making, by having flexibility and by giving people work choices. That is the case for industrial relations reform in this country.

The opposition leader has put forward his views in relation to this. He was asked a question yesterday about skills and he cited in his defence the OECD, the Reserve Bank and the IMF. Let me say, as I did yesterday, that the OECD, the Reserve Bank and the IMF have all been clear on one thing: Australia needs further industrial relations reform. In the course of that interview yesterday he was also asked about essential services. Here is the reply that the Leader of the Opposition gave to that question yesterday: Now, on the essential services thing ... I would roll that back.

The policy that dare not speak its name! He obviously realised at that point that ‘roll-
back’ was not a word to be used in polite political discussion anymore in this country, because he said:

I would change that. I would eliminate that and the reasons are simply this—and I will not use that phrase, I must say, in connection with these, so I’ve amended it immediately. I’ve amended it immediately because this is not the exercise that we’re engaged in.

The immediate amendment was just a whisper too late because the policy that dare not speak its name popped out. There was an American baseball player whom our American friends will know called Yogi Berra, who had a famous saying. He said, ‘It feels like deja vu all over again.’ Well, it feels like deja vu all over again when the policy that dare not speak its name popped out on industrial relations. The Leader of the Opposition was wrong about roll-back the first time and he was wrong about roll-back the second time.

**Workplace Relations**

Mr STEPHEN SMITH (2.15 pm)—My question is also to the Treasurer. I refer to the remarks of the Treasurer on 11 July, criticising church leaders, particularly Archbishop Aspinall, for expressing concern about the government’s extreme industrial relations changes on the basis that ‘having a theological degree doesn’t mean you’re an IR expert’. Does the Treasurer still stand by that view?

Mr COSTELLO—What I said, and I will say it again, is that church leaders have every right to speak as freely as they wish on every issue. I made that point at the time and I will make it again: church leaders have every freedom to speak on every issue. They are members of Australian society and they are voters. We practise freedom of speech in this country and, like any other Australian, they have complete freedom of speech. Like any other Australian their views should be assessed on their content. Like a politician’s views should be assessed and like a journalist’s views should be assessed, so too a church leader’s views should be assessed on their content. They should be assessed on their content on whether industrial relations would promote economic benefit, whether it would promote productivity, whether it would promote jobs and whether it would promote the opportunity for people in Australian society who are currently out of work to share in that. Whether it is a politician, whether it is a journalist or whether it is a church leader, every person has the right to freedom of speech and the right to be judged on the merit and content of their views.

**Iraq**

Mr RANDALL (2.17 pm)—My question is addressed to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Unfortunately, I cannot weave the Pope into my question. Would the minister update the House on Iraq’s path to democracy? What is the government doing to support it and are there any alternative views?

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr DOWNER—But you were in favour for a while; we read it in the book. I thank the honourable member for his question. Let me say, in case members of the House are not aware—but I know the honourable member for Canning would be—that on Saturday, 15 October, the Iraqi people will vote in a referendum on a draft constitution. I do not know how they will vote, and there is speculation about that. I will not add to it, but the fact that the ordinary people of Iraq are able to vote on a particular draft of their constitution is a great thing. This will be another example of how democracy is arriving in Iraq. We saw that at the end of January, when the Iraqi people voted for the Transitional National Assembly.

On this side of the House we are proud of our soldiers who helped to end Saddam’s regime. We are proud of those who are now
training Iraqis to defend themselves. We are proud of those who are providing a secure environment for valuable Japanese reconstruction work and we are proud of those Australians who are working to assist with the elections. I think our policy is perfectly clear. We are fully committed to supporting Iraq’s transition to democracy, because we support democracy. We are part of a proud coalition. I saw the British Secretary of State for Defence, Dr Reid, the other day and he reminded me that the British are determined to make sure they stay and defeat the terrorists. When I saw Donald Rumsfeld and Condoleezza Rice in Washington and in New York the week before last, they both made the same point: they are determined to make sure that the terrorists are defeated and that democracy thrives in Iraq. Are there any alternatives?

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr DOWNER—You can tell from the interjections that there are some. The Leader of the Opposition and the member for Griffith, in particular, profess that their position now is to support troops out of Iraq: we should now get out; we should have an exit strategy and get out as quickly as possible. The only problem with that is that Bernard Lagan in his very revealing book argued that the member for Griffith in particular had disagreed with the former Leader of the Opposition, Mark Latham. He disagreed with the Latham policy of bringing troops out by Christmas. Despite the fact that the member for Griffith and the Leader of the Opposition argued in favour of the Latham policy, we know from the Lagan book that they did not agree with it.

Nobody this week has mentioned, and let me be the first, Mark Latham’s very interesting diaries. The point about those diaries is this statement:

Rudd wanted our policy of the troops to be a review when we get into government so I overruled him and said yesterday that we wanted them home by Christmas.

The fact is that, secretly, people like the member for Griffith and, presumably, the Leader of the Opposition actually support the simple proposition that we must defeat the terrorists in Iraq and that we must support democracy in Iraq. But because of the way the Labor Party works, they profess to hold a different view. I thought in Mark Latham’s book it was all summed up with one simple phrase, and it is the phrase he used about the Leader of the Opposition.

Opposition members—Boring!

Mr DOWNER—I don’t think you will find it so boring. He said this about the Leader of the Opposition: ‘Kim Beazley? You can sum him up in four words: he is an opportunist.’ If ever there was a great opportunist—

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER—The Minister for Foreign Affairs will resume his seat.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER (2.22 pm)—I inform the House that we have present in the gallery this afternoon a parliamentary delegation from the United Kingdom. On behalf of the House I extend a very warm welcome to our visitors.

Honourable members—Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Workplace Relations

Mr BEAZLEY (2.22 pm)—All I can say after that is thank God that Chief Marshal Houston has an exit strategy and I hope he passed it on to you.

The SPEAKER—The Leader of the Opposition will come to his question.
Mr BEAZLEY—And my question is to the Prime Minister.

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER—Order! The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat. The interjections from both sides of this House are far too noisy.

Mr BEAZLEY—My question is to the Prime Minister.

The SPEAKER—Order! The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat.

Mr Ciobo—On a point of order, Mr Speaker: on a number of occasions you have asked the Leader of the Opposition to come to the question. How many times must we be subjected to that preamble?

The SPEAKER—The member for Moncrieff will resume his seat. The Leader of the Opposition has already been asked to come to his question and he will come to his question.

Mr BEAZLEY—My question is to the Prime Minister. Why did the government oppose Family First Senator Steve Fielding’s motion to have a Senate inquiry into the implications for families of the Howard government’s extreme industrial relations changes? Prime Minister, doesn’t the government oppose having this inquiry because it does not want Australians to know the truth?

Mr HOWARD—The answer to the question is no.

Taxation

Mr CIOBO (2.24 pm)—My question is addressed to the Treasurer. Would the Treasurer outline to the House how all states have benefited from windfall gains from tax reform? Is he aware of any alternative proposals to boost state Labor Party coffers?

Mr COSTELLO—I thank the honourable member for Moncrieff for his question and I can inform him that when the government introduced the A New Tax System in 2000 the GST revenue was allocated to the states in accordance with a formula that they agreed themselves to equalise allocations between the six states and the two territories. I am happy to inform the House that, after four completed financial years since the introduction of the GST, every state and territory has benefited in the sense that they are now in a windfall situation—they have more money after the abolition of the taxes which were part of the arrangement than they would have had if the old system had continued. In 2004-05 the states will receive around $35 billion in GST revenue. The total windfall to the states in 2004-05 will be around $2 billion.

No state has benefited more from GST arrangements than Queensland. Queensland has had the largest windfall—that is, GST receipts over and above what it would have received under the old system—of any state in the Commonwealth. That is why I was shocked to read a claim by the Queensland Premier yesterday that Queensland somehow was receiving less GST than it was entitled to and, as a consequence, raising the prospect that the Queensland Labor government may increase taxes as part of a minibudget. Here we are in Queensland, the biggest beneficiary of any state under the GST arrangements, own source revenue booming because of the property market and because of royalties out of coal—which is at the highest terms of trade ever—and we have the Queensland Premier saying, ‘I am now short of money and I may have to increase taxes.’

The suggestion is that in some way Queensland has not got what it was entitled to. Let me tell you what Queensland got in 2004-05. Queensland received, under the GST, $7.328 billion. If the old system had been in place, it would have received $6.559 billion. Queensland has received a windfall,
in one year alone, of $768 million over and above its guaranteed amounts. If there is a problem in Queensland, it has nothing to do with GST arrangements, it has nothing to do with own source revenues, which have been increasing at a dramatic rate; it is all about management. If the Queensland government cannot manage its own affairs, it cannot expect taxpayers in other states to bail it out from those affairs.

Workplace Relations

Mr STEPHEN SMITH (2.28 pm)—My question is to the Prime Minister. I refer to the Prime Minister’s industrial relations announcement on Sunday and his favourite example of Billy. In that example Billy is an unemployed job seeker who is offered an AWA which explicitly removes award conditions for public holidays, rest breaks, bonuses, annual leave loading, allowances, penalty rates and shift and overtime loadings. Prime Minister, is it not the case that Billy has no choice but to accept the job or remain unemployed? Isn’t Billy’s experience going to become the standard experience for all Australian employees moving to new jobs?

Mr HOWARD—The answer to the second part of the question is no. The answer to the generality of the question is that at least the member for Perth has acknowledged that Billy in that example was out of work and, therefore, it stands to reason that he is infinitely better off taking the contract under those conditions.

Workplace Relations

Mr HENRY (2.29 pm)—My question is addressed to the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations. Would the minister update the House as to how Australian workers will be protected in workplace bargaining in the future? Are there any alternative views?

Mr ANDREWS—I thank the member for Hasluck for his question. What we have seen over the last 24 hours or so is the Leader of the Opposition attempting to scare Australian employees into thinking that they will have to negotiate their terms and conditions directly with their employer without any protections or assistance. Yesterday on the Steve Price radio program the Leader of the Opposition claimed:

... an 18-year-old kid walking into a workplace simply does not bargain equally with his boss.

If the Leader of the Opposition were genuinely interested in the welfare of young people, rather than patronising them in the way in which he has been doing over the last 24 hours he would have pointed out a number of additional facts which he failed to point out. Firstly, he would have pointed out that every employee who is offered an Australian workplace agreement can appoint a bargaining agent to act on their behalf. He did not point that out.

Secondly, if he were genuinely interested in the welfare of young people in this country he would have pointed out that that bargaining agent could be a representative of the union, a lawyer, an accountant, a parent, a guardian or any other person.

Mr Bevis interjecting—

Mr ANDREWS—If he were interested he would have pointed that out. Thirdly, and this is important, if he were genuinely interested and did not have this patronising attitude to young Australians, he would have pointed out that once a bargaining agent is appointed—

Mr Bevis—Billy’s got to get an accountant.

The SPEAKER—The member for Brisbane is warned.

Mr ANDREWS—then the employer must deal with that bargaining agent. There is absolutely no discretion. The employer must deal with that bargaining agent. He would
have also pointed out that any person under the age of 18 years cannot enter into an Australian workplace agreement unless they have the consent of their parent or guardian to that agreement.

Lastly, he would have pointed out, but he is not interested in the facts, that the AWA must contain the new protections which will be contained in the Australian fair pay and conditions standard. None of these things were pointed out by the Leader of the Opposition. The reality is, as we saw yesterday coming from the member for Perth and the member for Capricornia, an intention simply to mislead this House and mislead the Australian people about Australian workplace agreements, something which the member for Perth at least conceded on the radio this morning.

Ms Gillard—Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The minister then made an allegation which would need to be made by way of substantive motion. He did say ‘intentionally mislead’. That needs to be withdrawn.

Mr Andrews—The member conceded this morning that he misled the Australian people, and that is what he did. He misled the Australian people, and you well know it. That is the reality. Let us get back to the reality here and that is that some 770,000 Australian workplace agreements have been entered into by Australians in Australia—thousands of them in the electorate of the member for Brand, the Leader of the Opposition, and thousands of them in the electorate of the member for Perth—and what the Leader of the Opposition wants to do is to strangle Australian workplace agreements and therefore cut the wages of those Australians who are earning more on those agreements. We stand for choice and flexibility, not for the regressive policies that are being adopted by the opposition.

**Taxation**

Mr Swan (2.34 pm)—My question is to the Treasurer and relates to his release of Treasury analysis showing the undercosting of the tax proposals by the member for Wentworth. Will the Treasurer, after publicly humiliating the member for Wentworth, bring forward his own tax reform proposals or does he believe his own leadership ambitions are a higher priority? When will the Treasurer release the costings of the member for Wentworth’s tax proposals?

The Speaker—in calling the Treasurer, he may respond to the parts that are of public interest. He does not have to respond specifically to a colleague’s views.

Mr Costello—The government has released its tax cut proposals. It brought them down in the budget in May. What is more: I would have thought the member for Lilley would remember because he voted them down on two occasions in the House of Representatives on the ground that there should be no tax cut—

Mr Swan interjecting—

The Speaker—The member for Lilley has asked his question.

Mr Swan interjecting—

The Speaker—The member for Lilley is warned.

Mr Costello—on 1 July of this year. Let us make this point. If the Labor Party had been successful after 1 July in maintaining its opposition, every single Australian would be paying higher taxes today. The Labor Party policy was to oppose—

Mr Beazley—Mr Speaker, a point of order which goes to relevance: this man was asked when he was going to release the costings of the member for Wentworth’s tax proposals whom he has in private—

The Speaker—The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat.
Mr Beazley—Get up here and tell us.

The SPEAKER—I call the Treasurer and the Treasurer is in order.

Mr COSTELLO—if the Labor Party had its way, every Australian would be paying higher taxes today. Secondly, we would be reminding the Australian people that the government has legislated further tax cuts to take effect on 1 July of next year. The consequence of that is that only three per cent of Australians will be on the top marginal tax rate. I remind the House that the Labor Party’s policy—

The SPEAKER—the Treasurer will resume his seat.

Mr Beazley—Mr Speaker, on a point of order: it is amply—

Mr Costello interjecting—

Mr Beazley—It is not frivolous. The way you dealt with Wentworth was frivolous.

The SPEAKER—the Leader of the Opposition will come to his point of order.

Mr Beazley—He has a question before him—a very simple one—about releasing the figures he has on the member for Wentworth’s tax proposal.

The SPEAKER—if the Leader of the Opposition wishes to raise a point of order, he should come to that point of order. He is not here just to restate questions.

Mr COSTELLO—and I will finish my answer, because the Labor Party hates to be reminded. The Labor Party opposes the tax cuts to take effect on 1 July next year on the grounds that they are for high-income earners. If the Labor Party had had its way, the Labor Party would have denied both this year’s tax cuts and next year’s as well.

Workplace Relations

Mr SECKER (2.38 pm)—My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport and Regional Services. Would the minister advise the House how award changes in the government’s WorkChoices reform package will affect workers in regional Australia and my electorate of Barker?

Mr TRUSS—There is no doubt that further reform of the workplace relations system—

Ms King interjecting—

The SPEAKER—the member for Ballarat is warned!

Mr TRUSS—will improve Australia’s economic performance, increase jobs and enhance living standards. We have a strong economy now, but we need to keep working on it and ensure that we make fair and practical changes to continue to make progress. If you stand still, you effectively go backwards. People in regional areas like the electorate of the member for Barker will well remember the impacts of Labor’s bungling in workplace relations and they have not forgotten the impact on residents in rural and regional Australia. There is far too much red tape and too much complexity. Some parts of the current system are just so confusing that employers have no chance of properly understanding them. When you consider that we have six different systems, 130 different pieces of industrial relations legislation and over 4,000 different awards, it is no wonder that there has been such confusion about the industrial relations arrangements.

I have a practical example: Don runs a pastoral station that has a coffee and gift shop for tourists. His station hands are working under a federal award while his employees in the coffee and gift shop are employed under a state award. Don has to negotiate with the complexity of two workplace relations systems—

Mr Brendan O’Connor interjecting—

The SPEAKER—Order! The member for Gorton!
Mr TRUSS—meaning two sets of laws governing how his employees are treated, their different entitlements and how they can negotiate. Their unfair dismissal arrangements and their redundancy protections are different and, of course, he has different unions in the workplace. Under what we are proposing, all of his employees will be under the same workplace relations laws. They will have the same Australian fair pay and conditions standard. He will be able to deal with all of his staff with the same set of conditions, making all the mechanisms so much simpler. Don will be able to spend his time running his business instead of trying to sort out all of this confusion. Those are the sorts of changes that can make a real difference in our workplace, and it is high time the opposition got on board and started to support this kind of reform.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER (2.40 pm)—I inform the House that we have present in the gallery this afternoon the Hon. Sir Harold Young, a former President of the Senate, and Lady Margaret Young. On behalf of the House I extend to them a very warm welcome.

Honourable members—Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs

Mr BURKE (2.40 pm)—My question is to the Minister representing the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs. Hasn’t the minister for immigration indicated that the government has accepted the Comrie report in full? Minister, doesn’t that mean the following words are an accurate reflection of the government’s management of immigration: ‘failure’, ‘inexcusable’, ‘catastrophic’, ‘dereliction of duty’, ‘shameful episode’, ‘inaccurate assumption’, ‘defying commonsense and decency’ and ‘dehumanised’? In the face of this, how is it that Senator Vanstone can say that her department has not ‘been, generally speaking, acting unlawfully’? Minister, if it has not been generally acting unlawfully, exactly how often does the department act unlawfully?

Mr Pyne—Mr Speaker, on a point of order: the question from the member for Watson clearly contains argument in the list that he gave and also hypothetical matter. The minister cannot possibly—

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER—Order! The member for Corio!

Mr Pyne—The question contains argument, hypothetical matter and a request for a legal opinion. The minister cannot possibly answer that question and I would ask you to rule it out of order.

Ms Gillard—Mr Speaker, on the point of order: just to clarify for the member, they were direct quotes from the Comrie report commissioned by this government.

The SPEAKER—I thank the Manager of Opposition Business.

Mr JOHN COBB—I thank the honourable member for his question. The Comrie report also pointed out that the department has been doing the majority of its work very well. The Prime Minister said yesterday that, yes, the minister and the government accept that there are problems that have to be solved within the department of immigration. That is being done. As a matter of fact, as Senator Vanstone, the minister, pointed out last week, some $230 million is being set aside over the next five years to rehabilitate some aspects of what the department administers. For example, the Palmer implementation plan is in line with what the minister and the department outlined under Andrew Metcalfe, the new secretary.
The $230 million is being spent on coming up with better ways of implementing the department’s dealings with its clients, who are, let’s face it, on the whole people who have come to Australia illegally or who have attempted to remain in Australia illegally.

Mr Kelvin Thomson interjecting—

The SPEAKER—The member for Wills is warned.

Mr JOHN COBB—One example is the establishment of the College of Immigration, Border Security and Compliance. It will deliver comprehensive, tailored operational training for departmental officers and will have an emphasis on quality assurance and decision making. Some 250 new departmental officers will be trained there every year and some 300 officers will be put through for refresher courses. The government accepts that the department has some issues to deal with, such as dealing with the health and wellbeing of clients. Also, information will flow through the department as to the background of illegal immigrants and people who are overstaying their visas.

Mr Albanese interjecting—

The SPEAKER—The member for Grayndler is warned.

Mr JOHN COBB—the honourable member for Watson and those opposite are certainly—

Mr Albanese—Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order, which goes to relevance. The question asked was: exactly how often does the department act illegally?

Mr Gavan O’Connor interjecting—

The SPEAKER—I ruled the question in order and the minister is in order in his answer. I call the minister.

Mr JOHN COBB—the member for Watson and those opposite in their questions are totally overlooking the fact that this department, since 2001, have done the job that the government asked them to do—dealing with illegal immigration in the order of what was looking like 12,000 or 13,000 boat people every year. Members opposite do not like this, because the people of Australia backed that policy to a 90 per cent degree. They may not like that option but it is a fact, and that is what the department did. When you have a job to do that is not always pleasant, it can be damned tough to do—and they did that job. We now have virtually no boat people coming to Australia at all because the department did that job under instructions. They did it well, and Australia agreed with that. What the members opposite do not like is the fact that Australia told them we were doing the right thing.

Ms PANOPOLLOS (2.48 pm)—My question is addressed to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. Would the minister advise the House how further workplace relations will improve the viability of Australian farmers?

Mr McGauran—I thank the honourable member for Indi for her question. The government’s workplace relations reforms are vitally important to Australia’s farming sector—employers and employees alike. At the outset, I remind and impress upon the House that WorkChoices will protect certain award conditions when the new workplace
agreements are negotiated. The award conditions include: public holidays; rest breaks, including meal breaks; incentive based payments and bonuses; annual leave loadings; allowances; penalty rates; and shift and overtime loadings. The reforms will allow streamlined negotiations between employers and employees—and nowhere is this more needed than in regard to Australia’s pastoral awards, which are mind-numbingly complex and a nightmare when trying to calculate entitlements and allowances. Let me give a couple of examples to prove the point.

Mr Tanner interjecting—

The SPEAKER—The member for Melbourne is warned.

Mr McGauran—In regard to the New South Wales pastoral award, there are some remarkable disincentives for employers and employees to reach agreement for mutual benefit, as well as for employers to employ people, which should be the main object of our policy, at least on this side of the House. Let me turn to clause 21(b), under ‘Transport’. It states:

... in all cases where the shearing shed is 400 metres or more walking distance from the employees’ huts the employer shall provide transport from the shed to the huts and from the huts to the shed for the midday meal.

The clause referring to ‘Transport whilst at shed’ states:

Where the employees sleep at the employer’s premises and the shearing shed is 800 metres or more walking distance from the employees’ sleeping quarters, the employer shall provide transport for the employees between the shed and the sleeping quarters before the start of the day’s work, and at the end of the day’s work.

At 400 metres you provide a minibus—

Mr Fitzgibbon interjecting—

The SPEAKER—The member for Hunter is warned.

Mr McGauran—and at 800 metres you provide a minibus when a few minutes walking is involved—which is good, of course, for fitness. ‘Smoke-oh lunches’ particularly grabs my eye. Clause 15(a) states:

Where the shearing shed is within 229 metres—

not 228 or 300 metres—

walking distance from the kitchen, smoke-oh lunches are to be held in the shed except:

(1) where an offsider is employed; or

(2) in the case of a cook of a mess of ten men or less.

In country areas people are individualistic and self-reliant and do not need union officials prescribing one-size-fits all, complex and often irrelevant conditions of this kind.

My favourite is under ‘Special allowances’, clause 37.1:

Where a station hand is required by the employer to find the employee’s own horse and/or saddle the employee shall be paid an allowance of $5.30 per week for the horse—

Mr Brendan O’Connor interjecting—

The SPEAKER—Order! The member for Gorton will remove himself from the chamber under standing order 94(a).

The member for Gorton then left the chamber.

Mr McGauran—Let me start again with ‘Special allowances’, clause 37.1:

Where a station hand is required by the employer to find the employee’s own horse and/or saddle the employee shall be paid an allowance of $5.30 per week for the horse and an allowance of $4.23 per week for the saddle.

For the horse, I can understand it—chaff and oats—but for the saddle? What is the equivalence between a horse and a saddle? That is a lot of beeswax for the saddle. It just goes on and on. This is what the Labor Party opposes; reform of this kind, whereby employers and employees can strike their own bargain. No wonder there has been a prolifera-
tion of shearing contract teams, harvesting contract teams and the like. The Labor Party want to return to the heavy hand of government and union regulation of this kind. This side of parliament does not.

Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs

Mr Burke (2.54 pm)—My question is to the Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs, representing the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs. Minister, I refer to the Comrie report, which was presented after an inquiry into the deportation of an Australian citizen. I quote from the Comrie report:

… the culture of DIMIA … was so motivated by imperatives associated with the removal of unlawful non-citizens that officers failed to take into account the basic human rights obligations that characterise a democratic society.

Minister, isn’t it true that the culture of departments is bred from policy and that the policy ultimately belongs to the Howard government?

The Speaker—in calling the Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs, that question is very close to asking for an opinion, but the minister may choose to answer it.

Mr John Cobb—I thank the honourable member for his question. As I have made very plain, the government and the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs are putting in more resources than the opposition ever put into the department to make it the department it can be and which it has been. We are fully cognisant of the Comrie report and we are fully cognisant of the fact that Vivian Alvarez was mistakenly taken overseas.

Ms Gillard interjecting—

The Speaker—Order! The Manager of Opposition Business is warned.

Mr John Cobb—Ms Alvarez has been given every opportunity to come back. The department is dealing with it and the government is making that right.

Education and Training

Miss Jackie Kelly (2.55 pm)—My question is addressed to the Minister for Vocational and Technical Education. Given the award of the Western Sydney technical college to the consortium led by the Catholic Education Office over the Westech proposal, led by the Penrith City Council, and the continued interest of Westech proponents in technical training in Western Sydney by the schools based apprenticeship scheme or any other model, would the minister update the House on the outcome of negotiations with the states and territories to reform Australia’s training system? Are there any alternative policies?

Mr Hardgrave—I thank the member for Lindsay, who is a passionate advocate for the people from her area. She is fighting very hard for more opportunities—particularly school based new apprenticeship opportunities—for the people of the western suburbs of Sydney, in particular in her electorate. She comes from a state that has the distinction of being the last state to sign up to the 2005-08 Commonwealth-State Agreement for Skilling Australia’s Workforce, the national training agreement. New South Wales was shamed into signing that agreement just last week.

This agreement provides real reform of Australia’s training system. It means that it can all now begin and that more training opportunities at the school based apprenticeship level for the people of Lindsay—and indeed all the people of New South Wales—should follow. We have eight separate training regimes—eight separate systems of entry, exit, assessment and so forth—in this country. We have supposedly been working under the theory of a national training system, but it is
a bit like many of the things you see. The Labor Party know what it is, then they ignore it. The Labor Party states have gone out of their way to prevent a real recognition of the trade skills that people have had. In many ways, when this country federated in 1901 it was about dealing with tariffs on goods between the states. Instead, we now have tariffs on services, called licences and so forth.

We now want a training system, and we can put in place a training system, in which Australian business recognise the gap between what it wants and what it gets. That should be what drives the way in which the training sector runs. It is not about the way in which the institutes and the unions which staff the institutes want to train people; it is, in fact, about getting real-time business demands at the beginning. We will back this initiative with funding of some $5 billion which will flow through this agreement until 2008. It includes an additional $215 million, which represents a real annual increase of $4.1 million compared with 2004. The states will match some of this funding, but additional funding is very good news.

The states and territories have accepted the agreement. State owned TAFEs deliver some 85 per cent of the publicly funded training in this country. We need to improve the flexibility and the responsiveness of that public system. One of our priorities is to ensure greater access to Australian workplace agreements, which gives greater autonomy to TAFE directors to make decisions about staff who are performing well and who must be kept. We have to make sure that we end the haemorrhaging of the public education sector by having good teachers go off and take up opportunities in the private sector. One of the ways to keep them is to ensure that they can trade their experience and their abilities for more pay, better opportunities and more take-home pay as a result of their ability. That is what we are about.

The Labor Party, of course, have their roll-back, their IR plan and their ambition to undo all of the good that we are currently doing. I have been asked about alternatives and there is one alternative the Labor Party might like to consider. My recent trip to the People’s Republic of China and the second Sino-Australia VET forum produced an amazing observation from a senior Chinese official. I would like to put this on the Hansard record so the people of Australia understand that the Chinese understand what is going on far better than those opposite do. I quote:

… push vocational colleges and schools to change their management systems and operational mechanisms … as well as … make greater efforts to reform teachers’ payment system, [including] relating staff income to the development of the school and linking promotion with individual performance. [This includes] implementing—a teacher-oriented system where salary is determined by different positions and performance. Motivate staff through this payment system.

So you cannot help but wonder why, if senior officials of the Communist Party of China have got it, those opposite are the last gasps in the arguments against performance based pay through AWAs. Why is it? They have to update their logic in order to ensure that Australia can keep its skills up to date.

The SPEAKER—Does the member for Denison rise on a point of order?

Mr Kerr—Yes. I just want a sanity check. Is the member referring to the—

The SPEAKER—The member for Denison will resume his seat.

Telstra

Mr WINDSOR (3.01 pm)—My question is to the Prime Minister.

Government members—Apologise!
Mr WINDSOR—You should be very sorry, too.

A government member—You should be sorry.

Mr WINDSOR—I accept your apology. Prime Minister, the National Farmers Federation President, Peter Corish, said recently that he had received a guarantee from the government of future pricing parity for both basic telephone and broadband services for country and city consumers and that the guarantee would be enshrined in legislation. Prime Minister, could you inform the House where in the Telstra sale legislation the guarantee is enshrined? How does the Prime Minister define ‘basic’ telephone and broadband services and ‘parity’ of pricing?

Mr HOWARD—What the government intends to do in this area has been announced, and I stand by that. I am not going to start interpreting what other people have said. I simply say to the honourable member for New England that he ought to be man enough to apologise to the member for Gwydir.

Agriculture: Subsidies

Mr HARTSUYKER (3.02 pm)—My question is addressed to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. Would the minister advise the House of recent developments in the negotiations on cuts to agricultural subsidies?

Mr McGAURAN—I thank the member for Cowper for his question. Australia exports 65 per cent of its farm produce and consequently we have a vital interest in breaking down distorted international trade caused by subsidies, restricted market access and the like. Farmers have been anxiously awaiting the successful conclusion of the Doha Round under the WTO in December in Hong Kong. There is a long way to go in reaching that goal, and so little time. However, some promising developments have emerged overnight from the WTO agricultural talks in Zurich, where various trade ministers have gathered, and the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade, Mr Vaile, is in attendance. The United States has tabled at that meeting an initiative to cut its most trade-distorting farm subsidies by 60 per cent and to reduce other farm subsidies by 50 per cent. The United States has put this proposal in the context of a highly ambitious vision of eliminating all agricultural barriers within 15 years. That is 15 years too long for Australian farmers, but it is the first time we have had a timetable enunciated in that way.

Promisingly, the European Union has responded to the initiative by increasing the extent to which it is prepared to cut its distorting farm subsidies—from 65 per cent to 70 per cent. There is no doubt that the United States proposal is a significant development that could help bring about a breakthrough in the current impasse in agricultural negotiations. The Minister for Trade has urged all WTO members to use the United States initiative as a building block to achieve tighter constraints on farm subsidies. It now falls on the European Union to take the courageous but necessary step of agreeing to improve market access in a way that delivers real commercial opportunities. There is no doubt that while elimination of subsidies is crucial to Australian farmers—because they give our competitors an unfair advantage in third markets—the No. 1 issue is market access. We must be able to trade in the various markets around the world and especially in the European Union. This is an opportunity that needs to be seized by all participating countries.

Avian Influenza

Mr RUDD (3.05 pm)—My question is to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. I refer to the minister’s answer in question time today outlining the depth of his concern about the po-
tential impact of bird flu on Australia and the region. This is the same minister who also said:

I haven’t been advised that there’s a real threat that it—

bird flu—

will come to Australia.

On the potential economic impact of bird flu in Australia, does the minister also recall saying that, apart from the import of chicken meat, bird flu ‘shouldn’t have any effect’? Minister, do you still stand by these extraordinarily complacent statements made fully seven years after bird flu first broke out in Hong Kong?

Mr Downer—As I said in answer to an earlier question, we are not complacent about bird flu. I quoted the Commonwealth Medical Officer and, by the way, I think I am right in saying—the health minister will correct me if I am wrong—that the World Health Organisation also shares his view that there is a one in 10 chance that bird flu could mutate and therefore be transmitted between people. Obviously, if that were to happen, the consequences could be extremely serious.

But I would have thought the government had been anything but complacent. Through the APEC processes we have been playing a leadership role. We did so back at the last APEC meeting in Chile, and we will be playing a very substantial leadership role at the meeting to take place at the end of this month in Brisbane of APEC senior officials from 21 countries. I think that, when we get to Pusan in South Korea for the APEC meetings next month, the government will find that—

Mr Rudd—Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The question asked whether the minister stood by two specific statements on bird flu—

The Speaker—The member will resume his seat. The Minister for Foreign Affairs is in order.

Mr Downer—We left that years ago and now we are members of parliament. The public are interested in our policy positions not in our running a high school debating society. I would think that at the APEC meeting in Pusan next month the Prime Minister and other leaders will reach a solid agreement on regional action to deal with avian flu. I mentioned, in answer to an earlier question, that the government has already committed about $180 million to deal with avian flu, so to make a high school debating point suggesting that the government is doing nothing about it is to walk around being—and I use the word again because Mark Latham uses it so often in his book—an opportunist.

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

Questions Without Notice: Additional Answers

Workplace Relations

Mr Howard (Bennelong—Prime Minister) (3.08 pm)—Mr Speaker, I seek the indulgence of the chair to add to an answer.

The Speaker—The Prime Minister may proceed.

Mr Howard—I was asked a question by the member for Lowe and I would like to add to the answer I gave by informing the House that I have been advised by a source on our side which I regard as impeccable in these matters—

Ms Gillard—Tony Abbott?

Mr Howard—No—that the late Pope John Paul II, writing in Laborem Exercens in 1981, said that the primary responsibility of government is to create the conditions under which everyone who wants a job can get one.
QUESTION TIME

Mr PRICE (3.09 pm)—Mr Speaker, I have a question of you which arises out of question time today. Will the member for New England be able to ask questions in silence like every other member? Given the Prime Minister’s answer to his question, I refer to your role of upholding the rights of and protecting all members of this House. Does that role of protection also extend to the member for New England?

The SPEAKER—I thank the Chief Opposition Whip. I would say, in reference to answers to questions, that he would be well aware that the standing orders are quite clear that only one standing order applies to answers to questions. In answer to the first part of his question, I think all members would be aware that there has been far too much noise—and that applies to both sides—and the chair has been endeavouring to ensure that the level of noise is reduced.

Speaker’s Ruling

Ms GILLARD (3.11 pm)—Mr Speaker, I have a question for you. In question time today, on a point of order, the member for Mackellar reflected in an inappropriate fashion on a ruling you had made. It is something on which I think the Leader of the House should have intervened at that point to protect you from such criticism. Given he failed to do so, can I assure you that in future I will, with the suggestion that you name the member involved.

The SPEAKER—I note the points of the Manager of Opposition Business, but I make it clear that I ruled at the time on the point of order.

DEPARTMENT OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Annual Report

The SPEAKER—Pursuant to section 65 of the Parliamentary Service Act 1999, I present the annual report of the Department of the House of Representatives for 2004-05.

Ordered that the report be made a parliamentary paper.

AUDITOR-GENERAL’S REPORTS

Report Nos 10 and 11 of 2004-05

The SPEAKER—I present the Auditor-General’s Audit reports for 2004-05 entitled Audit report No. 10, Performance audit: upgrade of the Orion maritime patrol aircraft fleet: Department of Defence: Defence Materiel Organisation, and Audit report No. 11, Business support process audit: the Senate order for departmental and agency contracts (calendar year 2004 compliance).

Ordered that the reports be made parliamentary papers.

DOCUMENTS

Mr ABBOTT (Warringah—Leader of the House) (3.13 pm)—Documents are tabled 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:

Australian Electoral Commission—Funding and disclosure report following the federal election held on 9 October 2004.


Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs—Reports from the Secretary to Senator the Hon Amanda Vanstone, Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs—
Response to the recommendations of the report of the Commonwealth Ombudsman of the inquiry into the circumstances of the Vivian Alvarez matter.
Medibank Private—
Report for 2004-05.
Debate (on motion by Ms Gillard) adjourned.

PARLIAMENTARY SERVICE COMMISSIONER

Annual Report

The SPEAKER—I present the annual report of the Parliamentary Service Commissioner for 2004-05.

DOCUMENTS

The SPEAKER—I present a letter from the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory forwarding a resolution of the Assembly relating to a planned nuclear waste site in the Northern Territory.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Workplace Relations

The SPEAKER—I have received a letter from the honourable member for Perth proposing that a definite matter of public importance be submitted to the House for discussion, namely:

The failure of the Government to accurately inform the Australian people about the adverse impact its changes to the industrial relations system will have on employees and their families.
of Churches, again and again since May, expressing concerns about the attack upon living standards, the attack upon quality of life and the attack upon our values and virtues.

On the other hand, the government try to pretend that none of these things are at issue. The government simply say, ‘These proposals are good for you and good for the nation.’ They are spending millions and millions of taxpayers’ dollars on a Liberal Party political advertising campaign to try to persuade the Australian public of that. They will not tell the Australian public the truth. They will not tell the Australian public how this is an attack upon their living standards and an attack upon values, virtues and characteristics that we have held dear.

The first thing the government will not tell you is that these proposals will make working Australians worse off, and there is a very good test to prove that is the case. Repeatedly in this place since May we have asked the Prime Minister to give a guarantee that no individual Australian employee will be worse off as a result of these changes, and consistently and persistently he refuses to do that. This was something of a surprise to us, because this was a guarantee he was happy to give in 1996 when he had Peter Reith and Alsatians and balaclavas. He gave what he then described as a rock solid, ironclad guarantee that, under his proposals in 1996, people could be better off but no-one would be worse off. He did it with Peter Reith and the Alsatians and balaclavas, and we were surprised that he did not do it with Minister Andrews. Kevin is not your Alsatians and balaclavas type—he is more your opera glasses and poodles type—but he does follow his instructions.

The Prime Minister says, ‘My guarantee is my record.’ And his record, he says, is 14 per cent growth in wages in real terms since he came to office and a 12 per cent increase in real terms in the minimum wage since he came to office. What a surprise that after 14 years of consecutive economic growth—we are now into the first quarter of the 15th year—set up by the structural reforms of the last Labor governments, the Hawke and Keating governments, we might have an increase in real wages.

Mr Andrews interjecting—

Mr STEPHEN SMITH—The minister interjects and says that under Labor it was two per cent. I distinctly recall that when the Prime Minister left office as Treasurer in 1983 he left us with a 10 per cent inflation rate. When he returned to office in 1996 the inflation rate was two per cent. Last time I looked, an effective calculation of the real wage was to judge that against the inflation rate. We battled against a 10 per cent inflation rate that the government, under Malcolm Fraser and John Howard, left us.

So he says his guarantee is his record. Let us have a look at his record on the minimum wage. The Prime Minister says that, under him, the minimum wage has increased by 12 per cent in real terms since his government came to office. The government first made a submission to the Industrial Relations Commission in respect of the minimum wage in 1997. So, if you take the period when the government came to office, from March 1996 until now, it is the case that the minimum wage has increased by 12 per cent. If you take the period from the government’s first submission in 1997, the minimum wage has increased in real terms by 9.7 per cent.

All of this is not because of John Howard’s best efforts but despite them. John Howard has consistently opposed the decisions made by the Industrial Relations Commission in respect of the minimum wage. If John Howard’s submissions to the Industrial Relations Commission on the minimum wage since he came to office had
been accepted, the minimum wage would be $50 a week or $2,600 a year lower. The consequence of that is that the minimum wage under John Howard, if his submissions had been agreed to, would have been reduced in real terms by 1.55 per cent—not a 12 per cent increase—since he came to office. That is at the start of the government’s attack on living standards. John Howard wants to get through the back door what he has not been able to get through the front door, through the Industrial Relations Commission, since he came to office. That is why he wants to take an axe to the minimum wage, an axe to the Industrial Relations Commission and an axe to the living standards of the nearly two million employees who are entirely dependent upon the minimum wage.

Why would he do such a thing? He would do such a thing because he has an economic view that by reducing the wage level at the lower end of the scale you somehow magically increase or improve employment. Anecdotally, that means this: you have a cleaner on $25,000—rule of thumb, the current minimum wage. John Howard’s thesis is that, if you reduce that by $2,600—let us just say to $23,000—somehow we are magically going to have two cleaners. Or there is his productivity and competitiveness argument that, if you reduce the cleaner’s wage by $2,000, somehow the cleaner is going to become more productive. The essential public policy assertion that the Howard government makes—that by reducing the living standards of those people on the minimum wage we will somehow magically increase employment—is an economic misnomer. There is no credible economic theory to that effect. Indeed, more recently we have seen serious economic analysts and labour relations and labour market analysts underlining that point.

The second area where there is an attack upon the living standards of working Australian families is in respect of conditions. At the moment we know that so far as conditions and entitlements are concerned we have the so-called 20 allowable matters and the no disadvantage test. It is the 20 allowable matters and the no disadvantage test which are the measures against which any individual agreement or collective agreement has to be judged. A judgment will be made as to whether, overall, an employee who goes onto an individual or a collective agreement is at a disadvantage when compared with the award. Currently we have 20 allowable matters. The government is proposing to knock off four allowable matters out of the 20. It is proposing to knock off long service leave, notice of termination, jury service and superannuation.

The government make a lot of saying, ‘We are going to enshrine four allowable matters as a legislated minimum standard: annual leave, personal or carers leave, parental leave and ordinary hours of work.’ That leaves 12 swinging. The 12 that the government leave swinging—at risk—are some of those things which are most important to the lifestyle, the living standards and capacity to make ends meet of working Australian families. They include such things as public holidays, rest breaks, meal breaks, incentive based payments, annual leave loadings, allowances, penalty rates and loadings for shift and overtime. They go right to the hip-pocket nerve of Australian families. In the great sleight of hand, the government try to pretend that those things will be protected.

If you look at page 8 of the 68-page explanatory memorandum, which should be entitled ‘No Choice’ rather than WorkChoices, the government says this:

... individual Australian workplace Agreements (AWAs) will need to be lodged with the Office of the Employment Advocate (OEA).

It goes on to say:
WorkChoices will protect certain award conditions when new workplace agreements are negotiated.

These award conditions are:
- Public holidays;
- Rest breaks (including meal breaks);
- Incentive-based payments and bonuses;
- Annual leave loadings;
- Allowances;
- Penalty rates; and
- Shift/overtime loadings.

These award conditions can only be modified or removed by specific provisions in the new agreement. If these award conditions are not specifically agreed to in the new agreement, these award conditions continued to apply.

It goes on to say that an AWA:

… need simply set out how the new agreement will either change or remove these matters in that agreement.

What does that mean? That means that an individual contract—an AWA for someone like Billy, who the Prime Minister in question time today was happy to say would be forced onto an AWA with such inferior conditions—simply needs to refer to the removal of those provisions. I drew the House’s attention to this yesterday with the Tancred Fresh AWA example. On page 4 of 12 of that AWA, under paragraph 14, ‘Wages’, it states:

Your rate of pay which is inclusive of leave loading, all allowances, penalties and public holiday pay is $17.20 per hour (subject to the table below).

So, under the government’s new changes, you will find a one-line entry which will say your rate of pay is inclusive of public holidays, rest breaks including meal breaks, incentive based payments and bonuses, annual leave loadings, allowances, penalty rates and shift or overtime loadings. And, once you say that your pay includes those things, the government’s so-called default provision goes by the board: those things are lost. They were lost for the people who signed this agreement in Rockhampton, and they will be lost for Billy, the government’s and the Prime Minister’s most precious example.

Overnight the minister has been making great play of the fact that the agreement that I referred to yesterday in the House was not actually registered by the Office of the Employment Advocate, because the Office of the Employment Advocate said the pay rate—which essentially gave 16c an hour for the loss of all those entitlements—did not meet the no disadvantage test and had to be improved to the princely sum of $1.31 per hour for losing all those matters. What of course the minister did not say overnight is that, under the government, the no disadvantage test which includes those things goes.

So, Minister, thanks very much for proving the point that we were making yesterday. I am quite happy to say, as I said on radio this morning, that the agreement that I referred to was the agreement that was signed by an employee and not registered by the OEA but, under the system that you are proposing to adopt, the Tancred agreement, as referred to by me in the House yesterday, would have been registered—proving the very point that we are making.

That deals with the living standards argument so far as the government is concerned. The government also does not like to hear how these extreme proposals are an attack upon the values, virtues and characteristics of Australian society. For over 100 years, we have prided ourselves on essentially being a fair and egalitarian society, saying that people were entitled to a fair go. Wasn’t it interesting in question time today? One question to the Treasurer about his attitude to the churches not being entitled to have a view, and he reeled off a whole range of things that might be relevant to this area. What was the
one thing he did not mention? Fairness—no mention of fairness.

When the Prime Minister was asked about his favourite example, Billy, what did the Prime Minister say? The Prime Minister said that he was happy for Billy to take his chances, that Billy could either sign or not have a job. The Prime Minister, both on The 7.30 Report last night and today, is essentially saying that he is happy for there to be a three-tiered employment system in Australia: those people who have jobs, those people who want to move between jobs and those people who do not have a job and are trying to get into one. At each level in the system of three tiers you will be treated more and more unfairly, depending upon which point in the cycle you are in. Billy is obviously going to be treated most unfairly; those people trying to transfer between jobs will be treated unfairly; and those people who have jobs will take their chances, as minimum standards, safety nets, salaries and conditions are attacked by this proposal.

The other point which the government do not make but which we find the churches making is that the government do not believe that the trade union movement has a legitimate role to play in modern-day Australian society. Unfortunately for the government, the churches and Labor do. It was very interesting to see the government’s private briefing for business and industry on Sunday morning. Nothing could have been better predicated to show how this is a massive shift in the bargaining power of the employer further against employee. Nothing could have given that signal better. The government are quite happy to sit there and say, ‘We don’t see a role for the trade union movement in the economic and social affairs of Australian society.’ Well, we do, and there is one classic illustration: who was it that came to the rescue of the asbestosis and mesothelioma victims of James Hardie? Not one person in that room on Sunday at the private briefing had lifted a finger for those victims; it was the organised trade union movement.

These so-called reforms—these extreme changes by the government—are nothing more than an attack upon the living standards of working Australians. They are an attack upon the values and virtues, underlined by fairness, that we hold dear as an Australian society. They indicate a view that the organised trade union movement has no role to play in the modern social affairs of Australian society. All of those things we reject and will reject day in and day out until the next election, when the government will find its judgment coming from the people.

**Mr ANDREWS** (Menzies—Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service) (3.29 pm)—There can probably be no greater irony in parliament this week than for the member for Perth to propose a matter of public importance which refers to the accurate informing of the Australian people, given his actions and those of the Labor Party yesterday in this place. It is a very interesting choice of words for the member for Perth to be speaking about accurately informing people, when that is what he and others in the Labor Party quite clearly failed to do yesterday. If he was interested in accurately informing people, he might have taken at least 30 seconds out of his 15 minutes to apologise for the way in which he misinformed the Australian people yesterday, because he conceded on radio this morning that he had done so.

Let me just take the House and those who are listening to this debate through what happened yesterday. The member for Perth in question time yesterday put a question to the Prime Minister which said, in part:
I refer to an AWA currently in place at Tancred Fresh...

Later on we had another question coming from the member for Capricornia, who said:

I ... refer to the fact that employees have lost their leave loadings, all allowances, penalties and public holiday pay rate in exchange for a maximum of 16c an hour more than the relevant award rate.

Saying that this was an AWA that was currently in place was quite clearly wrong. It was misleading because this AWA was not currently in place. The terms, conditions and amounts in the AWA which was approved and is therefore in place for these employees are different to those that the member for Perth pointed out in the proposal yesterday.

This is compounded because we know that the Labor Party was then hawking around the press gallery a letter from the relevant union, the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Association, which says, in the first line of the letter that has not been whited out: ‘Recently the union came across an Australian workplace agreement which is proposed to apply to employees.’ This was the letter that was being hawked around the press gallery yesterday, in which quite clearly the union says, ‘This is an AWA which is proposed to apply.’ It was not the AWA which applied. The AWA which was being referred to had not been approved and, indeed, even if the AWA which was referred to had been approved the reality is it amounted to an increase of some $86 a week for full-time employees over and above the award rate for employees in that particular business.

What we have here is one more example of a pattern of conduct that we have seen from the union movement and the Labor Party in relation to the government’s proposed changes. We have seen this with the television advertisements. One television advertisement shows a female worker purportedly being terminated because she is looking after her family due to family responsibilities. What that advertisement does not point out is that it is unlawful in Australia today, within the federal industrial relations system, to terminate somebody’s employment because of their family responsibilities.

That ad was clearly misleading so far as the general public were concerned. And then, to compound this pattern of behaviour, we saw footage on *Lateline* a few weeks ago showing a campaign meeting involving the President of the ACTU, Sharan Burrow, in which she said words to the following effect: ‘Wouldn’t it be great for our campaign if we had the mother or father of a worker who had been injured or killed in Australia. That would be fantastic.’ Those were her words. This is despicable conduct coming from the labour movement. They were saying, ‘It would be great if we could just find someone whose child had been unfortunately and tragically injured or, worse still, killed in some accident and we could use them for our campaign against the government.’

There was also the incident in this place yesterday when the member for Perth came in, aided and abetted by the member for Capricornia, and referred to a document which they must have known was referring to an AWA that had not been approved and was not in operation, because the very letter that they referred to and that was hawked around the press gallery yesterday says that this is a proposed agreement, not one which had been put in operation. A simple question to the union concerned or a simple phone call to the employer concerned would have verified that. It is no excuse to say, ‘Oh, we made a mistake,’ or, ‘We were sloppy.’ This is a case in which the Australian people were being misled by the members opposite in relation to the matters that they raised in the House yesterday.
Contrary to what the member for Perth says, the reality is that the current AWA would not have been approved by the Employment Advocate. The AWA which they are referring to actually cashes out all annual leave, but under the proposals that the government are putting to the parliament we are saying that, as part of the minimum wages and conditions, a person has to have as part of an agreement—whether it is a collective agreement or an individual agreement—four weeks annual leave. We go further and replicate what is in existence in Western Australia—apparently acceptable to a Labor government in Western Australia—and say that up to two weeks of that annual leave can be cashed out on a case-by-case basis at the request of the employee. This is something that has worked successfully for many people who want to make use of that in Western Australia. Even under the circumstances which the member for Perth puts to the parliament today he is wrong, because under the new system these provisions of the AWA would not be enforceable as they cash out all annual leave. It would have been invalid and it would not have been approved in the form that he talks about. He has even got that wrong.

We are told about failure to accurately inform the House, failure to accurately inform the people. What about the opposition’s attitude to Australian workplace agreements? On the Sunday program the Leader of the Opposition was asked whether his policy was to abolish Australian workplace agreements. Let us remember that 770,000 Australian workplace agreements have been entered into since their inception. Somewhere in the order of 500,000 of these individual workplace agreements are being used by Australians successfully today, paying more in wages than do both collective agreements and award arrangements for workers in Australia. When asked about this on the Sunday program, the Leader of the Opposition said:

We don’t favour individual contracts, and we believe that if you properly protect collective agreements and awards against an ability of the AWA system to undermine them, AWAs will disappear and that’ll be a good thing.

Laurie Oakes asked:

So you no longer subscribe to the policy Labor took to the last election, which was effectively to abolish AWAs?

Mr Beazley answered:

I subscribe to what I just said. There’ll be a million of those things in place when we come into office, and you can’t wander round cancelling contracts. But what you can do is put in place very tough provisions, which we will, on ensuring that AWAs cannot undermine collective agreements and awards, and are genuinely policed as to whether or not they’re voluntarily entered into ...

If you apply that to many individual contracts they’d disappear as well. That’s a good thing, that is what we want ...

So is the Leader of the Opposition, to quote the words of the matter before the House, ‘accurately informing the people of Australia’? What exactly is his policy about Australian workplace agreements? He says on one hand that he will not abolish them. In fact, he says that he cannot abolish them, because there would be too many losers. He is right about that. There are thousands of workers in his own electorate of Brand in Perth in Western Australia who have made use of Australian workplace agreements to get higher pay. He knows he cannot abolish them, but what he wants to do by stealth—this is hardly accurately informing the Australian people of matters—is to strangle these agreements and cut them off, yet pretend that he is not going to abolish them, because he knows that people would be worse off as a result. The reality is that, to use the political cliche, the Leader of the Opposition is attempting to walk both sides of the street.
But there is one thing he is right about, and that is that people would be losers. If you abolish AWAs, you are effectively saying to those people who are earning more on AWAs—whether they are managerial or non-managerial workers in Australia—that you would cut their wages. That is what you would do if you abolished AWAs. The Leader of the Opposition is right about one other thing: there will be a million of them approved by the next election. So what is he saying to up to 10 per cent of the Australian workforce who have made use of the flexibility which is available under these sorts of instruments? He is saying, ‘We are going to make you worse off.’

There was a story published in the Australian newspaper yesterday about a grocery merchandiser, Sandra Xuereb, who has an Australian workplace agreement which allows her to choose her hours and cope with the demands of being a single mother of three. The article says:

Ms Xuereb works 25 hours a week for food company Cerebos, stocking supermarket shelves with coffee, sauce, gravy, salt, herbs and spices. She normally works three days a week in western Sydney, but condenses this to two longer days in school holidays to spend time with her children, aged five, seven and nine. She has had the job since March last year and has rarely taken sick or personal leave because the AWA allows her to make up the hours lost when the needs of her children force her to leave work early.

Here is a single mum raising three kids in Western Sydney, making use of the choice and flexibility that Australian workplace agreements give her.

A government member—What a great story!

Mr Andrews—That is right; it is a great story. It is a great story about somebody who is getting on with their life and has a job. We heard this nonsense from the Leader of the Opposition today—he complained about an accurate depiction that we put in the 67-page document that is available for people who want to look at the detail of our policy. We said, honestly, that there can be circumstances in which a worker—someone, for example, who is unemployed—can be offered a job on minimum wages and conditions as set out and protected by the Australian fair pay and conditions standard. We had a mocking reference to this from the opposition as if being on welfare and not having a job is somehow better than having a job.

The reality is that almost 40 per cent of people who get a job in Australia use that within a year as a pathway to another job. Many people, probably many members of this House, have started a job to get a foot in the door—‘or to get a foot on the ladder’, to use an expression that was fondly used by the previous Leader of the Opposition. Many people have started by getting a job and then used that as a stepping stone to another job. We say unashamedly to this parliament and to the Australian people that it is better to give somebody who is unemployed the opportunity to get a job because that is an opportunity to get into the labour market in Australia. It is an opportunity, in many cases, to get off welfare and do something of benefit for themselves and their family members in the future. That is something which we, as I said, are unashamedly about.

We have heard from the Leader of the Opposition about another policy of roll-back. He has been trying to avoid the word ‘roll-back’ ever since the disaster of the roll-back of the GST—something that the opposition were going to do and then eventually caved in on, because they saw the good economic sense of the GST that everybody else recognised. For two terms of parliament, we had the Leader of the Opposition and others saying, ‘We’re going to roll back the GST,’ when every Labor Premier out there in Aus-
Australia had been talking about the benefits to them of the GST and wondering how they could get some more revenue out of the GST.

Now we have the Leader of the Opposition saying that he will roll back this policy. He was asked yesterday whether he would roll back a policy which gave the government power to do something in exceptional circumstances when essential services were threatened in Australia. He said that he would roll that back. Note this: essential services legislation exists in every state of Australia. I do not hear the Labor premiers around Australia saying, ‘We don’t have the power in exceptional circumstances to do something about essential services.’ Is the Leader of the Opposition seriously saying to the Australian people that if a rogue union, say in the electricity industry, went out on strike in such a way that the power supplies to public hospitals and aged care and nursing homes were put at risk, and the health and wellbeing of people in those hospitals and aged care homes was therefore put at risk, then we should not have the power to order an end to the dispute and get the parties into the Industrial Relations Commission? That is the practical effect of what the Leader of the Opposition was saying yesterday. He would roll back essential services legislation.

The reality is that when it comes to these matters the Leader of the Opposition is an opportunist. We have seen opportunism every time from this opposition in terms of the GST and other policies that we have put forward, and we have seen it once again today. These changes are good for the Australian people. They are about building on the 1.7 million extra jobs that we have created, building on the 14.9 per cent increase in real wages over the last 9½ years and building on our economic prosperity so that we can meet the challenges of the future and not go backwards, as we would under the policies of the opposition.

Ms George (Throsby) (3.44 pm)—I really think it is time that the government and the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations were honest and told the Australian community exactly what lies at the core of their proposed changes, as outlined in the WorkChoices package. What lies at the core of these changes is an attempt to resuscitate a myth that was discredited in this country more than a century ago—that is, the myth of freedom of contract. No amount of spin or gloss and no amount of taxpayer funding and glossy ads that we will see for weeks on end on the TV will ultimately detract from this fundamental truth. If you do not believe what I am saying listen to the words of the Treasurer, who said recently:

We should be trying to move to an industrial relations system where the predominant instrument is the individual contract ...

That is what the agenda is really all about. It will not happen overnight, but that is certainly where this government is heading, make no mistake about that. But what does that mean? It means turning back the clock to the bad old days in this country. It means dismantling all the protections and institutions we have developed to ensure fairness and all the things we have developed for people at the lower end of the income scale and those who are vulnerable at work to get the protections that a civilised society thinks are fair. It means getting rid of the industrial umpire. It means abolishing the protection of awards. It means getting rid of industrial safety nets. Very importantly, it means that they want to erode the collective representation of workers through their unions.

All these matters are at risk. At risk, and those who stand to lose the most in the short term, will be those who are most vulnerable at work. I think that is the greatest tragedy of these changes that the minister is bringing into the parliament: those who are most vulnerable will be at the mercy of the market-
place in a very short period of time. Those who are most vulnerable are the young, the part-time workers, the casual workers, the women workers, the 1.6 million workers who are reliant today on the award safety net and the minimum wage for their protection.

These changes will essentially make it easier for the employer to require workers to sign individual work arrangements, commonly referred to as Australian workplace agreements. Beyond dispute is that these agreements will be signed at standards that are lower than the prevailing award safety nets that apply in Australia today. We all know and everybody out there in the Australian community knows, but it seems, the minister and the Howard government, that there is not equality of bargaining power between an individual worker and an employer. Everyone knows this basic truth. That is why we have developed a system in this country that is built on the notion of fairness—the Australian way which says that every worker is not to be treated as a commodity and that society has a responsibility to ensure fairness and justice for everybody.

It is this fundamental truth that has underpinned the wonderful system we have built in this nation over the last 100 years, a system now very much at risk because of these extremely radical and regressive changes proposed by the Howard government. That is why we have developed a system in this country that is built on the notion of fairness—the Australian way which says that every worker is not to be treated as a commodity and that society has a responsibility to ensure fairness and justice for everybody.

We have just heard the minister say that all these changes will be in the interests of Australia. I have to dispute that, and the workers out there will dispute that. It is the working people, including the 1.6 million workers who get a wage rise only once every year, who have made an enormous contribution to the prosperity of our nation. The wages share of gross domestic product is 1.5 points lower than when John Howard came to power. This translates to a shift in income of $12 billion from labour to capital on the coalition’s watch. It is no wonder that profits are booming. It is no wonder that the minister and the Prime Minister come into this House and praise the virtues of Australia’s economic growth. Minister, you have to remember that it is the working people out there who have made the enormous sacrifice to ensure that prosperity, and it is not beyond a reasonable approach to ensure that they can continue to benefit from the prosperity they have so importantly contributed to.

Minister, I listened to you very carefully today, and you made no case on economic grounds for these radical changes. The only case that I have ever heard argued is that this package will lead to better productivity outcomes. Don’t you believe it, because you cannot find a reputable conservative economist who will back up that assertion. Let me give you one small example. Look at what happened in New Zealand under the Employment Contracts Act. From 1990 to 1998, Australia’s productivity under this fair system that we have had for 100 years grew by almost 22 per cent. New Zealand, which went down the route that the minister and the government are proposing, had a productivity outcome of just 5.2 per cent over that same period. So do not pretend that individual contracts lead to better productive outcomes, because they do not.

What worries me is that the Prime Minister will not give a guarantee that no worker
will be worse off. He did that in 1996, when he gave a rock solid, ironclad guarantee. Why won’t he do it now? It is simply that he cannot because the system is all about ensuring that the labour market is deregulated. That will inevitably mean that real wages will fall and that existing entitlements that workers have struggled for and had implemented in their awards over the last 100 years will quickly be eroded. Minister, the great tragedy of this is that those who are most at risk are young people, people who will be changing jobs, those who are vulnerable at work, the part-time workers, the casuals, the women and the single mother with three children whom you referred to. Make no mistake about it, people will be worse off.

What we will have is a new no disadvantage test of a handful of conditions. Let me tell you what the conditions are: a basic hourly rate of pay of $12.75 an hour coupled with a 38-hour week. But listen—and I am quoting from your document, Minister: it will be possible for ordinary hours to be averaged over a period of up to 12 months. So imagine the situation the single mum with her three children that you just referred to in your contribution, Minister, will be in. One week she will be working 15 hours a week and maybe the next week she will be working 50 hours a week. So much for work and family balance. It is certainly a barbecue stopper, in your terms, and I am sure there will be far fewer barbecues that the average family will be able to attend with this imposition and with the impact on their quality of life that the hours they will be expected to work will have.

So you will have a basic hourly rate of pay, you will have four weeks annual leave—of which two can be cashed out—10 days personal carers leave and unpaid parental leave. Anything else is up for grabs once you are moved onto an individual contract. So the no disadvantage test will see real wages fall. The entitlements that are currently in awards, like public holidays, meal and tea breaks, annual leave loading, penalty rates, shift loadings and overtime rates, can go in the stroke of a pen. The example of Billy in the government’s own package shows this all too clearly. The Prime Minister’s words today I thought were an appalling attempt to rationalise a totally unacceptable situation where young kids, who are going to work for the first time, will never see the benefits that their parents fought for and had accepted and integrated into the fundamental provisions that apply to all working people today.

You will mask all this rhetoric in the notion of choice. I do not know what parallel universe you find yourself in, Minister, but I know that out there in the real world, for many workers, there will be no choice. The choice will be the contract on offer with a lot of the basic entitlements eroded or no job at all. And, if you do not believe me, ask the young people at Krispy Kreme such as Thea Fitch, who was told she would get no work unless she signed an agreement allowing her employer to roster her for 10 consecutive days without overtime and to work shifts longer than 12 hours. *(Time expired)*

Mr BARRESI (Deakin) (3.54 pm)—The ALP can do nothing else but to oppose the workplace relations reforms this government has introduced. There is nothing more they could do. They have been told that they must oppose them. They know where their support comes from, they know where their financial support lies, so they have to oppose us. But these reforms are part of a third wave of reforms that commenced back in 1993. In 1993, when the first wave went through and Paul Keating said that we must move to a situation where awards were no longer an add-on to agreements, we were there to sup-
port the then government in making the changes in that first wave of reforms.

The second wave of reforms took place in 1996. The ALP and the unions opposed us at that time. In fact, we all recall Bill Kelty’s statement at the time: ‘We will give you the full symphony. We will draw a line in the sand and come at you with a full symphony.’ What happened following those reforms in 1996? What we saw was jobs growth. In that time we have seen real jobs growth of around 1.2 million full-time jobs and we have seen real wages increase by 14 per cent. Yet from 1986 to 1993, when the so-called masters of the union movement were in power here, we saw minimum wages fall in this country by five per cent in real terms. Minimum wages fell. Our 1996 reforms were opposed by members on the other side. What has happened to the doom and gloom which they espoused at the time and which was echoed by some members of the community that we are hearing from today, such as those within the church fraternity? At the time they also said the sky would fall in and the Australian workers would suffer following the 1996 reforms. None of that took place, and it will not happen this time around either.

These reforms are needed in Australia. We are experiencing dramatic changes in the demographics of this country. We are experiencing a need to compete against the world markets—more so than we did back in 1986 and 1993 or even in 1996. We have a global marketplace where the Australian worker and Australian industry must be able to compete on a level basis with those overseas. These reforms are part of the process of making sure that we have a productivity base from which we can launch our own competitive position on the world market.

Members of the ALP, and members of the media as well, keep raising the issue of the Prime Minister needing to make some sort of written commitment that no worker will be disadvantaged. The Prime Minister, of course, rightfully turns the argument to his record. There is no greater example of what a government is on about than its past performance. I want the Australian public to contemplate this: why would the Prime Minister of this country—and a government supporting the Prime Minister—who has spent the past 9½ years introducing policies that have seen the prosperity of this nation increase and the past 9½ years seeing jobs grow and wages grow, jeopardise all that? It does not make sense for us as a government to turn on our head everything that we have tried to do in the last 9½ years. It is illogical for that to take place, and that is not the intent of our workplace relations reforms. The ALP know that and the Australian public will also come to realise this very fact rather than their being scared off by the union campaign which is taking place at the moment in the media.

The member for Perth came out here today, and yesterday, saying that the Prime Minister should be criticised on his record and that if, in the national wage case, the Australian Industrial Relations Commission had agreed with the government’s submissions then Australian workers would be $50 worse off. The fact is, Mr Deputy Speaker Jenkins—and you know this because you have been involved in the adversarial system just like I have, and a lot of members of the other side also know this—that the current Australian Industrial Relations Commission and the national wage case decisions are based on the concept of ambit claims. This is the case: ‘Let’s have a confrontation on wages.’ The only way the Australian Industrial Relations Commission can hear a national wage case is if there is a dispute in place. And that dispute must be in terms of claims and counterclaims. That is a system which does not bode well for an Australia of
the 21st century. That is one of the reasons
this adversarial system that we have in place
today will be scrapped as part of these work-
place relations reforms.

We will have a Fair Pay Commission
which will be made up of members with ex-
pertise on economic management who will
make their decision not on ambit claims but
by taking into account the capacity for the
unemployed and low paid to obtain and re-
main in employment. They are the vulner-
able people that the members on the other
side are referring to in this debate. The Fair
Pay Commission will look at employment
and competitiveness across the economy
rather than in one particular industry sector.
It will take into account some of the regional
and competitive natures within our economy.
It will provide a safety net for the low paid.
It will provide minimum wages for junior
employees and employees to whom training
arrangements apply. So there will be a con-
sideration of the effect of their decision on
future employment growth that will take
place in Australia.

So we are getting rid of the adversarial
system. It is a system that the people on the
other side want to maintain knowing full
well that it has not served, that its time has
come and gone. It was a system created over
105 years ago when we were six colonies
and were very much bound by state jurisdic-
tions and certainly not looking at the com-
petitive marketplace which the world econ-
omy offers to us today.

The ALP and union campaign really is
about spooking Australian workers. There is
not only the campaign on TV but also what
we have seen in this chamber. As I men-
tioned earlier on, Bill Kelty back in 1996
going on about the line in the sand, and the
parliamentary voice pieces in this place were
also making the same comment. We now
have Greg Combet and Sharan Burrow with
the same sort of campaign. We see TV adver-
tisements, which have been exposed as
fraudulent by the Minister for Employment
and Workplace Relations, advanced by the
union movement as being the new world
order when in fact they are not. The minister,
of course, made reference to that. We have
had a senior union official saying that our
scrapping of the unfair dismissal laws will
have employers out there dismissing em-
ployees if they have had a bad hair day. That
is an absolute disgrace. It is a disgrace to the
small business people out there. It is also an
indictment of the ALP because they have
never been in small business. They do not
understand that an employer does not make
decisions based on a bad hair day—‘I got out
of the wrong side of the bed; I’m going to
get rid of you today.’

A recruitment decision—and I can speak
with some authority on this having worked in
the personnel/human resources field on the
side where we recruit, not on the side where
we create conflict, strikes and ambit
claims—can cost thousands of dollars in
downtime in the workplace, in advertising
and in the time that it takes to recruit through
screening processes in some cases or some
form of testing procedure. Employers out
there do not make these decisions willy-nilly.
The people out there are being sold a pup by
the ALP and the union movement with these
scare tactics.

Yesterday we had the Tancred Fresh AWA
element thrown at us by the member for Ca-
pricornia and also by the member for Perth. I
am pleased to see the member for Perth has
come out and basically say that it was not a
valid agreement. I say to the people of Rock-
hampton that, if the member for Capricornia
is willing to come into this chamber and de-
liberately put up an AWA that is not correct,
what else should they mistrust her for? (Time
expired)
The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Jenkins)—Order! The discussion is now concluded.

BUSINESS

Days and Hours of Meeting

Mr BILLSON (Dunkley—Parliamentary Secretary (Foreign Affairs) and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs) (4.04 pm)—I move:

That the House, at its rising, adjourn until Wednesday, 12 October 2005, at 10 a.m.

Question agreed to.

MAIN COMMITTEE

Mr BARTLETT (Macquarie) (4.05 pm)—by leave—I move:

That, unless otherwise ordered, for the Main Committee meeting on Wednesday, 12 October 2005, the first item of business shall be Members’ statements, each for no longer than 3 minutes, with the item of business finishing by 10.40 a.m.

Question agreed to.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS (INTERCEPTION) AMENDMENT (STORED COMMUNICATIONS AND OTHER MEASURES) BILL 2005

THERAPEUTIC GOODS AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2) 2005

CUSTOMS TARIFF AMENDMENT (COMMONWEALTH GAMES) BILL 2005

Referred to Main Committee

Mr BARTLETT (Macquarie) (4.05 pm)—by leave—I move:

That the bills be referred to the Main Committee for further consideration.

Question agreed to.

MAIN COMMITTEE

Environment and Heritage Committee Reference

Mr BARTLETT (Macquarie) (4.06 pm)—by leave—I move:

That the resumption of debate on the motion to take note of the report of the Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage entitled “Sustainable cities” be referred to the Main Committee for debate.

Question agreed to.

COMMITTEES

Selection Committee Report

Mr BARTLETT (Macquarie) (4.06 pm)—I present the report of the Selection Committee relating to the consideration of committee and delegation reports and private members’ business on Monday, 31 October 2005. The report will be printed in today’s Hansard and the items accorded priority for debate will be published in the Notice Paper for the next sitting.

The report read as follows—

Report relating to the consideration of committee and delegation reports and private Members’ business on Monday, 31 October 2005

Pursuant to standing order 222, the Selection Committee has determined the order of precedence and times to be allotted for consideration of committee and delegation reports and private Members’ business on Monday, 31 October 2005. The order of precedence and the allotments of time determined by the Committee are as follows:

COMMITTEE AND DELEGATION REPORTS

Presentation and statements

1 AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION TO CHINA AND MONGOLIA, 7-19 APRIL 2005

Report of the Australian Parliamentary Delegation to China and Mongolia, 7-19 April 2005
The Committee determined that statements on the report may be made—all statements to conclude by 12:40 p.m.

Speech time limits—
Each Member—5 minutes.
[Minimum number of proposed Members speaking = 2 x 5 mins]

2 JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE

Australia’s defence relations with the United States—Report of the delegation to the United States, 28 June to 13 July 2005

The Committee determined that statements on the report may be made—all statements to conclude by 12:50 p.m.

Speech time limits—
Each Member—5 minutes.
[Minimum number of proposed Members speaking = 2 x 5 mins]

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ BUSINESS

Order of precedence

Notices

1 Ms Burke to present a bill for an act to protect residential telephone subscribers’ right to avoid receiving telephone solicitations to which they object, and for related purposes. (Telemarketing (Protection of Privacy Rights of Residential Telephone Subscribers) Bill 2005) (Notice given 10 October 2005.)

Presenter may speak for a period not exceeding 5 minutes—pursuant to standing order 41.

2 Mr Tanner to present a bill for an act to amend the Charter of Budget Honesty Act 1998, and for related purposes. (Charter of Budget Honesty Amendment Bill 2005) (Notice given 10 October 2005.)

Presenter may speak for a period not exceeding 5 minutes—pursuant to standing order 41.

3 Mr Lindsay to move—That this House:

(1) acknowledges that the Lao PDR suffered the heaviest bombing that the world has ever known and remains today the most heavily contaminated country in the world;

(2) views with concern that 30 years after the Indo-China war the effects of unexploded ordinance (UXO) are still a serious problem, two thirds of Laos is affected with ten out of eighteen provinces remaining severely contaminated;

(3) is alarmed that there has been a substantial increase in civilian UXO casualties, particularly children, because population growth is increasing pressure to farm more land;

(4) notes that while the world community is well aware of landmines, there is little international understanding of the problems of UXO; and

(5) urges the Australian Government to continue to increase financial support for clearance efforts. (Notice given 10 October 2005.)

Time allotted—remaining private Members’ business time prior to 1.45 p.m.

Speech time limits—
Mover of motion—5 minutes.
First Opposition Member speaking—5 minutes.
Other Members—5 minutes each.
[Minimum number of proposed Members speaking = 9 x 5 mins]

The Committee determined that consideration of this matter should continue on a future day.

4 Mr Brendan O’Connor to move:

That this House:

(1) notes:

(a) that in the last census, there were an estimated 100,000 homeless people in Australia; and
(b) the high social costs of homelessness; and

(2) recognises that:

(a) the reasons behind homelessness are complex and varied but that governments do have a role to play in ameliorating homelessness; and

(b) the joint Commonwealth/State funded Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) is an example of a vi-
tal service provided to the homeless and to those at risk of homelessness; and

(3) calls on the Federal Government to:
(a) promote awareness of the issue of homelessness among the public;
(b) develop strategies aimed at preventing homelessness;
(c) work co-operatively with other levels of government to reduce homelessness;
(d) increase funding for crisis accommodation and support; and
(e) set realistic targets for the reduction of homelessness. (Notice given 10 May 2005.)

Time allotted—30 minutes.

Speech time limits—
Mover of motion—5 minutes.
First Government Member speaking—5 minutes.

Other Members—5 minutes each.

[Minimum number of proposed Members speaking = 6 x 5 mins]

The Committee determined that consideration of this matter should continue on a future day.

5 Mr Wakelin to move:
That this House:
(1) recognises that the Australian Government has made significant progress for regional Australians in further education;
(2) notes that:
(a) the first principle should be that all Australians are entitled to reasonable access to education including tertiary education;
(b) regional Australians should not be disadvantaged by the additional costs of access to education to be competent in the workforce;
(c) there are significant additional costs for rural people in obtaining access to further education institutions only available in the capital cities or major urban centres; and
(d) the educational outcomes of regional Australians demonstrate a significantly lower proportion with University degrees and completed post-graduate studies when compared to the national outcomes; and

(3) calls on the Australian Government:
(a) to recognise that about 65% of Australia’s export income is derived from the regional areas of Australia;
(b) to recognise that the continual development of all skills will assist to maintain and expand this key economic sector;
(c) to recognise that the cost of achieving greater educational equity is minimal when compared to the results possible; and
(d) to further analyse equity in the education of regional Australians to achieve fairer outcomes for all Australians. (Notice given 10 October 2005.)

Time allotted—remaining private Members’ business time.

Speech time limits—Mover of motion—5 minutes.
First Opposition Member speaking—5 minutes.

Other Members—5 minutes each.

[Minimum number of proposed Members speaking = 6 x 5 mins]

The Committee determined that consideration of this matter should continue on a future day.

Public Works Committee
Report

Mrs MOYLAN (Pearce) (4.06 pm)—On behalf of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, I present the 17th report for 2005 of the committee relating to the proposed refurbishment of the Royal Australian Mint, Canberra.

Ordered that the report be made a parliamentary paper.

Mrs MOYLAN—by leave—The Royal Australian Mint was built in 1965 and is re-
sponsible, and purpose built, for meeting the coin circulation and numismatic needs of Australia. The Mint buildings have not had any major upgrade works undertaken since they were built, and reports have indicated that non-structural elements of the buildings have passed their useful economic life.

The proposed work is intended to refurbish the Royal Australian Mint, extending the life of the buildings by at least another 25 years. Major refurbishment also enables the Mint to consolidate operations to one building providing two tenancies: the Process Building leased to the Mint; and the Administration Building, which will be available for lease by other government agencies. The estimated cost of the proposed works is $41.2 million.

The major refurbishment of the Process and Administration buildings seeks to address occupational health and safety and Building Code of Australia non-compliance issues through:

- new building and mechanical, electrical and fire services;
- reconfiguration and re-carpeting of office areas;
- refurbishment of the existing stone flooring to the lobby;
- new public forecourt and entry courtyard;
- new basement tunnel link to vault;
- new goods delivery security gates;
- new public and staff amenities; and
- new public and staff parking arrangements.

The committee conducted a site inspection of the Royal Australian Mint on Friday, 19 August 2005 prior to the confidential briefing and public hearing. Whilst inspecting the site, the committee experienced the Mint under normal operating conditions and saw the shortcomings of the current facilities at first hand.

As could be expected with works to the Royal Australian Mint, the committee expressed concern at any heritage issues that may arise by major refurbishment of such buildings. The department assured the committee that the heritage value of the buildings was a major consideration in planning the refurbishment and would not be compromised as a result of the work. The National Capital Authority supported the statements made by the department and was happy with the proposed refurbishment.

The committee questioned the department on existing hazardous materials within the buildings and what would be done to address this issue, noting that there had been previous projects undertaken to remove hazardous materials. The department explained that hazardous materials in the buildings were mainly PCBs—polychlorinated biphenyls—and asbestos, which would be removed in accordance with national code requirements. The department added that any such materials not removed as part of this refurbishment were in a contained state and therefore present no hazard.

Subject to parliamentary approval, construction works are planned to commence in October 2006 with completion by June 2008 for the Mint occupation of the Process Building and April 2009 for tenant occupation of the Administration Building. However, the department was unable to specify the method of project delivery at the time of the hearing. Whilst the committee remains confident that the department could deliver the project in the stated time frame, it recommended that the department advise the committee of the project delivery strategy to be employed once it has been determined.

In project costings provided by the department, the committee noted a discrepancy
in the stated total project cost. At the public hearing the department explained that the initial project cost estimate, as included in their main submission, was calculated very early in the process, based on a concept design. By the time of the committee’s hearing, the department were able to present a more robust project cost estimate, accounting for the difference between the original predicted out-turn cost and the budget appropriation. The revised amount provides for a greater contingency allowance. The committee was pleased that savings had already been made on the project and commends the department in this regard.

Having given detailed consideration to the proposal, the committee recommends that proposed refurbishment of the Royal Australian Mint proceed at the estimated cost of $41.2 million.

I thank those who assisted with the public hearing, including yourself, Mr Deputy Speaker Jenkins, and my other committee colleagues. As always, I thank Hansard and the committee secretariat, who make our work much more manageable. I commend the report to the House.

Mr BRENDAN O’CONNOR (Gorton) (4.12 pm)—by leave—I concur with the comments made by the member for Pearce, the Chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Public Works, on the proposed refurbishment of the Royal Australian Mint. It is an important project. I was not able to attend the hearing but, as was indicated by the member for Pearce, the inquiry was undertaken by other committee members. In listening to the comments of the committee chair, I feel confident that this project will be properly undertaken. It is customary for me, as you know, Mr Deputy Speaker, as deputy chair of the committee to rise and comment upon these very important matters. An extraordinary amount of money is expended by the Commonwealth, and the Public Works Committee is vigorous in examining the way money is expended. I concur with the outline of the comments made by the member for Pearce.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Jenkins)—The chair can modestly assure the member for Gorton that his interests were well represented on the committee’s inquiry into the Royal Australian Mint.

Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee Document

Ms VAMVAKINOU (Calwell) (4.13 pm)—by leave—As a member of the Human Rights Subcommittee of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, I present a paper containing comments by former Senator Harradine, a former member of the committee, relating to the committee’s inquiry into Australia’s human rights dialogue process. Prior to his retirement and while on sick leave, these comments were sent to the subcommittee; however, the subcommittee thought they were for consideration rather than inclusion. In fairness, because of his absence due to illness just prior to his retirement, we accede to his wishes and table his comments.

DEFENCE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (No. 1) 2005 Assent

Message from the Governor-General reported informing the House of assent to the bill.
ASBESTOS-RELATED CLAIMS (MANAGEMENT OF COMMONWEALTH LIABILITIES) (CONSEQUENTIAL AND TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS) BILL 2005

ASBESTOS-RELATED CLAIMS (MANAGEMENT OF COMMONWEALTH LIABILITIES) BILL 2005

MEDICAL INDEMNITY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (COMPETITIVE NEUTRALITY) BILL 2005

MEDICAL INDEMNITY (COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE PAYMENT) BILL 2005

Returned from the Senate

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

ACTS INTERPRETATION AMENDMENT (LEGISLATIVE INSTRUMENTS) BILL 2005

First Reading

Bill received from the Senate, and read a first time.

Ordered that the second reading be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

COMMITTEES

Migration Committee

Membership

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Jenkins) (4.16 pm)—The Speaker has received advice from the Chief Opposition Whip that he has nominated Mrs Irwin to be a member of the Joint Standing Committee on Migration in place of Mr TS Burke.

Mr BILLSON (Dunkley—Parliamentary Secretary (Foreign Affairs) and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs) (4.16 pm)—by leave—I move:

That Mr T. S. Burke be discharged from the Joint Standing Committee on Migration and that, in his place, Mrs Irwin be appointed a member of the committee.

Question agreed to.

HIGHER EDUCATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (WORKPLACE RELATIONS REQUIREMENTS) BILL 2005

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 10 October, on motion by Dr Nelson:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr GAVAN O’CONNOR (Corio) (4.17 pm)—Let me turn to some of the language accompanying the legislation put forward by the Minister for Education, Science and Training and the implications of what is contained in the Higher Education Legislation Amendment (Workplace Relations Requirements) Bill 2005. The government’s legislation states that all enterprise agreements in the higher education sector should be simple and flexible and should avoid excessive detail. This is code for the removal of provisions in enterprise agreements that protect staff conditions. Combining this with an award with just a few allowable matters in itself will cause staff conditions to be reduced.

The legislation says that there should be no limit on management’s capacity to make decisions and implement change about courses and staffing. This again is code for the removal of the right of staff to be consulted or involved in any change process. The opposition is not saying that change should not continually occur but that it should occur in consultation with staff. The bill will mean forced redundancies, and terminations will occur with management running roughshod over their staff. The resulting poor morale will impact heavily on the ability of universities to keep Australia at the
forefront of research and tertiary teaching. The government is fast becoming known as a retrospective government. We know that it is a reactive government, but in this legislation it is becoming a retrospective government.

When I was a young bloke growing up, I was taught that in this democracy, with our great traditions, retrospective legislation was bad legislation and that it was to be used only in the most exceptional of circumstances—circumstances that everyone could agree with. But here we go again in this legislation. Legislation passed in 2003 has already allocated funds for 2005-07. The parliament is now going to change that—not for the period post 2007 but for the funds already committed. This legislation will backdate certain aspects of it to April 2005. If a university does not agree with the minister’s wishes, it will lose funds that the government has already committed to it—funds that it had clearly planned on receiving and funds that it had already included in its forward budgets.

Many of our universities are going to have to revisit the enterprise agreements that they have already signed with their employees and put in place within their universities. It makes you wonder whether this government has any principles at all. Agreements reached in good faith are simply not worth the paper they are written on. Here we have the Prime Minister trying to encourage Australians to trust him with his industrial relations changes. We all know that the Prime Minister has deceived the Australian people on Telstra, the Medicare safety net, the war on Iraq and the GST. There is a lexicon of deceit as far as the Prime Minister is concerned, and now he wants the Australian work force to believe him on industrial relations. I do not think they will.

Under this legislation, staff will be left wondering about the past processes and will be very cynical about their future. Why should they commit themselves to their organisations and work hard to assist this nation in becoming a knowledge nation and a competitive nation if they are treated in this way by the government?

Mr Billson—Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I ask you to invite the colleague to withdraw the direct assertion against the Prime Minister and his behaviour in relation to a number of policy issues.

Mr GAVAN O’CONNOR—Mr Deputy Speaker, I won’t withdraw the truth at all!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Jenkins)—The honourable member for Corio will resume his seat. He was not invited to take the call. I call the parliamentary secretary.

Mr Billson—Mr Deputy Speaker, thank you for allowing me to finish my sentence and to draw his attention to what is appropriate parliamentary behaviour in relation to that kind of allegation.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—The honourable member for Corio, by his intervention, considerably upped the ante and changed the environment in which we were debating this matter. I would now ask him to withdraw.

Mr GAVAN O’CONNOR—I am a bit puzzled, Mr Deputy Speaker, as to what I am to withdraw. Is it the fact that the Prime Minister deceived the Australian people on the GST, because he did say that he would never ever introduce it?

Mr Hunt—He went to an election on it!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—The member for Flinders—the parliamentary secretary—is not assisting the chair, either. The member for Corio will withdraw.

Mr GAVAN O’CONNOR—As it is the order of the House, I withdraw. (Time expired)
Mr WINDSOR (New England) (4.23 pm)—I would like to speak briefly to the legislation, but before doing so I wish to inform the House—and I am sure that the parliamentary secretary will not object—that there is a group in the parliament today that has been very involved with education for many years. In my view, it is one of the very credible lobby groups that attend the parliament from time to time to represent their constituent bodies. One of the issues that it is raising in the House will concern the Minister for Education, Science and Training as we consider the Higher Education Legislation Amendment (Workplace Relations Requirements) Bill 2005.

The group is the Isolated Children’s Parents Association. I do not want to take up too much time in the debate, but I would like to put on the record one of the issues that the group have raised in relation to the equity of services available to country people. I am pleased that the shadow minister for education is in the chamber, because I am sure the group will have been lobbying her as well. The issue relates to tertiary access. The Isolated Children’s Parents Association request that, as a matter of national urgency, the federal government of Australia introduce a tertiary access allowance, based on the living away from home allowance for apprentices. It would provide financial assistance to all rural and remote students who live away from home to access a tertiary education. There is a precedent for this—

Mr Billson—Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise on a point of order. We are trying to be accommodating. If the member could make his speech vaguely relevant to the bill before the House and maybe achieve his goals, that would be helpful.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Jenkins)—I am sure that the member for New England is quite aware of the requirement to be relevant to the bill before the chamber.

Ms Macklin—He’s talking about access to higher education, and they’re going to need highly qualified staff.

Mr WINDSOR—My comments are very pertinent, but I take on board the shadow minister’s comments. There is a precedent in relation to this issue. There has been an allowance extended to students undertaking further study, because of geographical isolation, but not in relation to tertiary education. I raise the matter today because the group is in the gallery. It is an important lobby group. It is a very credible group. I would urge the minister—and the parliamentary secretary, who is very interested in this matter—to look seriously at this issue.

The bill before the House relates to the funding of our universities and the workplace arrangements that are to be put in place. I have some concerns about this legislation—not necessarily about the concept of workplace arrangements being put in place but about the way this is being done under the legislation. There is no doubt, as previous speakers have said, that the universities are expecting this money and, in fact, they have budgeted for it. I think that to put a gun to their heads by asking them to jump hurdles and put in place various workplace arrangements and make other commitments before they receive federal funding creates a fairly nasty precedent. It is one that indicates that the government is being a little selective in the tactic that it is adopting with respect to funding and workplace relations in universities.

I remember the COAG arrangements in 1995 when the water arrangements were put in place. The government said at that time that it would withhold money if the states did not comply with the various arrangements that were to be put in place under competi-
tion policy. For 10 years the Commonwealth government allowed the states to virtually accept the money and then do nothing about the provisos. That is slightly different to what is happening under this piece of legislation. At that point, there was the initiation of a new competition policy and a gun was held at the states’ heads. Here we have a continuation of grant funding—and I am pleased to see the Minister for Education, Science and Training has entered the chamber—and a gun being held at the head of the universities. They are being told that they will not receive their grant funding unless they comply with certain industrial relations arrangements. As I said—and for the benefit of the minister—I am not opposed to workplace arrangements, but I think that the process that has been put in place needs to be reviewed. It is not a process that I agree with.

While I am on my feet, I also wish to mention briefly the ongoing voluntary student union debate that is currently before the parliament. I say to the minister that many universities—and I am sure that he is getting the same message—have plans that they wish to put in place for the ensuing year. They are wondering what the government is doing in relation to this matter. I would hope that the government would agree to an amendment that I have put before the parliament, and I know the opposition has an amendment as well. I think that the process that has been put in place needs to be reviewed. It is not a process that I agree with.

The other issue I raise briefly—and I can assure you, Minister, that I do not intend to take my full time—concerns the research component in regional universities. There is a very real concern that more commercial arrangements on research that are being talked about in various corridors will have, or could have, a very negative impact, particularly on the smaller universities and, almost by definition, that means the regional universities. To turn those universities—I am not suggesting the minister will do this; I would suggest that he does not do it, with all due respect—into teacher-only universities really takes them out of the gamut, in a sense, of being universities.

If I may be a little parochial, the University of New England prides itself on the research component it has styled for itself, particularly in agriculture, and on its relationship with the CSIRO and the various CRCs. I urge the government—and the minister, in particular—to bear in mind that the University of New England does not have the economies of size that some of the eight universities have. If you apply the one-size-fits-all market orientation in the commercialisation of research, the smaller universities and those who are less able to afford to pay commercial rates for research may well miss out. In the longer term, a whole range of research bodies—particularly in agriculture, in our case—could miss out and regrettably Australia could miss out as well. I will end my contribution there. I thank the parliamentary secretary for his forbearance.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—I indicate to the member for New England that a very generous interpretation of ‘related purposes’ has been used. He should not assume that that will always happen, but I allowed it on this occasion because the chamber seemed to be accommodating of that course of action. I call the Minister for Education, Science and Training.

Mr Billson—A great man and a great minister!

Dr Nelson (Bradfield—Minister for Education, Science and Training) (4.31 pm)—in reply—I appreciate the interjection from the parliamentary secretary.
Dr NELSON—Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I thank those who have spoken in this debate. Whilst I do not necessarily agree with all the comments that have been made, I appreciate the input of those who were committed enough to contribute. The Higher Education Legislation Amendment (Workplace Relations Requirements) Bill 2005 is necessary for Australia to remain internationally competitive in the provision of higher education. Increasingly, both Australian and overseas students will make their choices on the basis not only of cost but also the reputation for standards and the local and overseas career options. In order to compete with international universities, Australian universities need to be able to attract and keep the very best staff and reward them in accordance with their skills. The government has committed more than $11 billion in additional support for higher education through Our Universities: Backing Australia’s Future. However, this funding must be accompanied by changes in the way that universities are managed and administered.

The higher education workplace relations requirements will achieve meaningful, lasting and much-needed reform in the higher education sector by making fundamental changes to the workplace policies and practices of Australia’s universities. These requirements will assist universities to become more productive, efficient, flexible and internationally competitive. They will facilitate and support workplace arrangements in universities which support greater flexibility and individual choice. The research we have done confirms that whilst, by international standards, Australian academics are generally relatively highly paid—in fact, a recent Association of Commonwealth Universities study found them to be the second highest paid of six comparable countries—the spectrum of remuneration is relatively narrow. Professor Gerard Sutton, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Wollongong and the recently elected President of the Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee, recently said, ‘Every university vice-chancellor has a professor that is worth half what he is being paid and another that is worth twice what he is being paid.’

These changes will help universities to attract and retain talented academics to undertake great teaching and research. The requirements will enhance workplace flexibility, which will assist institutions to respond to changing requirements and challenges and to develop a diverse and adaptable workforce. The reforms will assist institutions to encourage individual and organisational performance, including rewarding high-performing individuals, efficiently managing underperformance and strengthening management and leadership capability. The workplace relations requirements will enable staff and higher education providers to negotiate mutually beneficial work arrangements by ensuring that Australian workplace agreements are offered to all university staff.

It is essential that members understand that the government’s intention is that every employee of a university—with the exemptions which are included in the act—should be offered the opportunity to have an individual workplace agreement, a common law agreement or some other form of individual working arrangement, if that is what they wish. Arguably, these are amongst the most intelligent and educated people in Australia, and one would think that they would be perfectly capable of negotiating their own working arrangements if they so choose. If not one single Australian university employee wants to take up that opportunity, that is fine as far as the government is concerned, but we want them to have the choice. Also, we do not think that any third party should be
involved in those negotiations unless at the invitation of the employee, or employees, involved.

Workplace agreements allow greater flexibility than certified agreements to provide bonuses and other rewards for high performance. They assist employers to offer incentives to attract and retain the best employees. Data collected by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations has found that people on Australian workplace agreements earn 13 per cent more than employees on collective agreements and 100 per cent more than employees on awards. The requirements will encourage universities to develop a culture of direct communication with their staff and will promote freedom of choice and representation. It is the right of all employees to choose to belong, or not to belong, to a union without discrimination for their choice. It is a very important principle of this government that every Australian should be free to join and be represented by a union if that is what they wish. Equally, they should be free not to join a union and to represent their own interests, or have someone else do it for them if that is their choice.

In response to issues raised with us by the sector, I have made two amendments to the requirements. Firstly, I have extended the time available for higher education providers to comply with the requirements this year from 30 September to 30 November. Secondly, I have agreed to relax the requirement of offering Australian workplace agreements to all casual staff but only for casuals who are engaged for a period of less than one month. This exemption will apply only until 30 June 2006. The reforms mean that universities will need to comply with the new arrangements in their work force agreements, policies and practices as well as in the national governance protocols in order to be eligible for the increase in assistance funding, which is five per cent in 2006 and 7½ per cent in later years, under section 33.15 of the Higher Education Support Act 2003 and under the Commonwealth Grant Scheme.

Activity is well under way. Those universities which are required to comply with the requirements by 30 November 2005 are in the process of negotiating enterprise bargaining agreements. I have recently written to universities regarding this task, reminding them that approaches which are focused on minimising, diluting or circumventing genuine reform are unlikely to result in higher education workplace reform compliant workplace arrangements. Contrary to the suggestions of the opposition and the National Tertiary Education Union, the workplace relations reforms will have no impact on academic freedom—in fact, if anything it could be argued that they will enhance it—and universities will still be able to make their own decisions about the appointment of staff and other academic activities, as they most certainly should. I urge members to support the bill.

Question put:
That this bill be now read a second time.

The House divided. [4.43 pm]

(The Deputy Speaker—Hon. DGH Adams)

Ayes………….. 79
Noes………….. 58
Majority…….. 21

AYES

Abbott, A.J. Bailey, F.E.
Andrews, K.J. Baker, M.
Baird, B.G. Barresi, P.A.
Baldwin, R.C. Billson, B.F.
Bartlett, K.J. Bishop, J.I.
Bishop, B.K. Brough, M.T.
Broadbent, R. Causley, I.R.
Cadman, A.G. Cobb, J.K.
Ciobo, S.M. Draper, P.
Costello, P.H. Dutton, P.C.

Anderson, J.D. Elson, K.S.
The House divided. [4.52 pm]

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Tuesday, 11 October 2005

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Laming, A.
Lindsay, P.J.
Macfarlane, I.E.
May, M.A.
McGauran, P.J.
Nairn, G.R.
Neville, P.C.
Pearce, C.J.
Pyne, C.
Richardson, K.
Ruddock, P.M.
Scott, B.C.
Slipper, P.N.
Somlyay, A.M.
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Tuckey, C.W.
Vale, D.S.
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Wood, J.

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Randall, M.
Robb, A.
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Smith, A.D.H.
Stone, S.N.
Ticehurst, K.V.
Truss, W.E.
Turnbull, M.
Vasta, R.
Washer, M.J.

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Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

INTELLIGENCE SERVICES
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT
BILL 2005

First Reading

Bill received from the Senate, and read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr HUNT (Flinders—Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage) (4.56 pm)—I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Intelligence Services Legislation Amendment Bill 2005 will assist in strengthening the contribution of sound intelligence to government decision making and operations.

Effective intelligence arrangements, underpinned by sound accountability mechanisms, are fundamental to a range of key national priorities including countering terrorism, reducing the threat of weapons of mass destruction and proliferation, supporting Defence Force operations, and protecting Australian sovereignty.

This bill will implement the legislative recommendations made by Mr Philip Flood AO in his report last year on the inquiry into Australian intelligence agencies.

It will also put in place a range of amendments to intelligence related legislation which were identified as a result of the government’s review of the operation of the Intelligence Services Act 2001 (ISA) since that legislation came into force in October 2001.

This review was recommended by the former Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security and was coordinated by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.
The ISA established legislative bases for the Australian Secret Intelligence Service (ASIS) and the activities of the Defence Signals Directorate (DSD).

The government announced in July last year that it had accepted all of the recommendations of the Flood inquiry, with the exception of the proposal to change the name of the Office of National Assessments (ONA). This bill will implement all of the legislative recommendations from that inquiry by:

1. extending the mandate of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on ASIO, ASIS and DSD (PJCAAD) to all of Australia’s intelligence agencies—that is, it will cover ONA, DIO and DIGO on the same basis as it presently covers ASIO, ASIS and DSD;

2. formalising the functions and ministerial accountabilities of DIGO and amending the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security Act 1986 to include scrutiny of DIGO on a basis comparable with that which applies to DSD and ASIS;

3. extending the mandate of the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security to allow the inspector-general to initiate inquiries at his or her own discretion into matters relating to ONA and DIO without ministerial referral, consistent with the inspector-general’s jurisdiction in respect of ASIO, ASIS and DSD. The inspector-general should also conduct a periodic review of ONA’s statutory independence;

4. amending the Office of National Assessments Act 1977 to remove the references to two assessment boards—the National Assessments Board and the Economic Assessments Board—to reflect the reality that there is only one National Assessments Board which covers strategic, political and economic issues, but with provision for different composition according to subject matter, and to strengthen ONA’s community coordination role in section 5(1)(d).

A major outcome of this bill will be the provision of a legislative basis for the activities of the Defence Imagery and Geospatial Organisation (DIGO). DIGO is a defence agency established in November 2000.

While it is a relatively new organisation, Australia’s involvement in imagery intelligence and topography is not new.

These activities have been an integral part of Australia’s defence for many years.

DIGO was created within Defence to better realise increasing synergies in the exploitation of imagery and other data to produce intelligence and geospatial information.

Like ASIS and DSD, DIGO has a foreign intelligence focus; however, its role is not limited to that.

The bill sets out the five functional categories of DIGO’s work, as follows. Under its first function, DIGO obtains imagery and geospatial data to produce intelligence relating to people or organisations outside Australia. Under its second function, DIGO obtains imagery and geospatial data to support ADF exercises, training and operations, wherever they may occur.

This function includes providing data and material in support of ADF decision making for targeting.

Under its third function, DIGO obtains imagery and geospatial data to support Commonwealth and state authorities in their national security role.

Under its fourth function, DIGO communicates the material produced as a result of the exercise of the functions described above, in accordance with the requirements of the government.

Under its fifth function, DIGO provides non-intelligence products and assistance to
Commonwealth and state government agencies, as well as to approved non-government bodies and foreign governments. Non-intelligence products include routine topographic data and products. Assistance in search and rescue and response to natural disasters is specifically included in this function to acknowledge the important non-intelligence work done by DIGO in this area.

The review of the ISA’s operation was prompted by advice from the former Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security that this act’s application had shown that some refinement was needed.

In addition, increased public interest in the activities of intelligence agencies and the ability of some agencies to impede the privacy of Australians warranted an examination and finetuning of accountability mechanisms at a level of detail that was not possible during the time available to the Flood inquiry.

Mr Flood was aware of plans for this subsequent review.

In August 2004, the honourable member for Fadden, Mr David Jull, on behalf of the PJCAAD, which he chairs, proposed to the government that it consider a number of changes to that committee.

These proposals included an increase in the size of the committee and other adjustments to help the PJCAAD respond to its increasing workload. The government agreed that these proposals would be considered in the context of the review of the ISA.

The government has agreed in response to the review that the committee’s membership will be increased from seven to nine.

A position of deputy chair will also be established and the committee empowered to establish subcommittees when required.

In keeping with current arrangements, the committee will not have a mandate to review the content or conclusions of assessments or reports made by DIO or ONA, or review the sources of information on which such assessments or reports are based.

The committee will not have a mandate to review the coordination and evaluation activities undertaken by ONA.

Following the review of the bill by the PJCAAD in September 2005, the government also agreed with the committee’s recommendation that the bill be amended so that it does not stipulate that the deputy chair must be a member of government.

The government is conscious that the committee has operated well under a spirit of bipartisanship and that the introduction of a deputy chair position should both recognise and endeavour to preserve this cooperative goodwill. However, the amendment proposed by the government will also ensure that, if the chair of the committee is not present at a meeting of the committee where a question is to be decided by voting or is absent for a period of more than one month, then the members present are to appoint a government member to preside at a meeting.

That member so appointed may exercise, in relation to the meeting, any powers of the chair as acting chair.

Other significant amendments incorporated in the bill include clarification of the roles and functions, and ministerial authorisation regimes for intelligence collection by ASIS and DSD.

One major effect of these changes is to extend the protections that the legislation currently affords to Australians overseas to Australians in Australia.

Since the act was passed, the extension of those protections has been done through ministerial direction. In the government’s view, it is important that those protections be specifically set out in the legislation itself.
The bill also repeals the current definition of ‘permanent resident’. The new definition maintains the link to the ASIO Act with regard to a natural person, but redefines the understanding of a body corporate.

For the purposes of the ISA, a ‘permanent resident’ would include a body corporate incorporated under a law in force in a state or territory, but would exclude a body corporate whose activities are controlled, or could be controlled, by a foreign power or natural person who is neither an Australian citizen nor a permanent resident.

Another significant change will be adjustments to the ministerial authorisation regime to allow a minister responsible for a different intelligence agency to authorise intelligence collection activities in instances where there is a need for emergency collection and the responsible minister for an agency is not readily contactable or available. These other ministers will be the Prime Minister, the Minister for Defence, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Attorney-General.

A further change will give new authority to ASIS, DIGO and DSD to communicate incidentally obtained intelligence in defined circumstances.

The bill also proposes a common definition of ‘staff member’ for the intelligence collection agencies that clarifies the status of consultants or contractors, or persons made available to work with an agency by another Commonwealth or state authority.

Other changes include a provision which expressly provides for the Inspector-General to consult with the Commonwealth Ombudsman to avoid a duplication of effort.

A similar provision currently exists in the IGIS Act in respect of the Auditor-General.

Another provision will establish a clear right for the inspector-general, as part of monitoring ASIO’s activities, to access any place being used to detain a person under a warrant issued for the purposes of questioning in accordance with division 3 of part III of the ASIO Act.

Other amendments concern an inspector-general inquiry which directly concerns the head of an agency. These changes will allow the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security the option of advising the secretary of the Department of Defence, in relation to the Defence intelligence agencies, or the relevant minister in the case of the other intelligence agencies, of an inquiry and to use these channels to consult on a draft inquiry report.

A further change will enhance accountability arrangements for any use by the Director-General of Security of his power, under the ASIO Act, to authorise intelligence collection for up to 48 hours in advance of ministerial authorisation.

This amendment will require the Inspector-General to be advised within three working days of each case where this authority is exercised.

A similar change will be made to the authorities of the Director-General of Security under the Telecommunications (Interception) Act 1979.

The bill also includes amendments intended to achieve consistent treatment of the intelligence agencies under the Freedom of Information Act. I commend the bill to the House and present the revised explanatory memorandum.

Leave granted for second reading debate to continue immediately

Mr McCLELLAND (Barton) (5.09 pm)—The opposition supports the second reading of the Intelligence Services Legislation Amendment Bill 2005, which will go some way towards enhancing accountability.
and oversight of Australia’s intelligence agencies. There can be no doubt that the gathering and analysis of intelligence is at the front line of the fight against terrorism. As we feel the shockwaves of yet another bombing in Bali it is appropriate to once again stress that Australia, along with our friends in the region and across the globe, is well and truly involved in that fight. It is appropriate that yesterday the parliament yet again confirmed our determination to win that fight.

As Mr Philip Flood, in the 2004 report following his inquiry into Australia’s intelligence agencies, stated:
Situated in a potentially volatile region and subject to an increasingly uncertain global environment, Australia’s need for good intelligence is arguably greater now than at any time since World War II.

Increasingly, that intelligence will be not only for military purposes but also for regional law enforcement purposes. Labor entirely supports the significant additional funding that has been provided to our intelligence agencies over the past four years, which is now in the order of $4 billion. The Leader of the Opposition in a speech to the Sydney Institute given on 4 August this year said:
To combat terrorism we must make Australia a safe haven. It’s in ‘prevention’ that the primary investment must be made—we must concentrate our efforts on intelligence gathering, surveillance, investigation and detection.

More recently, as a practical measure to encourage talented young Australians to enter a career in our intelligence agencies and in our defences forces, the opposition has proposed that scholarships should be offered to pay the HECS debts of young graduates who have joined our major security agencies. The opposition has proposed that scholarships would apply to ASIO, ASIS, the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs and the Department of Defence, including defence intelligence agencies. These are the agencies that form the heart of our preventive efforts of intelligence gathering, surveillance, investigation and detection. It is these agencies that need ready access to the best and brightest of our youth. Under Labor’s proposals, up to 200 Australian scholarships would be offered to eligible graduates entering participating agencies each year. These scholarships would pay any outstanding HECS debt for an eligible graduate at the time they are granted permanent employment. The scholarships would cost up to $8 million each year and, based on today’s graduate intakes, would cover all graduates entering the agencies.

A return-of-service type obligation would require that the graduates be employed within a participating agency for a suitable period of years—for instance, based on the period of study for which the HECS debt has been paid. A graduate in Asian studies and languages, for instance, beginning work with one of our security agencies or a science and technology graduate, such as a signals analyst recruited by the defence intelligence agencies, could receive in the order of $20,000 in satisfaction of their entire HECS debt. We believe this is a practical measure that can go some significant way to strengthening the human resources of our intelligence community at a time when these human resources need to be the strongest we can possibly make them. Government agencies which keep Australia safe should be able to attract the very best young graduates to assist in protecting Australia and our region from the threat of terrorism.

I note media reports from yesterday of an impending publication from the Kokoda Foundation prepared substantially by Professor Ross Babbage. The report refers to a recommendation not dissimilar to that which Labor has proposed. Apparently it will be
suggested in the publication that tertiary students who do 12 months full-time military training and commit to six years follow-up annual training would have their tertiary study entirely paid by Defence. The author believes these young graduates would provide a highly trained, ready reinforcement for the permanent Defence Force. Clearly, that is an idea that is worth exploring, but Labor believes these sorts of innovative measures should extend across not only our Defence Force but also our crucial intelligence agencies.

I also commend to members an excellent contribution to this debate made by newly elected Senator Trood. Senator Trood noted the numerous references in the Flood report to potential value adding to intelligence and national security assessments through greater agency contact with the public and experts outside those agencies. As Senator Trood noted:

Most of these agencies have a very poor record of outside contact. They are loath to engage the public and particularly academe, where experts may reside.

Senator Trood argued that greater interaction between the agencies and academia is essential for a number of reasons including, to use his words, ‘the intelligence shortcomings over Iraq’.

I recently received a submission from an academic arguing for the formalisation of an exchange program between universities and our intelligence agencies. It goes without saying that national security considerations would have to be recognised in such a formalised exchange program. Nevertheless, refreshing the ranks of agencies on the one hand and providing practical interchange with students on the other would, to use the words of the Flood inquiry, significantly value add to our intelligence-gathering capacity.

I note that Senator Trood also criticised the fact that there is currently no one agency that provides an effective strategic view of longer term global trends that may impact on Australia’s security and foreign policy interests. That, we believe, is a valid criticism and one that needs to be addressed.

I note in that context that in the House yesterday the Leader of the Opposition noted the interchange between the Australian Federal Police and policing agencies in South-East Asia which were particularly successful in, for instance, apprehending a number of those responsible for the Bali bombings of October 2002. The Leader of the Opposition noted, however, that there has not been a similar level of interchange between our intelligence agencies. Obviously, there will be particular strategic interests between our countries that may limit the extent of communication in respect of a limited number of issues. However, the opposition believe that when it comes to the war on terror those limitations can be overcome. We believe that more work needs to be done to build up those crucial inter intelligence agency links.

In particular, the Leader of the Opposition referred to the ease of movement throughout the South-East Asian archipelagos and the fact that the waterways are essentially a highway for travel between those islands and indeed between nation-states. When I visited the United States Coast Guard last year, they recognised the waterways as a highway not only for criminals, including drug use and illegal smuggling of all kinds, but also for potential terrorist activity.

I note that the American agencies, through the Joint Interagency Task Force West— which involves not only the United States Coast Guard but also the United States military and the FBI—are providing valuable resources to South-East Asian countries, including resources and training to improve
their maritime intelligence links. We believe that is a project that Australia could be much more closely involved in. As was put to us when we visited the Joint Interagency Task Force West, Australia would have perhaps an even greater capacity to open doors in South-East Asia. The Joint Interagency Task Force West indicated that they would welcome Australia’s involvement in some of the projects that they are involved in. The point I am making is that I am far from convinced, and the opposition is far from convinced, that we are doing all that we can to establish appropriate intelligence links, which are essential if we are to defeat terrorism in South-East Asia.

I note that after the Bali bombings in 2002 the then head of ASIO, Mr Dennis Richardson, described the bombings as an ‘intelligence failure’. Similarly, to use that expression—not, I stress, in a judgmental sense but in a descriptive sense—last week’s bombings in Bali must also be regarded as an intelligence failure. Again, I want to stress that we are advancing that statement not to be judgmental or as a criticism of anyone’s neglect or culpability but rather as an indication that things could be improved.

These measures are some of the things that could be done, we believe, to strengthen intelligence gathering not only as it affects our nation but as it affects our region—a region which is our backyard, from the point of view of potential threats. These threats are coming from our backyard well and truly into our front yard.

After that quite wide-ranging analysis, it is appropriate to refer to the detailed provisions of the bill, not in the same extent of detail that the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage employed in his contribution but by way of outline. As previously indicated, the bill arises, firstly, from recommendations of the Flood inquiry of 2004 into Australia’s intelligence agencies and, secondly, from a review conducted by the government of the operation of the original 2001 legislation.

The government has also acknowledged the contribution of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on ASIO, ASIS and DSD, which the opposition would also like to formally acknowledge in recognising the parliament’s respect for that committee. That committee has made an outstanding contribution to the national security debate in Australia. As the parliamentary secretary pointed out, it is significant that each of its reports has been unanimous.

In terms of picking up some of the recommendations of the Flood report, it cannot go without mention that a significant cause of the problem that we and our allies are facing in Iraq was the intelligence failures that preceded the invasion of Iraq, intelligence failures that resulted in poor planning. In one section of the Flood report, Mr Flood said:

One or both of these documents—that is, the briefings on the existence of weapons of mass destruction—might also have covered areas relevant to Australia’s interests on which there was little intelligence assessment: the strategic cost implications for Australia of contributing to military action against Iraq, the likely strategic costs and issues involved in post-Saddam Iraq, and the impact of military action on the safety of Australia and Australians.

Again, I stress that I sincerely believe that a lot of the problems facing those countries participating in Iraq are a result of the poor planning resulting from the poor intelligence assessments as to what was going to be required in the vacuum created by the removal of Saddam Hussein from the leadership of that country. Irrespective of which side of the debate you are on as to whether the invasion was or was not appropriate, those who are
thoughtful in this area will recognise those intelligence failures and will recognise that inadequate and insufficient planning was undertaken as to how to deal with the vacuum created once Saddam Hussein was removed from office. Quite frankly, I think the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia are still trying to fathom what to do to fill that vacuum. Again, that goes back to the intelligence failures, not simply those about the existence or non-existence of the weapons of mass destruction but the inadequate intelligence assessment and advice about that crucial issue—that is, what would happen in the post Saddam Hussein vacuum.

In terms of the specific details of the bill, suffice it to say that the bill is intended to improve the effectiveness of oversight and accountability mechanisms of our overseas intelligence agencies, as well as to more effectively address the current division of responsibilities between those agencies. Importantly, the measures also provide a legislative basis for the activities of the Defence Imagery and Geospatial Organisation, a relatively new organisation but one that is vitally important to our national security interests, given the extent of the coastline that we are responsible for protecting. While the DIGO, like ASIS and the DSD, has a foreign intelligence focus, its ability to obtain imagery and geospatial data will assist Australian defence forces in their exercises and training wherever they occur. It should be noted that the technology can also be a valuable tool to assist in search and rescue operations.

The opposition support—also with appropriate safeguards—the provisions in this bill for these technologies to be used to produce intelligence to support Commonwealth and state authorities in their national security role. The opposition also support measures in the bill to expand the Parliamentary Joint Committee on ASIO, ASIS and DSD, which will now be appropriately renamed to include the additional agencies and will have its numbers increased from seven to nine. We note that the government has moved amendments in the Senate to adopt recommendations of the parliamentary joint committee that the deputy chair’s position should be occupied by an opposition member except in the circumstances outlined by the parliamentary secretary. Again, we believe that that amendment is appropriate.

We are disappointed, however, that the government has not accepted opposition amendments which are based on the unanimous recommendations of the joint standing committee. In particular, our amendments which were moved in the Senate were proposed in order to address concerns expressed by that committee about item 22 of the bill. That item proposes the removal of the qualifying words currently contained in section 8(1)(a)(i) of the primary act, in respect of ministerial directions: specifically, removing from those provisions the requirement for such authorisations to be obtained for the purpose of obtaining intelligence on an Australian person ‘who is overseas’. It is those words ‘who is overseas’ that will be removed.

Despite some ambiguity, the joint standing committee noted that, arguably, removal of those words could be interpreted as expanding the powers of the agencies to collect intelligence on Australians who are in Australia. While acknowledging that there may be circumstances in which it may be necessary for our overseas intelligence agencies to collect intelligence on Australians in Australia—for instance, if an Australian is communicating with an overseas organisation or person that presents a security concern—the opposition shares the committee’s concerns that the same approval regime that currently applies to ASIO in respect of its obtaining of intelligence on Australians within Australia should also apply to overseas intelligence...
agencies undertaking that function. In particular, the committee recommended that the ministerial authorisation regime should ‘generally replicate the provisions of and have identical authorisation provisions to those that apply to ASIO’.

In the opposition’s view, the ASIO warrant procedures that apply to its telecommunication interception powers are comparable to the powers that will be given to our overseas intelligence agencies under this legislation. On that basis, we have again proposed similar amendments in the House. We will also be moving an amendment which we believe will assist in the proper management of incidentally obtained intelligence. We will speak to those two arms of our amendments during the committee stage of the bill.

Mrs VALE (Hughes) (5.28 pm)—I welcome this opportunity to speak on the Intelligence Services Legislation Amendment Bill 2005. This bill demonstrates the Howard government’s continued commitment to Australian security and the government’s priority regarding the continued improvement to Australia’s intelligence services. The purpose of this bill is to amend the Intelligence Services Act 2001, the Office of National Assessments Act 1977, the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security Act 1986 and related legislation to implement proposals recommended by the Flood inquiry and the government’s review of the intelligence services coordinated by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet in 2004.

Australia’s strategic circumstances and the challenges Australia faces today make intelligence a vital part of this government’s efforts to protect our national interest. As Australia is subject to an increasingly uncertain global environment, its need for good intelligence is arguably greater now than at any time since World War II. The government needs to fully exploit every asset at its disposal to help protect Australia and Australians from the threat of terrorism. High-quality, independent intelligence is a critical element of the government’s armoury to meet these challenges. Despite the limitations on intelligence, there are nonetheless qualities which define good intelligence and which the government should expect to have access to. Australia’s intelligence collection assets must be focused on the government’s highest priorities, coverage of those priorities must be as comprehensive as possible and reporting must be accurate and timely.

Australia has built on the foundation of a strong intelligence history to help it meet today’s challenges. Our intelligence culture draws on liberal political traditions as well as the legacy of Western intelligence in World War II. Consistent with these traditions, intelligence in Australia has been focused outward and on threats to genuinely national interests. Unlike those of other cultures, Australia’s intelligence agencies do not focus on internal political dissent, nor do they engage in operations to support the government of the day. Australia’s intelligence needs are dynamic, reflecting rapid global transformation. Just as economic globalisation was a feature of the last decade, this decade has seen the globalisation of security threats—particularly from non-state actors. Fast-paced technological change has been diffusing power and empowering individuals and groups to play a role in world politics. Political and military threats to Australia’s security and prosperity have been supplanted by the new threats of global terrorism by radical activists.

The numerous recent attacks on Western targets underline the emergence of the use of terror by radical Islamic extremists as the major threat to Australia’s security. This threat is serious and enduring. This terrorist phenomenon is new in scale, method and
ambition. Al-Qaeda and similar networks have demonstrated both the willingness and the capability to inflict massive casualties on civilian targets, and they display no concern for the loss of innocent life. They have an active interest in obtaining chemical, biological or radiological weapons. Unlike the terrorist groups of the last century, the al-Qaeda fundamentalists embody an extremist terrorism that is uncompromising. Australia is a Western democratic nation. Where previous forms of terrorism barely touched Australia, this new form of extremist terrorism has declared its aim to inflict damage on Western liberal democracies. It is global in scale. No nation can afford to ignore such threats.

In our own region Jemaah Islamiah has emerged as a serious threat. Intelligence is the front line of the government’s campaign against terrorism and is vital in seeking warning of terrorist plans. It can help us understand terrorist groups as well as the context that sustains them. Changing global dynamics have resulted in a number of other less dynamic but nonetheless important demands on intelligence. With a strong government focus on border security, intelligence plays an important part in countering illegal immigration networks. It is a substantial task, not least because of the phenomenal increase in people movements between nations over recent decades. There are on average some 8.4 million passenger arrivals in Australian international airports each year, of which some five million do not involve Australian citizens.

Non-traditional threats are more difficult to detect. Often well-defined, slow-changing and predictable targets have been replaced with networks that are complex, adaptive and elusive. Australian intelligence agencies are responding and are increasingly engaged in whole-of-government and international teams. Another dynamic affecting the intelligence community has been technology, which has proved a double-edged sword for intelligence agencies. Technology is enabling, for the first time, individual access to communications that are instantaneous, diverse and robustly encrypted. New technology can impose great difficulties and costs on intelligence collection. On the other hand, access to our own and allied technological innovations gives our agencies new levels of reach. But keeping up with technology is a costly business.

This government has recognised this increasing need with a doubling of the Australian intelligence community budget over the past four years. In 2000-01, a total of $332 million was spent on both foreign and security intelligence, rising to $659 million in 2004-05. In addition, a small part of the budget of the Defence Science and Technology Organisation assists the intelligence community. The figures mentioned omit expenditure on intelligence by the Australian Defence Force other than the costs of Australian Defence Force personnel working within the defence intelligence agencies. Staff resources have also increased substantially in the past five years. Numbers of personnel in the intelligence community have increased by 44 per cent, from 2,301 in June 2000 to 3,324 in June 2004.

Looking at the legislation, the purpose of schedule 1 is to amend the Intelligence Services Act 2001, primarily to implement two of the proposals recommended in the Flood inquiry. The first is to amend the legislation to include the functions and ministerial accountabilities of the Defence Imagery and Geospatial Organisation in order to put the newest of Australia’s intelligence agencies on a legislative footing. The second is to extend the mandate of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on ASIO, ASIS and DSD to include the Defence Imagery and Geospatial Organisation, the Defence Intelligence Or-
ganisation and the Office of National Assessments on the same basis as that committee’s current mandate. With this change is the proposal to rename the committee the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security.

Schedule 1 also includes amendments that have resulted from a review of the Intelligence Services Act coordinated by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. These include: clarification of the existing roles and functions of the Australian Secret Intelligence Service and the Defence Signals Directorate; authority for the Australian Secret Intelligence Service, the Defence Imagery and Geospatial Organisation and the Defence Signals Directorate to communicate incidentally obtained intelligence in defined circumstances; and changes to the ministerial authorisation regimes for intelligence collection by agencies covered by the Intelligence Services Act. The changes to the functions of the Australian Secret Intelligence Service and the Defence Signals Directorate are not intended to change the scope of the intelligence functions of those agencies. The inclusion of a provision concerning the communication of incidentally obtained information is to clarify the circumstances when such intelligence, which has been collected unintentionally in the proper conduct of the functions of the agencies, can be communicated.

The amendments to the administration of the ministerial authorisation regime strengthen the strict procedures contained in the original act. These procedures apply when the activities of an agency are specifically directed at collecting intelligence on an Australian person. The amendments remove the legislative limitation on those procedures which currently applies to Australians who are outside Australia. Accountability for the activities of the agencies is also increased with the introduction of regular reporting obligations for agency heads on activities that have been authorised by the minister and with a specific requirement that agency heads must seek a reconsideration of a ministerial authorisation when the circumstances that justified the authorised activities cease to exist.

Further, these amendments provide that the ministerial authorisation regime will be changed to allow certain other ministers to authorise intelligence collection activities in circumstances where there is a need for emergency collection and the responsible minister is not readily contactable or available. The group of ministers involved will be the Prime Minister, the Minister for Defence, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Attorney-General. This amendment is intended to provide some flexibility to the agencies while maintaining the controls on their activities contained within the act.

The purpose of schedule 2 is to amend the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security Act to implement three proposals recommended in 2004 by the inquiry into the Australian intelligence agencies. The first is an amendment of the legislation to provide a legislative basis for the inspector-general to monitor the Defence Imagery and Geospatial Organisation on a similar basis to the current scrutiny of the Australian Secret Intelligence Service and the Defence Signals Directorate. The second amendment is to give the inspector-general authority to initiate inquiries at their own discretion into matters relating to the Defence Intelligence Organisation and the Office of National Assessments. These also include changes to give the inspector-general authority to conduct periodic reviews of the statutory independence of the Office of National Assessments.

The schedule also includes a number of amendments that have resulted from the review of the Intelligence Services Act. These include a provision to allow the inspector-
general to consult with the Commonwealth Ombudsman to avoid a duplication of effort, as can currently occur with the Auditor-General. Another provision establishes a clear right for the inspector-general to access any place being used for detention, as a component of the inspector-general’s role to monitor questioning by the Australian Secret Intelligence Service under the special powers conferred by the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Act 1979.

The purpose of schedule 3 is to amend the Office of National Assessments Act, primarily to implement two of the proposals recommended in 2004 by the inquiry into the Australian intelligence agencies. The first amendment to the legislation is to remove the references to the National Assessments Board and the Economic Assessments Board to reflect the reality that there is only one assessments board, which covers all strategic, political and economic issues but with provision for different composition according to the subject matter under consideration at each board meeting. Also included in this schedule is an amendment of the legislation to strengthen the intelligence community coordination role of the Office of National Assessments.

The purpose of schedule 4 is to amend the ASIO Act and schedule 5 amends the Telecommunications (Interception) Act to implement a measure agreed in response to the Intelligence Services Act review. This change will enhance accountability arrangements for any use by the Director-General of Security of their power under section 29 of the ASIO Act and section 9 of the Telecommunications (Interception) Act to authorise intelligence collection under an emergency warrant for up to 48 hours in advance of ministerial authorisation. It will require the inspector-general to be advised, by being provided with a copy of the warrant, within three working days of each case where this authority is exercised.

The main purpose of schedules 6 to 8 is to provide the Defence Imagery and Geospatial Organisation with a similar standing, under various legislation, to the other intelligence collection agencies. This is consistent with the recommendation by the inquiry into the Australian intelligence agencies in 2004 that the Defence Imagery and Geospatial Organisation be put on a proper legislative footing.

Schedule 6 also amends the Privacy Act 1988 to extend the exemption currently provided to ASIO and the Australian Secret Intelligence Service, under section 7(1A) of the Privacy Act, to the Defence Signals Directorate. Likewise, schedule 7 also amends the Freedom of Information Act. The various intelligence agencies are currently treated differently under the Freedom of Information Act. The Australian Secret Intelligence Service and the Office of National Assessments are exempt agencies under the Freedom of Information Act by virtue of being listed in part I of schedule 2 to the act.

Subsection 7(1) of the Freedom of Information Act provides that these agencies are exempt from the operation of the act as they do not have to comply with the procedural requirements of the act. The Defence Signals Directorate and the Defence Intelligence Organisation, on the other hand, are treated as an integral part of the Department of Defence. The department is the agency for Freedom of Information Act purposes. By virtue of subsection 7(2) and being listed in part II of schedule 2 to the act, documents relating to the activities of the Defence Signals Directorate and the Defence Intelligence Organisation are exempt.

However, the Department of Defence must still comply with the procedural requirements of the Freedom of Information Act—that is, it must respond to a freedom of
information request on behalf of the Defence Signals Directorate and the Defence Intelligence Organisation in accordance with the act’s time frames and give written reasons for refusing access to any documents sought in the application. These access decisions are subject to internal review and Administrative Appeals Tribunal merits review.

These amendments to the Freedom of Information Act will result in all intelligence agencies being treated alike. The Defence Imagery and Geospatial Organisation are included in part I of schedule 2 and the Defence Signals Directorate and the Defence Intelligence Organisation are moved from part II to part I of schedule 2. All intelligence agencies are then fully exempt from the operation of the act.

Australia’s intelligence needs are many and enormously varied. The agencies of the Australian intelligence community must be able to respond to the detailed operational intelligence requirements of the Australian Defence Force, the Australian Federal Police or ASIO while also informing government policy on regional, political, economic and strategic issues. More than ever in this uncertain and dangerous world environment, Australia’s intelligence needs and the resources and capabilities of Australia’s intelligence agencies must coincide.

This bill is a mix of provisions that will streamline the processes and operations of our intelligence agencies, and it will increase their accountability and transparency. We live in interesting times, but we also live in uncertain and potentially dangerous times. I support the government in its vital role of protecting Australia’s security and national interests. I commend this important bill to the House.

Mr Rudd (Griffith) (5.45 pm)—I rise to speak on the proposed amendment to the Intelligence Services Act 2001. The purpose of the Intelligence Services Legislation Amendment Bill 2005 is to amend the Intelligence Services Act 2001, the ISA; the Office of National Assessments Act 1977, the ONA Act; the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security Act 1986, the IGIS Act; and related legislation. This is to implement proposals recommended by the Flood inquiry and the government’s review of the intelligence agencies.

The opposition has raised concerns about aspects of the amendment, and these will be detailed soon by my colleague the member for Barton, the shadow minister for defence. The question arises when we debate this legislation as to why we had the Flood inquiry in the first place, given that it is the recommendations of that inquiry that have given rise to the amendments currently before the House. The Flood inquiry, for those who have lost track of this in the sands of time, arose because there was a parliamentary joint intelligence committee inquiry prior to it on the major deficiencies that had become apparent in the Australian intelligence community. These deficiencies had in turn become crystal clear over a word that these days almost dare not speak its name in this parliament, and that word is ‘Iraq’.

Iraq has been described in various reports as an intelligence failure on the part of the Howard government, and depending on how events proceed in Iraq it may prospectively be described as a foreign policy failure and prospectively also as a national security failure. We will wait and see. Because Iraq has been so central to the reason for the reports which have been constructed so far, in the first instance by the parliamentary joint intelligence committee and then, building on that report, by the Flood inquiry, it is worth reflecting for a moment in the parliament on the reasons we engaged in the Iraq war in the first place. The reasons we were given by the government—and I recall the debate well at
this dispatch box—included, firstly, the elimination of Iraq’s stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction and, secondly, to prevent said stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction finding their way into the hands of terrorists. Thirdly, when those arguments began to take on water, the government moved to the argument that the Iraq war all along was about the liberation of an oppressed people. Beyond that again, we were to believe that the reason for the Iraq war was to build an Iraqi democracy. More recently the government has moved post facto to a further reason for the Iraq war, which is to bring about the democratisation of the broader Middle East through some democratic domino theory approach.

Two and a half years later it is worth reflecting on where we have got to against the objectives of the benchmarks that the government has set for itself progressively in justifying the extraordinary decision to commit this country to war in Iraq as one of only three combatant states. On the first ground for going to war, the elimination of Iraqi stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction, we can collectively conclude that that criterion has failed in being met because there were no stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction at the time the government went to war. If we go to the second criterion, which is that we were to prevent stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of terrorists, that argument gets knocked over by the failure of the first argument that there were no stockpiles in Iraq to fall into the hands of terrorists.

On the question of the liberation of an oppressed people, yes, Saddam Hussein has been removed—that is true. But this is an interesting new addition to Australian foreign policy doctrine—that the removal of dictators now becomes an element of our foreign policy. The governments in Pyongyang and in Zimbabwe will be interested to hear how this doctrine will be applied in the future. Also relevant to this particular argument advanced by the government is the extent to which the government has been less than candid with the Australian people about the number of civilian deaths and casualties in Iraq which have occurred since the Iraq war began. When we have questioned the government on these matters in the past, the government has refused to provide details. As for the latter two justifications provided most recently by the government for the war in Iraq—that is, building an Iraqi democracy and using an Iraqi democracy to bring about a democratic revolution across the wider Middle East—the jury is still out.

In early June 2003, the opposition first called for an Australian parliamentary inquiry into intelligence on Iraqi weapons of mass destruction. The government did not respond to this request, instead resorting to the argument that Australians had at that stage ‘moved on’ from the Iraq war and that no such inquiry was needed. However, on 23 June 2003, the Australian parliament announced the establishment of an inquiry into Australia’s intelligence on Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction. This inquiry was to be conducted through the Parliamentary Joint Committee on ASIO, ASIS and DSD. The committee was chaired by the Liberal Party and had a majority of government members.

On 1 March 2004, the parliamentary joint committee released its report, which devoted much attention to the accuracy and honesty of the government’s intelligence related claims. In fact an entire chapter was dedicated to this. Significantly, the report also identified at least 12 examples where the government had exaggerated prewar intelligence on Iraq’s WMD threat. Example No. 1: at paragraph 2.5 of the report, reference is made to an Office of National Assessments admission that intelligence was ‘slight on the scope and location of Iraq’s WMD activi-
ties’. This was in stark contrast, however, to statements made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, among others, who said on 18 July 2002, in the lead-up to the Iraq war:

... I don’t think there’s any doubt about Saddam Hussein having stockpiles of biological and chemical weapons.

Example No. 2: paragraph 2.40 of the parliamentary joint intelligence committee report stated:

The agencies provided hardly any explicit assessment on the question of the immediacy of threat posed by Saddam Hussein.

Once again this contrasted with comments of the Minister for Foreign Affairs when, in reference to the United Nations Security Council veto, he said:

This denied the Security Council any further role in the disarming of Iraq—but it did not deny ... the clear and immediate threat posed by Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction to global security.

Example No. 3: paragraph 4.40 of the parliamentary joint intelligence committee report said that both United States and UK government documents—that is, from my recollection, the government documents used to publicly justify the actions of those governments in going to war—as published in September-October 2002:

... did not recognise the gaps in the intelligence, the problematic nature of much of the new intelligence or the uncertainties and disputes within the agencies about what the intelligence meant. Taken together, the omissions and changes constituted an exaggeration of the available intelligence, since established as an exaggeration of the facts.

In paragraph 5.520 of the parliamentary joint intelligence committee report, it notes:

The statements by the Prime Minister and Ministers are more strongly worded than most of the AIC judgements. This is in part because they quote directly from the findings of the British and American intelligence agencies.

The Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs were simply cherry picking the intelligence reports to legitimise the desire to go to war in Iraq. The report damningly said of the Howard government—and I quote again from a committee which is chaired by the Liberal Party and dominated by the Liberal Party:

... the case made by the government was that Iraq possessed WMD in large quantities and posed a grave and unacceptable threat to the region and the world, particularly as there was a danger that Iraq’s WMD might be passed to terrorist organisations.

The joint intelligence committee report, in paragraph 5.17, goes on to say:

This is not the picture that emerges from an examination of all the assessments provided to the Committee by Australia’s two analytical agencies.

It is also important to note the committee’s repudiation of the Prime Minister’s statement to the parliament when the Prime Minister explicitly referred to Iraq’s WMD threat as real and unacceptable. Again, the joint intelligence committee report states at paragraph 5.22:

Government presentations were in some areas incomplete, notably in respect of some of the available United Nations information on Iraq.

Furthermore, the report made the point in paragraph 5.32:

... the Australian agencies did not think the amounts of WMD to be large—they were described as ‘small stocks’—and the Defence Intelligence Organisation always expressed doubts about any production of biological or chemical weapons beyond 1991.

Yet at the same time the presentations by the Howard government in the lead-up to the Iraq war, to justify the action of going to war, appeared to suggest large arsenals and stockpiles.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Baldwin)—I hate to interrupt the member, but having a look at the bill, the context of the bill and the report referred to in the bill—the
Flood report, not a Senate report—this is about intelligence, not the Iraq war.

Mr Rudd—With respect, Mr Deputy Speaker, the Flood inquiry arises precisely because of the failure of intelligence on the Iraq war. That is why these earlier observations by the parliamentary joint intelligence committee relating to these matters gave rise to Flood which, in turn, give rise to the matters which are before the House.

Finally, on the terrorist threat arising from a war in Iraq, the story has been just as bad if not worse. The government’s selective use of information at its disposal amounted to a fundamental misleading of the Australian people. The government explained that the war was necessary to reduce the overall terrorist threat, but the parliamentary inquiry found in paragraph 5.29:

... the view of the Joint Intelligence Committee of the UK, available at the beginning of February 2003—

that is before Australia went to war—

that war would increase the risk of terrorism and the passing of Iraq’s WMD to terrorists.

The parliamentary inquiry, therefore, which has given rise to the process which is before the parliament now, examined some but not all of the intelligence information available to government in the lead-up to the Iraq war. But from what it did examine it concluded that the government exaggerated the intelligence information it had at its disposal. While it may be of discomfort to some in this parliament, I have to point out that this was a committee which was chaired by the Liberal Party, dominated by the Liberal Party, but which could reach no other conclusions than those that I have just referred to.

So, when we talk about Iraq and the intelligence failure which it represents, let us be absolutely clear-cut that whatever failures existed in intelligence did not of themselves explain the government’s failure to tell the truth about the intelligence information it did have in its possession. In example after example, which I have referred to from the parliamentary joint intelligence committee report, we have the intelligence committee providing information full of reservations, concerns, doubts and uncertainties about Iraq’s WMD status, and, on the other hand, the government in parliament and outside parliament telling the Australian people that no such doubts and uncertainties existed. This I think needs to be a matter of parliamentary record.

These matters led the government to establish an administrative inquiry into the structural changes which would be necessary within the Australian intelligence community itself. We in the opposition at the time called for a royal commission to consider these matters, given that they related to not just the operations of the intelligence community itself but also the relationship between the intelligence community and the executive arm of government. We therefore criticised the nature of the inquiry which had been established, the Flood inquiry, and we criticised in particular its limited terms of reference. As I said before, the terms of reference did not focus on the extent of the political relationship between the agencies on the one hand and the political arm of government on the other in the use publicly of information provided to the executive arm of government by the intelligence community. That is the core point emerging from the analysis of these matters by the joint intelligence committee chaired by the Liberal Party and dominated by the Liberal Party.

Furthermore, as I said before, the inquiry lacked royal commission powers—no power to compel ministers’ attendance at public forums and no power to extract information from ministers or agencies. Furthermore, the inquiry was led by a former recent head of an intelligence agency, Mr Flood, who had been
Director-General of the ONA within the last eight years, and the ONA itself was a central focus of the criticism of the parliamentary inquiry. The Flood inquiry was established in March last year. A year later, we come to the third definitive report in terms of the conclusions which the government had put forward concerning Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction capability at the time of the Iraq war.

The first inquiry, to recap, was the joint intelligence committee produced by this parliament. The second was the Flood inquiry, which concluded that there had been an abject intelligence failure on the part of Australia concerning Iraq’s WMD status. The third, and most significant because it was an international report, was the report delivered by the Iraq Survey Group. The Iraq Survey Group was established by the United States following the invasion of Iraq. It was staffed by a number of US agencies with the explicit objective of locating said stockpiles of missing weapons of mass destruction, chemical and biological weapons in particular, and to establish the truth concerning the claims, again prior to the war, about the reconstitution of Iraq’s nuclear weapons program. The Iraq Survey Group, in which Australians also participated, reported on Anzac Day this year, 25 April. Its conclusions also need to be recorded formally in the parliament. Its conclusion was:

The ISG has not found evidence that Saddam Husayn possessed WMD stocks in 2003 ...

And the report concluded in its key findings:

The former Regime had no formal written strategy or plan for the revival of WMD after sanctions.

Thanks to the Senate inquiry into the duties of Australian personnel in Iraq, also known as the Barton inquiry, we also know that Foreign Minister Downer met with Dr John Gee, an Australian government official seconded to the Iraq Survey Group, and that meeting occurred on 10 March 2004. Dr Gee had just resigned from the Iraq Survey Group reportedly in disgust at its operations.

I think the Australian people today are still entitled to know precisely what advice Dr Gee provided to Mr Downer back in March 2004 concerning the work of the Iraq Survey Group at that time and the progress it had achieved in its hunt for Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction in the post Iraq war period. The foreign minister has declined to reveal any context of his discussions with Dr Gee on that day, describing them as personal. I would suggest, given that this country sent its armed forces to war, that such discussions are not in fact personal but in the public interest and should be placed in the public domain for proper scrutiny.

Given the findings of the Iraq Survey Group report and the concerns voiced by Australian government officials working for the Iraq Survey Group, it is interesting to note what Foreign Minister Downer had to say yesterday at the launch of a report dealing with WMD in general. Buried on page 106 of the report lay the understated acknowledgement that the Iraq Survey Group had found no evidence of WMD or post-1991 WMD production. Does that report and its contents constitute any formal apology on the part of the foreign minister to either the public or the parliament of Australia for the fact that Australia went to war on the basis of a lie? It does not. We still await such an apology from the foreign minister.

That brings us to the present. It brings us to the matters which are currently before the parliament in terms of the future operations of the Australian intelligence community. Our approach, as the alternative government of Australia, is that the Australian intelligence community represents a vital asset in this country’s continued campaign against global terrorism and, beyond that, a vital
asset in this country’s overall national security requirements. But it brings us back again full circle to the current situation which confronts us in Iraq. The current situation in Iraq is very difficult indeed. What we have today in Iraq is a political and security situation which is rapidly deteriorating. It has been deteriorating for some time. Yet the government still stands at the dispatch box and says that everything will go well in Iraq or that the security and the political situations are improving in Iraq. Debates in the United States most recently have pointed in precisely the reverse direction. If we look objectively at circumstances on the ground in Iraq, we find an increasingly difficult and problematic set of circumstances which exist 2½ years after this war ended. Remember the government told us that Australia’s own troop commitment in Iraq would be matter of months and not of years.

This requires some questions to be answered by the government. First, does the Prime Minister stand by his foreign minister’s statements that the security situation in Iraq is very much improved and is heading in the right direction? Second, what is the government’s assessment of the likelihood of civil war in Iraq? Third, what does the increase in sectarian violence between the Sunni and the Shia mean for the security situation in Al Muthanna province and the safety and wellbeing of Australian troops operating in that province? Fourth, what happens to the increased presence of foreign jihadists, principally from Saudi Arabia, in the security circumstances in Al Muthanna? Fifth, what discussions has the Prime Minister and his officials had with the administrations in Washington and London about the real timetable for troop withdrawal from Iraq? And, finally, what is the timetable for Australia’s withdrawal from Iraq as well? What implications do all of the above have for Australia as a terrorist target, given that Australia’s invasion of Iraq increased Australia’s overall status as a terrorist target? These are matters which we shall continue to prosecute with the government, which has continued to remain unaccountable in this parliament. (Time expired)

Mr CAMERON THOMPSON (Blair) (6.05 pm)—That was a very interesting trip down memory lane with the member for Griffith and before him the member for Barton, but we are speaking today on the bill which is before us, the Intelligence Services Legislation Amendment Bill 2005. The member for Griffith continues to work every new nuance into his rewriting of history. We can entertain him and listen to his reports as he puts them together, but eventually he will be drawn into the current circumstance and into addressing the world as it stands, not the world as he perhaps would like it to stand.

The bill that we face today is a very important part in the process of equipping Australia to deal with the world as it stands. There has been a trend towards greater reliance on and greater provision of defence assets, greater reliance on and greater provision of better security assets within Australia and greater reliance on and greater provision of intelligence assets on behalf of Australia. This is a very important process, because without that we would be miring ourselves in the kind of quagmire that the member for Griffith specialises in—that is, living in the past instead of dealing with the present.

I would like to touch briefly on some of the significant changes in defence and those other security assets in Australia over the last five years or so. If you go back to 2000, the government set out its strategic priorities for defence in the defence white paper. A defence capability plan was produced as part of that, and that was reviewed in 2003. If you look purely at the defence front, in the time since the 2000 report we have seen 125 indi-
vidual defence capability plan projects approved for the government, including new main battle tanks, armed reconnaissance helicopters and six airborne early warning and control aircraft—a total of over $20 billion of investment over that time. That is on the defence front. We can also canvass the changes in legislation to support the Australian Federal Police and, indeed, state police structures. There has just been a very lengthy debate in Australian society about that.

But, of course, intelligence is a very important part of the process as well. After the government set the Flood inquiry into action in 2004, the report recommended that a series of new initiatives be implemented, and those are being implemented by the government for the benefit of the country through improving intelligence networking. The inquiry by Mr Philip Flood found that the Australian intelligence community is performing well and is a potent capability for the government. In response to the findings of the inquiry, the government is expanding the budget of the Office of National Assessments from $13.1 million to $25 million and doubling ONA staff from 74 to 145. It is establishing a foreign intelligence coordination committee under the Director-General of ONA to assist the DG in coordinating and monitoring the AIC’s performance. It is providing a greater role for the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet in coordinating the consideration of the National Security Committee of cabinet of the priority setting and reporting of the AIC. It has increased funding for the Australian Secret Intelligence Service to build staff language skills and to conduct a periodic external review of the AIC every five to seven years.

That sums up many of the changes and many of the existing responses we have heard about from the government in response to the Flood report, but now there are these additional changes and it is important that we canvass some of those and look at the entire framework within which they apply. The Intelligence Services Act 2001 came into force on 29 October 2001 and established a legislative basis for the Australian Secret Intelligence Service, ASIS, for the Defence Signals Directorate, DSD, and for the Parliamentary Joint Committee on ASIO, ASIS and DSD, which replaced the former Parliamentary Joint Committee on the Australian Security and Intelligence Organisation.

The Flood inquiry was conducted last year and now we have the changes before us. Intelligence is an important asset for the country. In the introduction to the Flood report you can see some of the important core capabilities that it entails. They are listed there. It says that through intelligence we can receive:

- warning, notably of terrorist plans, but also of potential conflicts, uprisings and coups
- understanding of the regional and international environment, with which Australian decision-makers will need to grapple
- knowledge of the military capabilities and intentions of potential adversaries, a vital ingredient in defence procurement and preparedness
- support for military operations, minimising casualties and improving the environment for operational success
- support for an active and ambitious foreign, trade and defence policy.

Furthermore:

... beyond these vital roles of intelligence in providing information, modern intelligence can be a more active tool of government—disrupting the plans of adversaries, influencing the policies of key foreign actors and contributing to modern electronic warfare.

The development of both of those things can be influenced to our advantage. The brief of the Flood inquiry was to investigate:

- the effectiveness of the intelligence community’s current oversight and accountability
mechanisms as they relate to such matters as the setting of priorities, the assigning to the priorities of appropriate resources, and the delivery of high-quality and independent intelligence advice to the government

- the suitability of the current division of labour among the intelligence agencies and communication between them
- the maintenance of contestability in the provision to government of intelligence assessments
- the adequacy of current resourcing of intelligence agencies and in particular ONA.

This is, of course, in keeping with the government’s aim of eradicating duplication in our legislation and enforcing consistency and accountability.

It is important to note that, through this legislation, we are endorsing and enforcing the role of parliament as a scrutiniser of these agencies. It also recognises the need for intelligence in our society, a need which is increasingly essential. The Flood report said—and I notice that the opposition spokesman for defence, the member for Barton, picked up this quote:

Good intelligence is arguably more important to government now than at any time since World War II. Global terrorism has transformed Australia’s perceptions of its security.

Intelligence in today’s world has a vital role in a range of crucial issues. This bill demonstrates a commitment to ensuring our intelligence agencies can work at their most efficient level while also maintaining their obligations to operate with accountability and responsibility.

Let us look at the agencies involved. The Office of National Assessments, ONA, is responsible for reporting an assessment of matters of international, political, strategic and economic significance to Australia. It also monitors Australia’s international intelligence activities. The Defence Intelligence Organisation, DIO, provides all-source intelligence assessment to support defence decision making and operations. ASIS, the Australian Secret Intelligence Service, provides overseas human intelligence collection; it obtains and distributes intelligence about the capabilities, intentions and activities of individuals and organisations outside Australia. The Defence Signals Directorate, the DSD, provides the collection, production and dissemination of signals intelligence. It also provides information security products and services to the government and the Defence Force. The Defence Imagery and Geospatial Organisation, DIGO, provides imagery intelligence and geospatial based intelligence. I understand that it is one of the newest intelligence agencies working in Australia. The Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, ASIO, is responsible for gathering and producing intelligence to warn the government about situations and activities that might endanger Australia’s security. This government has substantially increased the funding and, thus, the abilities of our intelligence agencies.

I again quote the Flood report:

Intelligence is a key element in Australia’s response to this changed environment, and the past four years have seen a doubling of the intelligence budget, with over $650 million invested in the intelligence community in 2004-05. Staff numbers in the Australian intelligence community have risen by 44 per cent over the same period. Overall, the government has committed more than $3 billion in additional funding for national security from 2001–02 to 2007–08.

Having sat through the comments of the previous speaker in this debate, the member for Griffith, I began to ponder where we would be if we had received the Flood report and had to decide what to do in relation to it with Mark Latham as the Prime Minister. I am sure that, if that were the case and the opposition were in government, it would be a very
different response from the one we are getting from this government.

After listening to the member for Griffith, I would like to pause and let members reflect on the fact that, at the time of the debate on weapons of mass destruction, the opposition were as adamant as the government that there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq—and so were most of the defence organisations the world over. That position was held in practically every country of the world, except Iraq. The only difference of view in Australia was what to do about it. The view of the opposition was that basically nothing should be done about it, that sanctions should remain and that things should continue, such as the now totally discredited oil for food program.

However, the government proposed a different view: after warning Iraq again and again about weapons of mass destruction, eventually the world community would have to do something about it. In the end, there can be only so many recommendations, pronouncements and warnings from the United Nations before something would have to be done. The government took a position on that. It also took a very strong position in support of the democratisation of Iraq, the freedom of its people, and against the despotic dictatorship of Saddam Hussein.

The opposition spokesman for defence, the member for Barton, spoke about both the recent and previous Bali bombings as examples of intelligence failure. Those examples are not given in the Flood report—naturally enough, given the timing—but Flood does give a description of intelligence failures. He says:

The history of major intelligence failures—the failure to detect plans for the World Trade Centre attack in 2001, Iraq’s intention to invade Kuwait in 1990, the imminent collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989 or, much earlier, the failure to anticipate the strength of Turkish forces in the Dardanelles in 1915 or Japanese plans for Pearl Harbour—provide a cautionary lesson for any policy-maker who believes intelligence is always accurate or that it can provide guarantees.

That shows the quality and level of consideration that has gone into this report. It also reflects on initiatives. While steps can be taken by the government in all the areas of security, defence and intelligence, nothing is infallible because it is carried out by man. Provisions might be manufactured with the best of intentions, but they do not provide a guarantee—as noted by Philip Flood.

I spoke a minute ago about the attitude of the ALP to weapons of mass destruction. The ALP have been less than candid in their position on Iraq. They were critical of the Iraq campaign but claimed to support the US alliance. In fact, as it turns out, they went ahead and elected somebody who did not support the US alliance. At the time, the opposition spokesman on defence, the member for Barton, was in the US looking at the US Coast Guard and talking up the alliance while Mark Latham was writing in his diary that Australia should become more like New Zealand. He told the ABC:

We should have a look at how New Zealand has made itself the safest country in the world.

That is not really a move in support of the US alliance at all. It was interesting that the member for Barton, during his contribution, referred to a speech made by the current Leader of the Opposition who told the Sydney Institute that the strategy for Australia should be to make Australia a safe haven. What is that? If you want to set up Australia like New Zealand and go down the Latham road then you are not supporting the US alliance and you are not working in a manner that is conducive to the kinds of initiatives that are being proposed by the Flood report, such as the gathering of intelligence assets to support Australia’s position. It is not going down that path. It is setting yourself up as a
kind of a hippy commune on the edge of the world, divorced from reality and immune from it. That is not the kind of outcome that we are seeking from this report. Once again, it would be instructive to sit there and think how we would cope with this kind of common sense if we were being led by someone with the kinds of cuckoo policies that were being proposed in secret by the then Leader of the Labor Party late last year.

This bill extends the mandate of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on ASIO, ASIS and DSD. The bill now extends its coverage to include the Office of National Assessments, the Defence Intelligence Organisation and the DIGO on the same basis. It formalises the functions and ministerial accountabilities of the DIGO. It clarifies the responsibilities of the agency and sets out the five functional categories of the agency’s work. The parliamentary secretary outlined those five functions earlier in this debate.

The level of scrutiny of the DIGO will be comparable to the level of scrutiny which applies to DSD and ASIS. DIGO is the newest of our intelligence agencies and this bill provides for its induction to legislative accountabilities. It gives parliament, through the committee, a consistent and effective mandate which will cover all of Australia’s intelligence agencies, rather than the current situation of covering some agencies but not others. This legislation does not diminish the roles of our agencies but clarifies their functions concerning, for example, the circumstances of communication of incidentally obtained information. I would like to close by quoting from the Flood report again:

Effective oversight and accountability of intelligence agencies is critically important for a healthy democracy. The more relevant intelligence becomes to government, the greater the need and public demand for strong and transparent oversight and accountability.

There have been many recent operations whereby Australian service personnel and security personnel have been sent overseas to represent our interests, and they have done a fantastic job. They have done that in places like East Timor, the Solomon Islands, Afghanistan and Iraq with the effective support of our intelligence agencies. This bill will ensure that our intelligence agencies are even better equipped to provide better support in the future and that Australian service personnel and Australians as a whole will benefit as a result.

Mr BEVIS (Brisbane) (6.25 pm)—Although I am sure we would all wish it to be otherwise, we presently live in a world in which non-state terrorists are bent upon taking action against people around the world, largely at random and in an asymmetric manner. That is not surprising, given that if you were in their shoes conventional warfare with the people they are seeking to do battle with would be a fairly short encounter. That said, people involved in these acts of terror have no regard for any human life and appear to have no regard for their own lives. They operate beyond nation and state boundaries. They have no regard for international boundaries, national or international laws. In that environment, there is no doubt that one of the most critical weapons available to nation states to defend themselves—one of the greatest assets that you can have—is good intelligence.

The Intelligence Services Legislation Amendment Bill 2005 is based on a view of providing better intelligence-gathering capabilities, and that is something which I think all members of the parliament understand and accept. In a free society such as Australia, though, it is one of those balancing provisions where the need to obtain intelligence on the conduct and behaviour of our citizens is always balanced against the freedoms that distinguish our society from totalitarian so-
cieties. It is important when we consider
laws of this kind that we consider that bal-
ance and that we satisfy ourselves that we
have the balance right: that the safeguards
are in place, that the accountability is there
and that we are not eroding the fundamental
nature of our freedoms in such a way as to
give the terrorists a victory that they could
not otherwise achieve.

In the end, only we can give up our free-
doms. The terrorists may well be able to
bomb from time to time, take life and cause
misery; they cannot take our freedom away.
That power rests with us and us alone, and
particularly with those of us privileged to be
in this parliament as legislators. I think it is
important that we look at the Intelligence
Services Legislation Amendment Bill 2005
and similar bills in that broad context. This
bill has its genesis in the Flood report. The
Flood inquiry was conducted because of
concerns that were raised after the 2001 elec-
tion that the government and, in particular,
DSD—the Defence Signals Directorate—had
inappropriately intercepted telephone con-
versations between the Maritime Union and
the Norwegian freighter, the *Tampa*, which I
am sure everyone in this parliament will re-
call was a significant issue in the lead-up to
the 2001 federal election.

The Minister for Defence at the time re-
leased an edited report that was conducted by
the then Inspector-General of Intelligence
and Security, Mr Blick, who inquired into the
matter. The edited report was released on 2
May. The report found that there had in fact
been four breaches of the classified privacy
rules—that is, DSD had contravened its own
rules. Whilst that much is clear and an estab-
lished fact, the basis upon which that hap-
pened and the extent to which ministers in
the government were aware of it in advance
is something we may not know for some
time. In any event, that gave rise to the Flood
inquiry to look at the operations of our intel-
ligence agencies in order to assure us, as a
free society, that they were conducting their
affairs in a way that the Australian people
would want.

We should not simply sweep aside that
2001 incident. It is a matter of serious grav-
ity that an intelligence agency entrusted with
great powers by this parliament has breached
those powers and inappropriately intercepted
communications between trade union officials
and the commander of that vessel. That is a
serious matter. Frankly, I think it has been
too lightly set aside in this debate and since
the incident occurred in 2001. When intel-
ligence-gathering agencies—special agencies
of government with particular powers not
normally afforded to law enforcement agen-
cies—misuse or abuse their powers, whether
intentionally or inadvertently, it is a serious
matter in a free society. As legislators, we
especially should never allow that to pass
without serious consideration.

The Defence Signals Directorate, or DSD,
has always had as its primary charter the col-
lection of information and data associated
with people outside Australia. That has been
its principal responsibility. In relation to the
activities of people within Australia, includ-
ing Australian citizens, ASIO has always
been the body with principal responsibility
for intelligence gathering. I think that has
been a fairly useful delineation of responsi-
bilities. With that delineation of responsibili-
ties has come a different regime for activi-
ties. When ASIO wants to exercise its pow-
ers to intercept information—in plain terms,
maybe to intercept a telephone conversation
between one person somewhere in Australia
and another person elsewhere in Australia—
it is obliged to follow a fairly rigid regime
for the authorisation of a warrant. Successive
governments have put that requirement in
place for good reason. As a people, we are
not going to lightly allow any government,
or any arm of government, to intervene in the

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legitimate privacy rights and civil liberties of our citizens without just cause and appropriate authorisations.

I am concerned—and we will wait with interest to hear from the minister, perhaps in the summing up on this or later in the debate—as to why it is that the bill proposes a different regime for the authorisation of DSD warrants than for ASIO warrants, particularly given the provisions in the bill to change the focus, or at least the parameters, of DSD’s involvement. One of the provisions in the bill removes the restriction on DSD concerning itself with people outside Australia. The minister should clearly state the parameters for the exercise of warrants for DSD engagement and, having done that, we can then assume that this in some way extends the opportunity for people within Australia to have their privacy compromised or their conversations listened to—that is, that DSD can conduct intelligence activities in relation to people living here in Australia. If this bill facilitates a greater use of that power then it is important for all of us that the minister explain, firstly, why that is necessary and, secondly, that being so, why DSD should have a different set of requirements for getting warrants than ASIO does. If, after the passage of this bill, DSD is going to be more likely to be intercepting information involving Australians here in Australia, then it would seem to be a sound principle that the same restrictions that apply to ASIO to undertake those activities should apply to DSD. I hope that the government can comment on that.

There is an opportunity for the parliament to review these activities in a limited way, and the Parliamentary Joint Committee on ASIO, ASIS and DSD has fulfilled that role. I want to take the opportunity in this debate to commend that committee and its members. The parliament and the people of Australia are very well served by the existence of that committee; it is fundamentally important. Indeed, I think there is a good argument that the powers of that committee can, and should, be extended beyond what they were in the past—and that is probably a discussion for another day. The parliament is well served by the committee; it comprises people who are not only experienced members of parliament but experienced in the field of national security. In some cases, they are legal practitioners well experienced in the relevant laws. We have former defence ministers on that committee and it is chaired by a former minister of the present government. It is important that a senior committee of the parliament have the opportunity to regularly review the workings of the intelligence agencies ASIO, ASIS and DSD. I think all members on both sides share a confidence in the people who represent us on that committee, and it provides a degree of certainty for the people of Australia that these intelligence-gathering organisations are accountable, on a regular basis, to such a forum. I will await with interest the comments of the minister and perhaps join the debate later during consideration in detail.

Mr KEENAN (Stirling) (6.36 pm)—I rise to support the Intelligence Services Legislation Amendment Bill 2005, but first I would like to address some of the comments that we heard in the chamber earlier today. In particular, the member for Griffith used the time given for his address, supposedly for him to talk about this legislation, to lecture the government on Iraq. I am amazed that he has the gall to come into this chamber and do that, considering the ALP’s position on Iraq, which is not clear to me and certainly not clear to the Australian people. I understand that at last count the ALP has had about 29 separate positions on Iraq. For the government’s part, our policy has always been clear: we opposed a brutal dictator who ruthlessly oppressed his own people and we are
now playing our part to protect freedom and a young democracy in that country. So the member for Griffith came in here to lecture us on our position, which is remarkable considering it has just been revealed that he spent the last election campaign running around trying to cover up what he believed to be the terrible mistakes of his leader in making off-the-cuff comments and on-the-run policy on what is an extraordinarily important defence issue for Australia. So the next time he cares to come into the chamber and talk about Iraq, perhaps he would like to level with the Australian people and simply explain what the ALP’s actual position is. I will certainly await that with bated breath. I will listen with interest as that could be policy position No. 30 of the ALP.

I am encouraged by the introduction of this bill into parliament so soon after the Flood inquiry into Australia’s intelligence agencies and after the Parliamentary Joint Committee on ASIO, ASIS and DSD reviewed its own role last year. In light of the recent terror attacks in Bali, it is imperative that we as a parliament recognise the timeliness and great importance of this bill. Terror can strike at any time and in any place. Sadly, we have seen this in New York, Madrid, Bali and London and on a day-to-day basis in Iraq. As a consequence, it is imperative that the government ensures that it does everything it can within its power to obtain intelligence in a timely manner and use it effectively to counteract terror cells, both here in Australia and internationally.

The brutal scourge of terror is closer than ever before. Enemies of freedom and proponents of a sickening and deformed interpretation of Islam continue to wage war against basic human values and individual dignity. As a consequence, Australia’s intelligence services are on the frontline. They play an increasingly vital role in defending our interests not only at home but also abroad. A major component of ensuring effective, professional and timely intelligence can be directly attributed to the delegation of legislative and parliamentary oversight. Also, the provision of sound intelligence rests on the supposition that no untoward political or otherwise extraneous influence has been brought to bear on its determination. The most effective manner through which this can be ensured is parliamentary oversight. By providing wide-ranging but not obstructionist parliamentary oversight, we as a government recognise and endorse the valuable role parliament plays in the provision of sound intelligence. This bill also recognises and accepts that a shared responsibility exists between parliament and our intelligence-gathering community. The government always has a responsibility to govern fairly but the parliament always has a right to scrutinise agencies of the government to ensure that Australians have effective oversight of Commonwealth operations. This legislation reaffirms that shared responsibility. It also enhances and strengthens it.

This bill is a part of a package of measures designed to amend the Intelligence Services Act 2001, the Office of National Assessments Act 1977, the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security Act 1986 and all the related legislation. In implementing the recommendations given to us by Mr Flood, by the parliamentary joint committee and by the review by the Inspector General of Intelligence into the Intelligence Services Act 2001, a number of changes will be made to legislation that will enhance agency accountability and operational coordination. Firstly, the roles, functions and ministerial accountabilities of the Defence Imagery and Geospatial Organisation, known colloquially as DIGO, will for the first time be placed on a legislative basis. Considering the nature of the work prepared by DIGO in an effort to secure Australia’s national interest and support our defence forces, I consider these leg-
islative amendments to be valuable as for the first time ever parliament’s role in ensuring and providing oversight will be codified. The Office of National Assessments intelligence community coordination and evaluation role will also be further enhanced by providing it with a clearer and stronger authority. Mr Flood also recommended that the number of ONA staff be doubled and that there be a substantial increase in its funding. I wholeheartedly applaud this recommendation and I am pleased to see that the government has accepted it. By recognising that intelligence developed through analytical assessments of international developments is absolutely integral to securing Australia’s security and our national interest, the bill continues the government program aimed at securing Australia’s borders.

I have also been encouraged to see within this legislation that the Parliamentary Joint Committee on ASIO, ASIS and DSD will have its mandate extended to cover all of Australia’s intelligence agencies. In effect, this means that the ONA and DIGO, as well as the Defence Intelligence Organisation, will be included in the committee’s ambit on the same basis as ASIO, ASIS and DSD. In addition to extending the mandate of the parliamentary committee, the bill will also make other important changes. The committee will be expanded from its current seven members to nine, a deputy chair will be created and the power to establish subcommittees as required will be granted. In themselves, these changes are important in expanding and strengthening the parliamentary oversight of Australia’s intelligence services. On 5 October 2005, when the bill was introduced in the Senate, Senator Ferguson spoke about how previously one of the committee’s major drawbacks was that, with its limited number of seven members, it was not uncommon to have one or two members unavailable for various reasons. As a result, the committee was hindered in its deliberations and therefore hindered in its oversight capabilities. The rectification of this problem will go a long way to increasing parliament’s oversight capacity.

The bill also provides for a deputy chair of the committee to be created. By creating this position, the government has recognised the committee’s strong history of bipartisan cooperation. As a result of the September 2005 review of the bill by this committee, it has been amended so as to stipulate that the deputy chair does not have to be a government member. The goodwill and bipartisan cooperation within the committee has warranted this amendment, and I support it in its entirety. It is often forgotten here because of the confrontational nature of Australia’s political arena that both sides of politics can work together, and I am extremely glad to see that this is the case, especially considering the importance of the work conducted by this committee.

However, the amendment proposed by the government will also ensure that, if the chair of the committee is not present at a meeting of the committee when a question is to be decided by voting or is absent for a period of more than one month, the members present are to appoint a government member to preside at a meeting. Once appointed, that member will exercise all the powers and prerogatives of the chair. This caveat, I believe, is vital to the bill as it ensures the integrity of the duly elected government of the day and recognises its mandate to govern.

Moving away from the amendments that the bill will make to the structure of the parliamentary committee, the bill will also extend the mandate of the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security. A legislative basis for the scrutiny of DIGO will be created and the inspector-general will be empowered to initiate enquiries at their own discretion into
matters pertaining to the DIO and ONA without prior ministerial referral. Considering the nature of the work that is conducted by the inspector-general and its utmost importance in ensuring that Australia’s intelligence agencies conduct their activities within the law, behave with propriety, comply with ministerial guidelines and directives and have regard for human rights—both in Australia and internationally—the increase in this mandate recognises the body’s professionalism and importance in making sure our intelligence agencies operate within their guidelines.

Internationally, we have seen examples of the disastrous consequences that occur when intelligence agencies operate outside of their rightful place. By strengthening the provision against this occurring, the government makes sure that our intelligence services continue their professional practices within the bounds of their appropriate operational powers. Furthermore, the bill will require that the inspector-general conduct periodic reviews of ONA’s statutory independence to ensure political influence does not adversely affect the provision of sound and timely intelligence. In giving effect to the recommendations of the review of the Intelligence Services Act 2001 which was conducted by the inspector-general, the bill clarifies the roles and functions of ASIS and the DSD to reflect agencies’ operational experience under the act. Public accountability of ASIS and DSD will also be enhanced with the implementation of the measures contained in this bill.

The changes outlined above will continue the process of strengthening the contribution of sound intelligence to government decision making and operations. ASIS, DIGO and DSD, as Australia’s foreign intelligence collection agencies, will be placed on a sound legislative footing, thus completing the framework of legislation covering all of the Australian intelligence community. The changes will also provide an effective balance between allowing the Australian intelligence agencies to fulfil their rightful functions, while at the same time maintaining and enhancing appropriate public accountability arrangements. The balance that will be reached by this bill is important, as it goes far enough to provide effective oversight but not so far as to be obstructionist, thus inhibiting our intelligence services in getting on with their rightful job. The introduction of this bill demonstrates the Howard government’s commitment to maintaining the vital contribution of intelligence agencies to Australia’s security whilst ensuring that these agencies operate responsibly and with appropriate accountability. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr KATTER (Kennedy) (6.49 pm)—The people on earth that Australians should be best friends with are our neighbours. I was minister for Aboriginal affairs in the Queensland government, which led me to visit Boigu and Saibai islands. One of those islands is 28 kilometres from Indonesia. In fact, on a clear day you can see Indonesia clearly. They are the people that we should be best friends with, and most of our initiatives in foreign affairs should be directed to this area.

You may ask us, ‘Do we have a natural affinity with these people?’ I represent a large part of Australia’s cattle industry. All of my adult life I have been involved in the cattle industry. About an eighth, a seventh or maybe even a sixth of our entire cattle herd is now going, in the main, to Indonesia and the Philippines. We sell them fairly small beasts for about $600. They grow the beasts out—from little more than calves, I suppose, yearlings or two-year-olds—and then they process the beasts, and they are worth about $3,000 to the Indonesian or the Philippine economy. Or they may choose to sell those products on the world market to the rest of
the world. So they make an enormous amount of money out of our industry, and it is a way in which we can see that a relationship with these people would be of great benefit to them and of great benefit to our country as well. Would to heaven that when I had a cattle station in the gulf we were getting $600 or $700 for one- to two-year-old steers!

Having said that, a lot of these people are of an Islamic persuasion, which historically has had very great conflicts with Christianity, the predominant belief system in Australia, and that raises some questions. Add to that the fact that a lot of people who visit this country unfortunately have been involved in drugs and that the sexual mores that come from America in their movies and various other things are very unacceptable to these people, many of whom are arch-conservative in their moral beliefs. They find the sort of morality that is coming out of America very offensive. In this context, we are seen as Anglos, the same as the Americans.

To quote Winston Churchill, those who cannot learn from history will be condemned to repeat history. About 230 years ago, Australians said, ‘We do not have to have a population in this country. In fact, we do not want population; we have birth control methods. We do not have to occupy this country; we do not have to have people living in it. It is our country—we do not have to occupy it. We do not have to defend it—our woomeras and spears are quite adequate for the defence of this nation. We do not have to export anything. There is no onus upon us to produce anything of value to the rest of the world.’ The Australians that occupied this country then ran into very, very rough times indeed. Their fate was not a happy one.

Has anything changed, except the colour of the faces of most Australians? Has anything changed? Do we believe that we have to have a population commensurate with other countries? Do we believe we have to occupy this country? The golden boomerang—not the Brisbane Line but the golden boomerang—was all that was going to be defended; the rest of it was going to be handed over to the Japanese. Take out the golden boomerang, and a little bit around Perth, and the rest of the country is occupied by about the same size population that was here when Captain Cook arrived in 1770 or whenever it was. So we most certainly do not believe that we have to occupy the country.

As for defence, when I was a kid and left secondary school, I was handed an SLR rifle and told, ‘You’re on 24-hour call-up to go and fight, son,’ because we were at war with Indonesia at the time. It was delightfully called Konfrontasi, but it was a war. If I had been sent there, people would have shot at me and tried to kill me. There were 250,000 SLR rifles in Australia to defend our country, and standing behind them were a million semiautomatic weapons. That is what we had to defend this country with. We now have 50,000 rifles. As a weapons instructor in the Army for some seven or eight years of my life, I can say the rifle is a very substandard combat weapon. In fact, the last time I used a Steyr rifle to shoot with, it had shot three Australians and no enemy—and I was not the slightest bit surprised. But, in any event, there are 50,000 rifles. If you think you can defend your country with 50,000 rifles, you have another think coming—and I venture to submit that your position is not much different from the position of the Australians that were here 230 years ago.

I represent about 2,000 kilometres of the northern Australian coastline, which abuts our northern neighbours. I represent the Gulf of Carpentaria. And it makes me weep to read, in the newspapers in Sydney and Melbourne, of the Queensland government wild rivers legislation that says we will not be
able to touch any of the water in the rivers of the Gulf of Carpentaria, where my family come from and have lived for nearly a century and a half. Those rivers’ run-off is 124 million megalitres. To put that in context, the Murray-Darling system, which produces nearly half of Australia’s entire agricultural production, has a lousy little 20 million megalitres of water. We have 124 million megalitres of water. If we are trying to come to grips here today with a danger to the security of Australia, I venture to submit that, if you put temptation in the way of people, they might succumb to that temptation, as they did in 1770. They came to a country where there was no-one living—the founder of my own homeland, the mid-west of North Queensland, Ernest Henry, was there for two years and never saw the people who lived there, the people we now describe as Aboriginals. He did not see one in two years. It was a vast and empty land. As he wrote home to his parents in England, he only wished and prayed that he could make contact with them.

That 124 million megalitres drains the greatest undeveloped resource on the planet, a blacksoil plain 600 kilometres wide stretching from Normanton and Burketown all the way down to Blackall. A great resource God has given us: water and black soil, the magic combination. Do you know how we as a race of people have used that? Six million hectares of it has been taken over with the prickly acacia—acacia nilotica—tree. It has destroyed all native vegetation. If you fly over it in an aeroplane, you will see a station property that is black and a station property that is white. The one that is black has the infestation of prickly acacia tree. I will not go into why one is white and one is black. If people in Indonesia, a country where 80 or 90 million are going to bed hungry every night, find out that we are sitting on a resource where not 55,000 farmers, as we have on the Murray-Darling, but 12 farmers—count on your fingers and two toes—and about one per cent of Australia’s agricultural production come from there, they might get a little bit upset. They might think that we are dogs in the manger. We will not develop it and we will not let anyone else develop it. Whilst I speak here, the Queensland parliament is passing laws that nothing is to be touched—no water, no rivers, no anything.

That is temptation. This is the danger to Australia: add to that the fact that the people of Indonesia had an economy that was very rapidly growing—I think it was six or seven per cent annual growth rate—and they were going on strong. Their economy ran into problems, as all economies do from time to time. There was intervention by the World Bank—and creditor nations. I will cite Joseph Stiglitz’s Globalization and its discontents for the net result of that intervention. He was the head of the World Bank. Rupert Murdoch took a whole page in his own newspaper, which he very seldom does, to condemn the Australian government of the day. I do not even know whether the government of the day was ALP or coalition. The net result of that intervention was that average Indonesian income dropped from $1,800 per person to $1,000—clean in half. We were at about $19,000 in Australia. Poor as they were, our intervention—and, when I say ‘our’, they lump us in with the Americans, and quite rightly so, because we were party to that intervention—dropped their income in half. Whether or not it is fair to blame the Americans or us for the collapse of the economy, Stiglitz most certainly does and a number of others do, too. Rupert Murdoch most certainly did. But whether it is fair or not, that is how it is seen by those people. To quote Churchill again, ‘If you can’t learn from history ...’
The great threat to our security during the Second World War came from Japan. They were only about four or five weeks away from invading Australia when they were intercepted by the 39th Battalion on the Kokoda Trail. Members of my family were there at Milne Bay, where the Japanese were also intercepted. Every soldier in the Japanese southern army was handed a little black book. In this little black book it said: ‘Three hundred and sixty thousand Asians are ruled by 300,000 Europeans. And they will never consider us to be equal—never. They consider us to be inferior, and it is the duty of Japan to throw off the yoke of European tyranny.’ That is the way an awful lot of people in Asia view the Anglos—for the want of a better word.

I turn now specifically to the subject of border and coastal security. We are talking here about internal security. I pay the minister great tribute here because I think he did an awful lot to protect the coastline of Australia. He did it very courageously. He took a lot of punishment as a result, and I for one would like to put on record my appreciation of what he did in that respect. But to say we are at the present moment in occupation of the Gulf of Carpentaria is a very poor joke. You can fly in an aeroplane from Cairns across to Broome in Western Australia and see no sign of human habitation. We are not in occupation of this country at all, and if you are not going to develop it or occupy it then you cannot blame someone else for saying, as they did 230 years ago, ‘We’re going to come here and have a slice of the action.’

I would like to see us at least act to protect our country. I do not profess to be an expert in this field. If you are talking about infantry warfare then, yes, in my day I knew a hell of a lot about it. I was an instructor for eight years, and a very keen and enthusiastic one. But if you are talking about defending the coastline, I am not an expert; I would know nothing about that. However, people who do have said—and I urge the minister consider this—that we need 100 patrol boats. People who know say those patrol boats should be armed with guided missile capacity, which is not very expensive. It costs $5 million for five guided missiles. They say we need interception capacity on those boats—and that is very expensive. It costs about $30 million. But it could be accomplished through a 10-year building program, which would make us the leading small boat builders in the world—and I would not worry too much about the free trade deal with America, because they are not going to; and if they are not I do not see why we should be restricted in awarding procurement contracts locally. We also need helicopters with over-the-horizon radar. You can see for 400 kilometres with a radar equipped helicopter.

Trying to resupply your army would not be a lot of fun. Undoubtedly the heroism and bravery of our troops on the Kokoda Trail and at Milne Bay—where members of my family fought and many of their comrades died—were the most important factors. But it must also be said that the Japanese ability to resupply was cut off, ultimately, by the Battle of Midway. And the ability to resupply dictated the final outcome of the war, as it did in Europe with the invasion of Russia.

If we can deprive an invading force of the ability to resupply and if 100 patrol boats can also patrol our coastline, that is the immediate issue. Again and again we see boats that cannot be identified—but they can be identified: there is a satellite up in the sky. We have vehicle-monitoring devices now on all of our fishing boats and can have them very cheaply on all of our tourism boats. All the rest of them have to go through Customs pilots—and there are other permits needed to bring a boat into our waters. If they do not fall into any of those categories, which we can bring up on a computer in a matter of
seconds, then they need to be looked at. But we have no ability to confront them at present. The nearest patrol boats are in Cairns. Look at a map and see how many thousands of kilometres you have to travel from Cairns all the way around into the Gulf of Carpentaria. The people I represent tell me again and again that they see not only boats but boats landing. I cannot see any way that you could stop them under the present arrangements that we have in Australia.

So even though this proposal is outside the minister’s portfolio, Australian security is inside the minister’s portfolio. He is well equipped and has an excellent background in defending our coastline that will serve him well in the history books of Australia. I urge the minister to look further at this. At the present moment our situation is very grim indeed. I contributed to the debate tonight because I wanted to put on record that I had said, in the year of our Lord 2005, that our situation was a grim one. There were some people standing in this place in 1938 who argued that we should not have any defence system, but there were other people arguing that we desperately needed one because we were in very great peril. The price that we paid for not listening to those people was very great indeed. The price paid by a lot of my constituents, who were First Australians, was very great indeed, and I do not want to see my country pay the same price again.

Mr Ruddock (Berowra—Attorney-General) (7.06 pm)—The Intelligence Services Legislation Amendment Bill 2005 has been transmitted by the Senate, seeking concurrence of the House. It was introduced by the member for Flinders, Mr Hunt. I thank him for doing that. I had to attend a National Security Committee meeting of cabinet and that meant that the task that I was expecting to fulfil had to be undertaken by the honourable member. Of course he has been supported in this debate by the member for Barton, the member for Hughes, the member for Griffith, the member for Blair, the member for Brisbane, the member for Stirling and now the member for Kennedy.

Might I say that, while the member for Kennedy roamed widely on a range of issues in relation to national security, this bill is really about intelligence services and their role in identifying any potential risk. I hope I will be forgiven for containing my remarks to the bill because Australia’s foreign intelligence collection agencies provide crucial support to government policy formulation, decision-making processes and military operations.

The agencies collect information that is not available from other sources, in accordance with the national intelligence priorities established by the government. The Intelligence Services Legislation Amendment Bill 2005 will assist in the strengthening of the contribution of sound intelligence to the government. The bill implements—and I think many have emphasised this—the legislative recommendations made by Mr Philip Flood AO in his 2004 inquiry into the agencies. The bill also puts in place a range of amendments to legislation identified as a result of the government’s review of the operations of the Intelligence Services Act 2001, which had been in place for some four years.

Effective intelligence arrangements are necessarily underpinned by sound accountability mechanisms. It is important to review these mechanisms regularly, and the Flood inquiry, along with the government’s review, has provided the opportunity to do so. Obviously, I welcome—as have my colleagues—the review of the bill by the Parliamentary Joint Committee on ASIO, ASIS and DSD. The government is very happy to support most of the recommendations of that committee report. It is a committee that under-
takes a very sensitive task with a very large degree of bipartisanship, and that is something that is appreciated. The committee also respects the sensitivities when working in this area, where intelligence information may be imparted as part of the reviews being undertaken.

As outlined in the debate today, however, there are sound reasons why the government does not support the third committee recommendation—the opposition, I think, will propose it—and when we go into the consideration in detail stage I will expand on why that support will not be forthcoming. In the second reading debate most of the comments have been very supportive of the need for these measures, but there are two matters that I want to deal with. One arises from some comments by the member for Brisbane, who asked what parameters surround DSD’s production of intelligence on Australians in Australia and why these powers need to be extended. Let me deal with this because my understanding of the bill is that it does not extend the intelligence agencies’ power to collect intelligence against Australians.

The act currently allows the Defence Signals Directorate, DSD, and the Australian Secret Intelligence Service, ASIS, to undertake activities to produce intelligence on an Australian person who is in Australia but only if that Australian’s activities relate to people or organisations outside Australia, the responsible minister is satisfied that the Australian’s activities meet strict criteria listed in section 9 of the act and the responsible minister issues written authorisation to the relevant intelligence agencies under the act. The proposed change corrects an anomaly in the Intelligence Services Act 2001 by specifying that the above requirements are in the act itself rather than in a ministerial direction, as is currently the case.

The same requirements are currently specified in the act for an Australian person who is overseas. This anomaly was noted in a question to the Hon. Senator Robert Hill from Senator Evans on 13 March 2002. The response to the senator’s question was incorporated in Hansard on 21 March 2002. This amendment in fact enhances accountability arrangements by proposing a legislative requirement that any collection on an Australian person in Australia needs to be authorised by the responsible minister.

There was also some interest in another matter relating to DSD’s compliance regime and Tampa. Tampa is often raised in relation to DSD. In his inquiry into that matter, the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security found that reports published by DSD had breached the 1998 rules on Signet and Australian persons. The inspector-general noted that it was not a trivial matter and the DSD immediately put in place a special internal instruction to ensure that there could not be a repetition of what had occurred on this particular occasion.

Since the implementation of the Intelligence Services Act 2001, DSD has established a dedicated compliance team to ensure that DSD meets international best practice in compliance with legislation governing its activities. This team is embedded in DSD’s operational elements and meets with staff from the inspector-general’s office once a month to provide updates on all DSD activity that has a compliance aspect. DSD has also engaged a specialist legal practitioner on a full-time basis, outposted from the Australian Government Solicitor’s office, to provide advice on all matters related to the Intelligence Services Act and other legislation affecting DSD.

The organisation has instigated a comprehensive education program developed specifically to address the requirements of the
act and the Telecommunications (Interception) Act as they relate to DSD’s activities. The Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security supports this program. He attends each course and provides participants with an opportunity to hear his views about compliance first hand. I think this demonstrates a very clear commitment to ensuring appropriate compliance is understood within the organisation. All DSD officers, including ADF personnel posted to DSD, are required to attend the full-day compliance course, regardless of where they work.

The courses are also run at all of DSD’s remote sites, and to date over 450 officers have received this training, with priority given to those engaged in the production of intelligence reports. DSD has also implemented technical and procedural measures which are designed to ensure that no communications passing over the Australian telecommunications network can be inadvertently collected by DSD.

I think you will see that these are very serious issues. They are relevant to national security. I welcome the remarks of those members who have identified the importance of intelligence and its role in supporting government policy formulation and decision-making processes as well as military operations. This is obviously a very important measure and I hope it will receive a speedy passage in this House. I commend the bill to the chamber.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Bill—by leave—taken as a whole.

Mr McCLELLAND (Barton) (7.15 pm)—by leave—I move opposition amendments (1) to (7) together:

(1) Schedule 1, page 5 (after line 21), after item 15, insert:

15A Section 3
Insert:

security has the same meaning as in the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Act 1979.

(2) Schedule 1, page 7 (after line 21), after item 23, insert:

23A At the end of section 9
Add:

(6) The responsible Minister must notify the Attorney-General within 24 hours of giving an authorisation under this section for an activity, or series of activities, of a kind mentioned in subparagraph 8(1)(a)(i) or (ii).

(7) The responsible Minister must notify the Attorney-General in writing and must specify the facts and other grounds on which the responsible Minister gave the authorisation.

(3) Schedule 1, page 8 (after line 6), after item 24, insert:

24A After section 9
Insert:

9B Warrants
The relevant agency head of ASIS, DSD and DIGO must obtain a warrant from the Attorney-General under section 9C before:

(a) undertaking an activity, or a series of activities, for the specific purpose, or for purposes which include the specific purpose, of producing intelligence on an Australian person who is in Australia; or

(b) undertaking, in accordance with a direction under paragraph 6(1)(e), an activity, or a series of activities, that will, or is likely to, have an effect on an Australian person who is in Australia.

(4) Schedule 1, page 8 (after line 6), after item 24, insert:

24B After section 9
Insert:
9C Issue of warrants

(1) A request by the relevant agency head of ASIS, DSD and DIGO for the issue of a warrant in respect of activities in paragraphs 9B(a) and (b) must specify:

(a) the facts and other grounds on which the relevant agency head considers it necessary that the warrant should be issued; and

(b) the grounds on which the relevant agency head considers that the issue of the warrant advances Australia’s national security interests.

(2) Where, on receipt by the Attorney-General of a request by the relevant agency head for the issue of a warrant under subsection (1), the Attorney-General is satisfied that:

(a) any activities which may be done in reliance on the warrant will be necessary for the proper performance of a function of the agency concerned; and

(b) there are satisfactory arrangements in place to ensure that nothing will be done in reliance of the warrant beyond what is necessary for the proper performance of a function of the agency; and

(c) there are satisfactory arrangements in place to ensure that the nature and consequences of acts done in reliance on the warrant will be reasonable, having regard to the purposes for which they are carried out;

the Attorney-General may, by warrant under his or her hand, subject to any conditions or restrictions that are specified in the warrant, authorise the relevant agency to undertake the activities of a kind mentioned in paragraphs 9B(a) and (b).

(3) Before the Attorney-General issues a warrant under this section for an activity, or a series of activities, of a kind mentioned in paragraph 9B(a) or (b), the Attorney-General must also:

(a) be satisfied that the Australian person mentioned in either of those paragraphs is, or is likely to be, involved in one or more of the following activities:

(i) activities that present a significant risk to a person’s safety; or

(ii) acting for, or on behalf of, a foreign power; or

(iii) activities that are, or are likely to be, a threat to security; or

(iv) activities related to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction or the movement of goods listed from time to time in the Defence and Strategic Goods List (within the meaning of regulation 13E of the Customs (Prohibited Exports) Regulations 1958); or

(v) committing a serious crime by moving money, goods or people; or

(vi) committing a serious crime by using or transferring intellectual property; or

(vii) committing a serious crime by transmitting data or signals by means of guided and/or unguided electromagnetic energy; or

(viii) an activity or activities that are, or are likely to be, a threat to security (whether or not covered by another subparagraph of this paragraph in addition to subparagraph (iii)).

(5) Schedule 1, page 8 (after line 6), after item 24, insert:

24C After section 9

Insert:

9D Content of warrants

(1) The Attorney-General may issue a warrant following a request in accordance with section 9C in relation to:

(a) an activity, or class of activities, specified in the warrant; or
(b) acts of a staff member or agent, or a class of staff members or agents, specified (whether by name or otherwise) in the warrant; or
(c) activities done for a particular purpose connected with the agency’s functions.

(2) A warrant is subject to any conditions specified in it.

(3) A warrant must be in writing and must specify how long it will have effect. The period of effect specified in a warrant for an activity or a series of activities, of a kind mentioned in subparagraph 8(1)(a)(i) or (ii), must not exceed 6 months.

(4) A warrant issued in accordance with section 9C may be revoked by the Attorney-General at any time before the end of the specified period of effect.

(5) If the Attorney-General issues a warrant under this section in relation to an agency, the relevant agency head must ensure that a copy of the warrant is kept by the agency and is available for inspection on request by the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security.

(6) Schedule 1, page 8 (after line 6), after item 24, insert:

24D After section 9
Insert:
9E Issue of subsequent warrants not prevented

(1) Subsection 9D(3) does not prevent the issue of any subsequent warrant.

(2) Before a subsequent warrant can be issued, the relevant agency head must again comply with subsection 9C(1).

(7) Schedule 1, page 10 (after line 6), after item 36, insert:

36A At the end of section 15
Add:

(7) The retention of incidentally obtained intelligence concerning Australians that is not publicly available, must be minimised.

We can be brief on this point. The bulk of these amendments goes to our proposals to implement the recommendation of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on ASIO, ASIS and DSD in respect of item 22 of the bill. That concerns the ministerial authorisation process for the obtaining of intelligence on Australians who are within Australia. The committee recommended that the regime that applies to the obtaining of such intelligence should be equivalent to that which applies to ASIO, our domestic intelligence organisation, and that that procedure should be a warrant procedure issued through the Attorney-General. We believe that warrant procedure will provide greater safeguards due to the fact that the Attorney-General is an officer other than the one responsible for these particular offshore agencies. In addition, the proposed warrant procedure is more formal than a mere authorisation procedure, with more formalised review processes.

Amendment (7) attempts to replicate provisions in equivalent legislation applying to ASIO in respect of the retention of incidentally obtained intelligence. We believe there should be a statement of policy in the legislation that the retention of incidentally obtained intelligence concerning Australians that is not publicly available should be minimised. That is the thrust of the second tier of our amendments. With that, I commend the amendments to the House.

Mr RUDDOCK (Berowra—Attorney-General) (7.18 pm)—Can I firstly assure the member for Barton that the amendments have been the subject of very careful consideration. While they are not supported, I want to make it clear that the issues have been looked at as questions that ought to be properly considered. Essentially, the substantive issue is that the opposition is suggesting that we should have a warrant from the Attorney-General before agencies are able to undertake activities for the purposes of producing
intelligence on an Australian person who is in Australia and for ASIS activities that will have an effect on an Australian person who is in Australia.

The amendments consist of a combination of provisions taken from the Telecommunications (Interception) Act as well as from the Intelligence Services Act. There are issues as to whether the opposition is proposing that the warrant system should co-exist with existing requirements or replace them. It seems to me that, if what you are seeking is a warrant, it is important to recognise that other than the person who is dealing with the issue, the Attorney or a minister, the processes are really the same. The practical difference is the terminology used. A warrant constitutes a written means of authorising the doing of a future specified act which may otherwise be unlawful. It transforms the nature of the act from unlawful to lawful.

Essentially, the government is saying in relation to these matters that collecting intelligence is not an unlawful act, and it is not something that has to be validated. So the authorisation procedure seems to us to be more appropriate. A proposed amendment for a warrant process implies that the activity of producing intelligence on an Australian person who is in Australia is illegal. That is not the case. The other practical difference between a warrant and ministerial authorisations involves which minister undertakes the task. The Attorney-General signs warrants; the responsible ministers for DSD and ASIS sign ministerial authorisations. The requirement for me as the Attorney-General to sign a warrant would in fact suggest that we would need to review the current arrangements in relation to ministerial accountability and responsibility generally. I say that because there are issues relating to the handling of warrants that go to ensuring that I do not undertake the warrant task lightly. They involve my department ensuring that I am briefed beforehand in situations where warrants are being sought that the lawful requirements for the issue of a warrant have been met. It is not just a question of procedures; it is a question of looking at whether the circumstances for the issue reflect the legal environment in which the agency is operating.

I am grateful for that advice. I have said in the parliament before that I have come to different views at times, for reasons that I will not elaborate on, as to why a particular warrant should not be granted at a particular point in time. That is a view that I am entitled to come to, but I am comforted by the fact that officers of my department look at those issues as a threshold before I turn my mind to whether there are matters which, in my judgment, I must take into account. That of course opens up on this very question of administrative arrangements whether, if you make the Attorney-General responsible—or jointly responsible—for aspects of foreign intelligence activity involving DSD, DIGO and ASIS, the issues relating to foreign intelligence collection should be in the Attorney-General’s Department. (Extension of time granted)

The other amendments proposed, in our view, add little weight to the accountability framework of intelligence agencies. They require agencies to notify the Attorney if an Australian person is involved in activities that are a threat to national security. The legislation already requires the agreement of the Attorney-General before a ministerial authorisation is given. To require agencies to minimise the retention of incidentally obtained intelligence, which occasionally does of course occur, incidentally collected intelligence is usually destroyed; however, incidentally obtained intelligence, if it were of foreign intelligence value, may be reported. This is done in accordance with the privacy

In making rules to protect the privacy of Australians, the responsible ministers for DSD, DIGO and ASIS must have regard to the need to ensure that the privacy of Australians is protected as far as possible. Section 15 of the act already has the effect of minimising incidentally obtained intelligence. The existing ministerial authorisation process is considered robust, vigorous and comparable to the similar provisions of the warrant process. Oversight of DSD, DIGO and ASIS operations and a ministerial authorisation process have been undertaken by the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security. This process will be strengthened by further specific provisions which have already been included in the Intelligence Services Legislation Amendment Bill 2005. For these reasons, the amendments are not supported but I assure the honourable member were given serious consideration.

Question negatived.

Bill agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr RUDDOCK (Berowra—Attorney-General) (7.25 pm)—by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

NATIONAL HEALTH AMENDMENT (IMMUNISATION PROGRAM) BILL 2005

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 14 September, on motion by Mr Abbott:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Ms GILLARD (Lalor) (7.26 pm)—The purpose of the National Health Amendment (Immunisation Program) Bill 2005 is to amend the National Health Act 1953 to improve the vaccine funding advisory arrangements for the government funded National Immunisation Program as announced in the 2005-06 budget. The intention of this bill, as stated in the explanatory memorandum, is to ensure that the vaccine funding advisory arrangements place emphasis on cost-effectiveness assessment and provide a transparent and robust framework for evaluating vaccines and making decisions on whether they should be publicly funded. The explanatory memorandum states the amendments will:

... provide for a stronger focus on cost-effectiveness assessment by utilising the established transparent and rigorous decision-making processes of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) for vaccine funding recommendations.

The amendments contained in this bill extend the role of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee to assume responsibility for evaluating the cost-effectiveness of vaccines. The government says that this is in order to provide a more consistent and transparent process for recommending vaccines for Australian government funding. The bill also comprehends amendments to allow the PBAC to specify in its recommendation to the minister those circumstances under which a vaccine should be listed for government subsidy.

The amendments also comprehend allowing the PBAC to advise the minister on any other matter referred to it by the minister in relation to the provision of designated vaccines. The amendments go to ensuring that before the minister removes a vaccine from the list of designated vaccines he or she obtains advice from the PBAC. The PBAC's advice must be tabled in both houses of parliament. And, finally, the amendments increase the total membership of the PBAC by two members. We certainly hope, though it is not clearly spelt out, that this means that
those two new members will have expertise in vaccines and immunisation policy.

The opposition will not be opposing this bill, but we do have a number of concerns which relate not so much to the substantive provisions in this bill but to the background that brought it to this place. I will describe that background, though there would be many members in this House who would remember these circumstances only too clearly. In particular, they would remember that the expert group that has advised Australia, and particularly the Australian government, on the cost and clinical effectiveness of vaccines to date, and up until the time that this bill is passed by the House and the Senate, has been the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation. It has been the job of these immunisation experts to assess new vaccines for cost and clinical effectiveness and, if they pass those tests, to recommend to the government that these vaccines be subsidised for the target population. Depending on the nature of the vaccine, the target population might be the whole of the population or it might be an age or gender based subset, but it is their job to recommend to the government who should receive the vaccine.

This is a system that has worked with considerable effectiveness for Australia until it hit a hurdle under the Howard government. Mr Deputy Speaker, if I could remind you of the hurdle that the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation hit, on 5 September 2002 the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation, ATAGI, advised the then Minister for Health and Ageing, Kay Patterson, of their recommendations that the government should fund: the replacement of an oral polio vaccine with inactivated polio vaccine for infants, the introduction of chickenpox vaccine for children and the introduction of pneumococcal vaccine for infants. These were new recommendations. They passed the clinical effectiveness tests. They passed the cost-effectiveness tests. In order to pass the cost-effectiveness tests, it must be absolutely clear that the cost of funding the vaccine will be less than the cost of meeting the burden of disease arising if the vaccine is not funded.

Some of these things might sound quite minor, but in truth these things are not minor when one considers their substantial health impact. The reason for moving from oral polio vaccine to inactivated polio vaccine is that there was some chance that someone could contract polio from the oral polio vaccine because it contained a live form of the virus whereas that was clinically impossible from the inactivated polio vaccine—so an important health safety measure. With respect to the chickenpox vaccine, many members in this place and in the Australian community would remember having chickenpox as a child and might think that that is just one of those mild childhood complaints. For most Australian children who contract chickenpox, that is true, but it is also true to say that chickenpox does kill Australians, including Australian children, and that there are cases where contracting chickenpox can lead to severe, ongoing disabilities.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly in the minds of the community, on 5 September 2002 ATAGI recommended the funding of the pneumococcal vaccine for infants. Most Australians I think would be aware from television programs and from horror stories that they have read in their local newspapers that there are two diseases that have caused real problems for Australian kids in particular—the meningococcal virus and the pneumococcal virus. Both diseases have a very rapid onset. Their symptoms of fevers and rashes can be easily confused with more common childhood complaints, but these are deadly or severely disabling illnesses, particularly if medical treatment is not available.
almost instantaneously. In the community there are many horror stories about kids who have caught meningococcal or pneumococcal disease and who have been dead 12 or 24 hours later. The meningococcal issue had been dealt with by way of vaccine and on 5 September 2002 the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation said: ‘Pneumococcal kills Australian children too. Pneumococcal disables Australian children too. Pneumococcal can be prevented by infants getting access to the pneumococcal vaccine and this is cost and clinically effective.’

You would think that a government in touch with the needs of the Australian community, a government competently focused on the task of defeating diseases in our community—diseases that can be defeated because of vaccines and because of medical research—would say, ‘We have this expert Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation for a reason. They have given advice, as they properly should, that these vaccines are cost and clinically effective. Our task as the government now is to get along with the funding of these vaccines.’ You would have hoped, Madam Deputy Speaker Bishop—and I am sure you did hope this at the time—that perhaps in the forthcoming budget round after the 5 September 2002 recommendation those vaccines would have been funded; so one would have looked to the May 2003 budget. But, of course, in the May 2003 budget the Howard government did nothing. Then in September 2003 the National Health and Medical Research Council made exactly the same recommendations as the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation. So now you have two of the foremost health bodies in this area, your experts in immunisation and vaccines and the incredibly well-respected, for good reason, National Health and Medical Research Council, saying, ‘Please, Howard government, there are three vaccines, one of them for a very deadly disease, the pneumococcal disease, that you need to fund. They are cost-effective and they are clinically effective. Can you please fund these vaccines?’ Even then, the Howard government did nothing.

We might debate, in moral philosophy, the difference between sins of omission and sins of commission, but it is generally believed that, if you omit to do something or you neglect to do something, that might be wrong, but it is not as badly wrong as deliberately considering whether or not to do something and choosing to do the wrong thing. We need to understand, in the lead-up to the May 2004 budget when the Howard government did not fund these vaccines, that the Howard government deliberately and knowingly chose to do the wrong thing. Its Expenditure Review Committee considered these matters. This was not a sin of omission; this was not paperwork lost in a back drawer of the department on this occasion. Of course, our health minister has been grossly incompetent on a number of occasions, but it was not on this occasion a grossly incompetent health minister failing to bring forward a recommendation.

On this occasion the most senior people in the Howard government, including the Prime Minister, the Treasurer, the Minister for Finance and Administration and people of that level of seniority, sat around a table and looked at a recommendation from the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation and the National Health and Medical Research Council dealing with three vaccines and two illnesses that kill children—chickenpox and the deadly pneumococcal—and deliberately determined not to fund those vaccines. This was a dreadful day in Australian politics. It became clear in the May 2004 budget that the Howard government had done this dreadfully wrong thing.
You might recall that the May 2004 budget was brought down in the lead-up to an election, a time when normally the Howard government loosen the purse strings and get out all sorts of giveaways. We certainly know that, in health, the classic expenditure pattern of the Howard government—and we are living through it again—is that for the couple of budgets after an election they cut health and other needed programs. They are in that cycle now. They did it in the last budget, a post-election budget, by hacking into the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. They hacked into the Medicare safety net, notwithstanding Minister Abbott’s now infamous rolled gold, rock-solid, ironclad guarantee. They have hacked into all those programs and done mind-numbingly mean things like taking calcium off the PBS. All of those things have been done in the recent budget because that is the classic Howard government pattern—after an election you cut back health.

You can track this mathematically. In the budget before an election they loosen up the purse strings and chuck a bit of money at health to try and massage any constituency concerns. They hope that will last long enough to get them through the election and then they go back to hacking into health. But even though they were actually in a pre-election budget—a budget full of giveaways and vote-buying exercises with money for all sorts of things that they thought needed to be massaged to buy votes—the Howard government’s most senior members, including the Prime Minister, the Treasurer, the minister for finance and the others making up the Howard government expenditure review committee, deliberately looked at these recommendations and said, ‘Nope, we are not funding those vaccines.’

What changed? Madam Deputy Speaker, I will tell you one thing that changed. The Thursday Labor announced that it was committed to funding the pneumococcal vaccine in what was a very emotional press conference involving a small child, Bella, who had contracted the pneumococcal virus and, thankfully, had successfully won that fight for her life. Her mother, who had taken a very brief break from her bedside when baby Bella was literally fighting for her life, picked up a magazine at the hospital and read an article that said her child could have been immunised against this dreadful illness. But, of course, she did not know a vaccine was available, and the Howard government was not paying for that vaccine.

So Labor announced not only that it was going to fund the pneumococcal vaccine but that it was going to fund the other vaccines as recommended—that is, it was going to meet every recommendation that ATAGI and the National Health and Medical Research Council had laid out. I well remember the day when, in the most inelegant and see-through of political manoeuvres two days after the budget, because Labor announced its commitment to properly fund these vaccines, the Minister for Health and Ageing had a scrambled press conference where he announced that he too would fund the pneumococcal vaccine. There was laughable scrambling around. The principal policy document of the Howard government was released on the Tuesday and the pneumococcal vaccine funding was not in that. Then the Minister for Health and Ageing, Tony Abbott, got a heads-up—presumably from someone in the media or whatever—that Labor was about to announce its commitment to funding these vaccines. He was playing catch-up politics and, with cynicism dripping from every pore, he tried to scramble around and say, ‘The Howard government is committed to funding the pneumococcal vaccine as well.’
But even on that day the Howard government did not commit to the funding of the chickenpox vaccine and the new form of vaccine for polio. Of course, Labor having successfully campaigned to get the pneumococcal vaccine funded went on to say that the other recommendations needed to be met as well—the chickenpox and the injectable polio vaccines. Minister Abbott, under political pressure on these questions, did what the Howard government has done so many times: he tried to stand over the independent advisory body. We have seen this before. It is a feature of the way the Howard government deals with independent experts. It does not matter who it is. The Federal Police Commissioner comes to mind as someone who has suffered through this cycle in the past. If the Howard government does not like what you are saying, it goes into standover mode. The Minister for Health and Ageing, Tony Abbott, stood over the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation and said, ‘In respect of these recommendations about the new form of vaccine for polio and the chickenpox vaccine, I am sending them back to you for reconsideration.’ Reconsideration, of course, is a word that hides a whole lot of malice in its intent.

It speaks volumes for the integrity of the people who made up the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation that, even under that kind of political pressure, where they had the minister standing over them and they were basically told to somehow revisit their recommendation and cook up a new one that the minister liked a bit better than the old one, these people stood their ground and recommended again that the Howard government should fund these vaccines. It speaks volumes for the integrity of the people making up the committee. It also speaks volumes about the predisposition of the minister for health when he gets advice that he does not like.

Finally, in March 2005, we ended up with these vaccines being funded as well. On the Thursday after the May 2004 budget, the minister for health gave a hurried press conference basically saying, ‘I’m thinking I will—I probably will—fund the pneumococcal vaccine.’ He finally confirmed that in June 2004. He tried to stand over ATAGI. He could not crack them. They stood up to him. Finally, he had to realise that that was not going to work and he funded the polio and chickenpox vaccines. The minister for health might have been dragged kicking and screaming to this decision, but he did not forget. In part this legislation, with the abolition of the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation, is here because the minister did not forget or forgive the independent experts who had caused him a political problem by standing up for what they believed in.

This does not mean that the new arrangements will not work and it does not mean that the new arrangements cannot work under a competent minister for health—and one day in this country we will get a competent minister for health; we do not have one now—but part of the motivation that has brought the bill to this place is that the minister is in payback mode. He does not like it when people stand up to him. The proposal to basically get rid of ATAGI and to have its role subsumed by the PBAC was included in the last budget—that is, the May 2005 budget—without any consultation with, or advice to, ATAGI. This resulted in the immediate resignation of the chair of ATAGI, Professor George Rubin—a man of principle, a man who is prepared to stand up for what he believes in, no matter what political pressure is being put on him. And to this day ATAGI is still without a chair. It concerns us that this is the history of this bill. The history of this bill is not a road paved with good intentions. It is a road paved with very callow politics.
on the health minister’s part. It is the kind of behaviour that he is only too famous for in the public domain. The road to this bill has been paved with that sort of ill intent, but the bill is here now and we would like to see the government get it in a form where it is going to work.

When we were briefed by the Department of Health and Ageing about the National Health Amendment (Immunisation Program) Bill 2005, no information was provided about exactly how ATAGI and the PBAC would work together in the future and how the PBAC would utilise the expertise of ATAGI. ATAGI still has a minimum role but it will not be the decision maker, the way it has been in the past. The legislation provides for the addition of two new people to the PBAC, and it is assumed but not specified that these people will need to have immunisation experience. There is no reassurance that one of these people would be the chair of ATAGI, which would obviously be one way to ensure the effective integration of information. We are concerned about that, and we would certainly want some reassurances from the minister for health that, whilst his downgrading of ATAGI was no doubt motivated by payback, he will make the right sorts of arrangements to make this work.

We are also concerned that the way in which ATAGI has historically looked at the question of vaccines and the way in which the PBAC has historically looked at the question of vaccines is different. ATAGI has always looked at vaccines through the prism of the National Immunisation Program—that is, ATAGI has had a disposition towards the provision of vaccines universally, not necessarily population-wide but certainly to affected populations. It worked through a prism of universal provision to the relevant section of the population. It has had considerations in its mind about public health issues, about what is called the ‘herd immunity’—that is, vaccination strategies work best if everybody is vaccinated because that is the way of eradicating the virus. The world no longer has the scourge of smallpox because of the way in which universal vaccination works. That has been the prism through which ATAGI has made its decisions. On the other hand, the PBAC has historically considered vaccines through the prism of cost and clinical effectiveness, and much more on the basis of putting into place very targeted arrangements for vaccines. It has not had the public health prism in quite the same way that ATAGI has in order to try and work out what role vaccines should be playing and what government funding should flow.

So we have concerns about this, and particularly about the way that vaccines will be considered in the future. We are concerned that, with the PBAC now being the principal driver, they will be taking an approach to the listing of vaccines like the approach they have taken to hepatitis A and influenza where they are not looking at them as broadly based public health measures; they are looking at cost-effectiveness tests.

We are concerned that the increasing predisposition of the Howard government—and this has in fact been stated in briefings to us—is to view the future of vaccines not as great new breakthroughs to be made on the universal provision of vaccines as a public health matter but as lifestyle vaccines for highly targeted vaccine populations who require the vaccine because of some particular set of circumstances. We are concerned that we are now at a stage where the Howard government is looking at vaccines through that prism. Over the coming period, this country will be required to make some decisions about the provision of vaccines, which I would say are decisions that ought to be made through the prism of universality and public health measures rather than through
the prism of the provision of highly targeted vaccine provision—the so-called lifestyle conditions that then attract a predisposition to needing a vaccine.

One example of that—and I think it is a very critical one—is the vaccine that is now under development for the human papilloma virus, which we know is implicated in a number of cancers but most especially cervical cancer. This is a great Australian invention and we should be incredibly proud of it. Every year in Australia, 700 cases of cervical cancer are diagnosed and there are about 270 deaths. We know that this vaccine appears to have the potential—when used as a population health measure, viewed through the prism of universality for young people—to eradicate that kind of cancer in our population. Girls growing up in the current generation and girls born this year will never have to think about cervical cancer in the same way the women in this parliament throughout their lives have had to think about it. They will not have to think about risk factors in relation to it because a vaccine will be available. It is a complete medical miracle.

If someone had said to me in a casual conversation that viruses can lead to cancer, I would have said—as a non-medical person—‘I think that is confusing two concepts: viruses are one thing and cancers are another thing,’ which just goes to show how much I know. This virus is the predisposition for a number of cancers, but especially cervical cancer. It does not mean that everybody who has the virus—and, apparently, 75 per cent of people are infected with the virus at some time in their lives—will go on to develop the cancer, but the virus is a precondition to getting the cancer. CSL is obviously the driver of this miracle and the head of CSL, Dr Brian McNamee, said:

We have a responsibility to the Australian public and our regional partners and others to actually get the vaccine out there.

I think that sentiment is right. That is an issue that this nation is going to have to process at some point through the prism of population and public health measures—not, in my view, through the prism of asking who is particularly at risk because of lifestyle factors. At some point we will have to confront the question of the provision of this vaccine to at least all girls and, given that this virus is associated with other cancers, possibly to all boys as well. Obviously, that is something that doctors will have to work out for us. But it is a population health measure and it will need to be looked at through that prism. We are concerned that, in downgrading ATAGI and in moving to the PBAC, that focus on population health measures could well be lost.

As I said at the start, Labor are not opposing this bill; we are worried about the conduct of the Howard government that brought it here. We believe that it can be made to work by a government that will show a better disposition in dealing with vaccine issues—particularly the funding of them—than the Howard government has shown at any time during the last three to four years. We need a better performance from the Howard government if we are going to accept its bona fides on providing vital vaccines to the Australian community. I conclude my remarks by moving the second reading amendment, which will be seconded by the member for Shortland. I move:

That all words after “That” be omitted with a view to substituting the following words: “whilst not declining to give the bill a second reading, the House expresses its concern that the Government has:

(1) consistently ignored the expert advice of the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) with respect to the inclusion of pneumococcal, oral polio and chicken pox vaccines on the National Immunisation Program;
(2) failed to consult with ATAGI prior to announcing this change in its role in vaccine approval;

(3) failed to publicly state how ATAGI and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee will work together on the approval and listing of vaccines for the National Immunisation Program and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme; and

(4) established a mechanism whereby it will be increasingly difficult for new vaccines, such as the vaccine recently announced against cervical cancer, to be listed for universal use’.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. BK Bishop)—Is the amendment seconded?

Ms Hall—I second the amendment.

Mrs MOYLAN (Pearce) (7.56 pm)—I find it extraordinary sitting here listening to the attack by the shadow minister for health on the Howard government. I have been in this place for a fair while longer than the shadow minister has. I remember in 1996, when the Howard government took office, that the then minister for health, Michael Wooldridge, was deeply concerned about the actions of many of the state governments—many of them Labor—in allowing the immunisation program across Australia to get into such a terrible state where young children, in particular, were not being immunised at a very high rate. That was deeply concerning. Today we live in a very different and a very mobile environment where children are exposed nationally and internationally and where many young children—sometimes small babies—are admitted at an early age to kindergartens and child-care centres. It puts them at high risk.

We have listened to this incredible lecture by the shadow minister for health—who has now left the chamber—about the Howard government’s record, but I would put it to the House that the Labor government has had an appalling record on immunisation programs. I now go back to where I really wanted to begin, having got that off my chest.

Mr Tanner—Do you feel better?

Mrs MOYLAN—Yes, I do.

Ms Hall—Bring back Michael Wooldridge.

Mrs MOYLAN—You have to give Michael Wooldridge credit for having implemented this National Immunisation Program. It was one of the very significant things done by Michael Wooldridge, whom I consider to be a very fine former minister of the Commonwealth. In the 21st century, Australia has been characterised by the near elimination of childhood diseases, such as tetanus, measles, mumps and other diseases which, in the past, caused very high rates of mortality and morbidity in the nation’s children.

Today, many Australian adults still suffer from the long-term complications of polio. In fact, some people in my electorate do. They were the lucky ones who survived the ravages of this disease, because many families were devastated by the death of young children who managed to get polio. I remember those years very well, and those families were not so fortunate. The dreaded lockjaw, as tetanus was referred to, causes rigidity in its victims and the jaw to lock. The medical fraternity recognises that dying from tetanus is one of the most painful deaths mankind can experience. The bacteria can very simply enter the body through any cut or scratch and it is found naturally in the soil everywhere. It has the most dreadful effect on babies, in particular, whose chances of surviving tetanus are virtually zero.

These are some of the reasons why the Commonwealth, under the Howard government, has taken a leading role in ensuring that our country’s children are protected against these preventable childhood diseases; but, probably due to the elimination of what, in the past, we referred to as common child-
hood diseases, they do not occupy or exercise our minds so greatly today. Yet children, as I said, are increasingly vulnerable due to greater mobility, nationally and internationally, and the earlier exposure of very young children and babies in preschools and childcare centres. Our immunisation programs have been substantially successful in protecting children and adults from the harmful effects of bacteria that could otherwise lead to greater exposure to a long list of life-threatening illnesses.

The health risks of childhood diseases saw immunisation programs administered through infant health centres throughout Australia in the 1940s. As the years pass, we rarely encounter those life-threatening diseases that we saw in the 1950s but not in the 1990s. Childhood immunisation slipped to dangerously low levels in the 1990s, with few states and territories requiring proof of immunisation for entry to school and childcare centres, and immunisation rates for 12-month-old children fell to as low as 53 per cent. Allowing immunisation rates to get to that very low level was a serious dereliction of duty and it seriously put our nation’s young children at risk. As I said, it was not until the Howard government took office in 1996 that the then minister recognised the serious risk that such a low level of immunisation posed for children. With an emphasis on encouraging parents to have their children immunised, the government increased funding from $13 million in 1996 to $288 million in 2004-5.

The National Immunisation Program is a joint Commonwealth, state and territory government initiative through which vaccines are provided free of charge to the Australian community for the prevention of diseases such as diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, polio, measles, mumps, rubella and hep B. We have now added some vaccines to that list. Prior to the government’s announcement in the 2005-6 budget, the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation provided advice to the minister on vaccines suitable for funding under the NIP and advice to the National Health and Medical Research Council on the clinical administration of vaccines. That task will now transfer to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee. That change requires these amendments so as to allow the PBAC to consider vaccines for funding under the NIP. The PBAC will retain the ability to assess vaccines for suitability for subsidisation through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme and it will provide advice on cost effectiveness, in a transparent and rigorous way, commencing in 2006.

The PBAC is a statutory body established under the National Health Act 1953 and it has developed a reputation as a world leader in the rigorous application of evidence based assessment in the development of funding recommendations. The PBAC process rewards innovative medicines that demonstrably improve the health of Australians. I am sure that the issues raised by the shadow minister for health about the human papilloma virus and new vaccinations will be taken into account, as are other vaccines, under this new program. As I said, the process rewards innovative medicines, so I am sure that this will not be any different. ATAGI will continue to be resourced to continue to provide evidence based clinical advice to the National Health and Medical Research Council and advice to the minister on the medical administration of vaccines. This body is well resourced to provide this clinical advice, and this amendment builds on the government’s work in previous years to ensure a high level of immunisation cover.

With new strains of influenza and other infectious diseases, the need for new vaccines and the development of complex technologies requires the government to examine
the cost effectiveness of vaccines. Again, with new strains of influenza, such as bird flu, and other infectious diseases, such as the human papilloma virus, we would be derelict in our duty if we did not look at this. We must look at the effectiveness of vaccines and make sure that the public are getting value for money.

I would like to talk for a moment about pneumococcal disease. According to Dr Michael Nissen, a consultant in paediatric infectious diseases and microbiology at the Children’s Hospital in Brisbane, pneumococcal disease is a leading cause of meningitis in children under two. He says:

Pneumococcal disease is a bacterial infection that causes significant illness every year in children, such as meningitis (infection of the lining of the brain) …

I know about meningitis because my older sister, who is no longer with us, suffered from it as a child. And it has a number of other side effects and serious implications. Dr Nissen says:

Pneumococcal bacteria can cause a range of severe illnesses in children such as ear infections and the more serious meningitis.

The pneumococcal bug is carried in the nose and throats of healthy adults and children. It can be passed from one child to another in droplets that are released into the air by sneezing and coughing. If they haven’t done so already, I would strongly urge parents and caregivers to talk to their GP or healthcare professional about having their children vaccinated.

The important thing is that the government did provide in July, in the last year’s budget, $178 million to ensure that this could take place: to make sure that all infants born after 1 January 2005 would be vaccinated and protected against this disease as part of the standard newborn vaccination program. The government also implemented a catch-up program for children who were born after 1 January 2003. It is important that any parents who may be listening to this debate tonight note that they have a few months left in which to ensure that they take advantage of the government’s offer of free vaccination for children born after 1 January 2003. That vaccination is available in 2005 under the catch-up program.

As new threats, such as the Asian bird flu, emerge, it is essential that the government has a sound process for considering new vaccines and ensuring that people are afforded protection from infectious diseases. These amendments will ensure that decisions about vaccine funding are subject to the same high level of scrutiny as PBS medicines. These changes will continue to give full effect to the government’s commitment to ensure that Australians continue to access free vaccinations to protect them against vaccine preventable diseases through the National Immunisation Program. An additional $7.8 million will be allocated to the PBAC in 2005-06 to 2008-09 to assist its expanded role. In relation to these changes, I refer to a comment made by the Secretary of the Department of Health and Ageing. Jane Halton. She said:

The reality is that cost-benefit analysis is actually a highly specialised activity. ATAGI has done a fantastic job over the last however many years, but the volume of work and the level of technical expertise that is required in respect of vaccines and analysis has become infinitely more complicated in the last few years. Really, that is what the PBAC does par excellence. I think the government’s decision is a reflection of what is a new world in this area. So giving that part of the job to the group who have actually demonstrated expertise is a fairly logical conclusion.

The government, through its leadership and in consultation with the states and territories, has overseen a world-class immunisation system and is proud of its record of achievement in funding vaccines. I must say too that we are proud of what our scientists have achieved. We have some of the best
scientists in the world. I know that our government supports these people in their work and is very proud of what they have done. The state and territory governments are provided funds by the Commonwealth to purchase vaccines under the National Immunisation Program so that they can ensure that the target population can have access to free immunisation programs.

While they have worked well in the past, the immunisation advisory structures have not changed since 1998—even though the vaccine costs of immunisation programs have increased. These changes are necessary if the government is to maintain a high-quality, cost-effective vaccination program. The government has an obligation to the people of Australia to achieve that. There are differences between vaccines and pharmaceuticals, as vaccines are used mainly for preventing disease whereas pharmaceuticals are used for therapeutic purposes. Vaccine cost modelling will therefore take account of the health benefits to the community that are unique to vaccines. This has been an argument used for why this change should not take place, but I think that, while there are differences, that difference will be taken into account and will take into account the health benefits to the community that are unique to vaccines. The government will ensure that additional members are appointed to the PBAC and its relevant subcommittees who have vaccine specific clinical and economic expertise. In conclusion, I believe the government has made a very strong case for these amendments to the National Immunisation Program. I support these amendments.

Ms HALL (Shortland) (8.12 pm)—I am sure that all members on both sides of this parliament support the National Immunisation Program that exists within Australia. Every member of this House can see the benefit that it has delivered to our nation and every member would be very keen to see the benefits that have been gained continue. I support the second reading amendment moved by the shadow minister to the National Health Amendment (Immunisation Program) Bill 2005. In doing so, I think it is very important to make a couple of points to draw to the attention of the House some of the issues that we have concerns about whilst not wishing to stop the passage of this bill.

The bill amends the National Health Act 1953 by transferring funding advisory arrangements for vaccines from the vaccine experts—I emphasise ‘experts’—the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation, ATAGI, to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee. Also, under this legislation there will be an increase in the size of the PBAC by two members. The legislation provides for the Chair of the PBAC to be a full-time position, something that will be quite beneficial. It provides an additional $7.8 million over four years to the PBAC to expand its role in relation to vaccines.

I do have some concerns. Whilst there is going to be the additional $7.8 million over four years for the PBAC—it will result in some savings for the government—I am concerned that this could be a cost-cutting exercise. I am concerned about the motivation of the government in introducing these changes, and I will speak a little more about that later in my speech. I am concerned that these changes are not motivated by good public health policy but, rather, that there is political motivation for these changes.

Vaccination, as we all know, is terribly important for disease reduction and disease control. To see this, you only have to look at some of the changes that have taken place over the years with the vaccinations for diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, polio—my own grandfather had polio and was quite disabled by it. There are also measles—how
many people have been very badly affected and had residual disabilities as a result of measles? There are mumps, rubella and even chickenpox—what has been seen as being quite a harmless childhood disease takes the lives of 19 young Australians each year. There is also hep B, pneumococcal, and the list goes on and on. In the future there will be many other vaccines developed that will be used for the prevention of diseases. I mentioned polio earlier. Polio leaves a person with residual disabilities, and in recent times there has been the emergence of the post-polio syndrome. These are all disabilities and diseases that have an impact on our community as a whole and all diseases that have been shown to be avoidable through immunisation and prevention and by making good public health decisions. Prevention is the way of the future. Prevention is much better than cure.

It was in 1997 that advice was provided to the government about the National Immunisation Program by ATAGI. It was seen to be a good idea in 1997 that there be an expert body set up to give advice on immunisation. ATAGI was a child of the Howard government, and now I hear members on the other side of this House arguing that this body, which was set up specifically to look at immunisation issues with specific expertise in that area, is no longer good enough. It no longer has the expertise. It can no longer make the recommendations to government. That raises some questions for me. Why has there been this turnabout? Why does the government no longer think that ATAGI, which was established to give advice and make recommendations on the technical and scientific elements of the National Immunisation Program and on funding and policy issues, can do that job?

I think there is some politics involved in here, and that makes me very sad because I believe that decisions about immunisation should be made based on population health issues, the issues that determine what is best for our population, what will deliver the best public health outcomes and what is the best decision in the area of community health—not based on politics. If we go down that track then we are in danger of losing some of the benefits that have been gained.

The previous speaker in this debate, the member for Pearce, made some comments about the previous health minister, Dr Michael Wooldridge. I know he was very committed to immunisation and I suspect he would be quite concerned about these changes. He would hate to think that the government that he was part of did not have the same commitment to and passion for immunisation that he had and is prepared to slip it across to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee, a statutory body established to advise the government on which drugs and medicines should be listed with the PBS. I do not think it is good enough. I really do not. The government argues that the PBAC is a logical choice for the role of providing funding advice on vaccines, since it has developed a reputation as being a world leader in the rigorous application of evidence based assessments of new medications. I still argue that it does not have the expertise that ATAGI has.

The intention of the bill is to ensure that the vaccine funding advisory arrangements place emphasis on the cost effectiveness of the assessment. I think it is very important that there is this cost effectiveness aspect to any listing of medications or to any immunisation program, but I feel first and foremost that the issues that need to be considered are those that relate to public health, the best outcome for the community and the best outcome for all the people who we represent in this parliament. I would like to put on record here my concern that the Howard government has consistently ignored advice that it
has received from ATAGI and from other experts in these areas. I think that the Howard government is increasingly looking to reduce immunisation costs, and that is where I worry about the cost-effectiveness aspect of the PBAC. At the beginning of my contribution to this debate I mentioned the fact that this will be cost neutral. It will actually lead to a reduction of expenditure by the government, and this is where I start to have concerns about the motivation.

The Howard government has a record of ignoring the recommendations of ATAGI. We saw most recently with the pneumococcal, the oral polio and chickenpox vaccines that the government ignored the advice of ATAGI—their experts. The minister for health was not happy with the recommendation made to him by ATAGI, and he sent it back for them to reconsider their advice. Being the experts, the people that know what is best for the Australian people, the body that has first and foremost the concern of population and public health in Australia, they refused to change their recommendation. They knew that the best immunisation for Australians was the oral polio and chickenpox vaccines and that the pneumococcal immunisation was needed. We on this side of the House placed pressure on the government to make a commitment to these vaccinations, and it finally agreed to this. It finally listened to the advice of its experts, and these vaccines are now available through the NIP.

I wonder whether or not the downgrading of ATAGI’s role in vaccines listing is payback time—payback for not being subservient to the government and for not agreeing to the request of the health minister to back away from their recommendation. I believe there are some serious questions about the motivation for this legislation and the motivation behind these amendments. I believe strongly, and I know that my colleagues on this side of the House believe, that it is imperative that vaccinations continue to be made available to Australians as more vaccines are developed. The decisions about whether or not those vaccines should be provided through the National Immunisation Program should be based purely and simply on public health issues; they should not be based on issues that are developed by the minister for health in some esoteric way or in an attempt to cut the costs of our immunisation program. It is far too important to Australians as a whole.

Whilst the intention of this bill, as stated in the explanatory memorandum, is to ensure that the vaccine funding advisory arrangements place emphasis on cost-effective assessment and to provide a transparent and robust framework for evaluating vaccines and making decisions on whether or not to publicly fund them, I have concerns. ATAGI is the body that is best able to make decisions about whether or not the vaccine should be available and what the best vaccine is, and I have concerns that now we are going to get the second best, with the decisions being made by the PBAC. Whilst there are going to be two extra members on that board, I think that it will not be quite the same.

ATAGI currently comprises a chairman nominated and endorsed by the Minister for Health and Ageing, who is a member of the NHMRC Health Advisory Committee; the chairman of the National Immunisation Committee; three clinical paediatricians with particular expertise in immunisation; two members with expert immunisation program delivery expertise; a public health physician; a clinical microbiologist; a representative from the National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance; a representative from the Australian Division of General Practitioners; a representative from the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners; a representative from the Consumers’ Health
Forum; and a representative from the Department of Health and Ageing. In addition, ATAGI may appoint expert working parties comprising members of ATAGI and other persons nominated by ATAGI or other peak advisory groups with specific expert knowledge to address particular issues. I am not convinced that those people do not have the expertise to make the best decisions about immunisation. I do not believe that there could be any statutory body that would be better placed to make that decision than those I have mentioned here.

To go back to what I was speaking about a moment ago in relation to the vaccines that the minister was very slow to list on 5 December 2002, ATAGI advised the then health minister, Senator Patterson, of their recommendations to the government. These recommendations were replacement of the oral polio vaccine with inactivated polio vaccine for infants, introduction of a chickenpox vaccine for children and introduction of the pneumococcal vaccine for infants—very important. The government ignored these recommendations until June 2004, when the minister was forced to introduce these vaccines under the NIP after a strong campaign from us on this side of the House and after ATAGI refused to reconsider its recommendations. ATAGI knew that that was what was best for Australia. It knew that that would deliver the best health outcomes to the people of Australia. That is its role: to evaluate vaccines and determine whether or not they are suitable. The vaccines are now being administered here in Australia and I know that they will deliver outstanding outcomes.

My other concern is one that the shadow minister, the member for Lalor, mentioned, and that relates to any new vaccines. The minister’s staff, I understand, have indicated that any new vaccines would be for lifestyle conditions and they would not require listing with the NIP. I hope that the PBAC do not agree with what the minister’s staff were saying. We have the new cervical cancer vaccine that is designed to give immunity to the human papilloma virus, which causes cervical cancer. I think it should be embraced by the government and not put aside as a lifestyle choice. While supporting this bill, I do have the concerns that I have outlined here to the House. I am concerned that this is motivated more by payback and cost cutting than by good public health policy.

Mr WOOD (La Trobe) (8.32 pm)—I stand in support of the National Health Amendment (Immunisation Program) Bill 2005. I must first make a point about something that has been raised by a number of Labor colleagues. I strongly believe that past behaviour predicts future performance. When Labor was last in government in 1995 the immunisation rate was roughly 50 per cent. After great efforts by Dr Michael Wooldridge, it is now over 90 per cent. So while we are in government the public can be assured that we will do everything that can be done to protect the young children of this nation and ensure that they are properly immunised.

The aim of the National Health Amendment (Immunisation Program) Bill is to ensure that the National Immunisation Program can be delivered with consistency and transparency. The National Immunisation Program consists of all state governments and the Australian government. Its function is to provide free vaccines to Australians. Currently the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee—the PBAC—provides advice to the Minister for Health and Ageing regarding pharmaceuticals. This role will now be extended to include providing recommendations on which vaccines should be funded through the National Immunisation Program. As science and technology are developing new vaccines at a rapid pace, the PBAC is required to provide analysis of the cost effec-
tiveness of each vaccine before it is funded within the national program. It is essential to review the role of the PBAC as the level of government expenditure on vaccines has increased dramatically. The advisory structure has not been reviewed since 1998. The National Immunisation Program must be able to respond to the development of new and more complex vaccines in an efficient and effective manner. This can be done through a revision of the PBAC function.

We have not always been proud of our immunisation coverage record. We have had childhood immunisation programs in place since the 1920s, reducing the impact of vaccine-preventable diseases such as polio, tetanus and diphtheria. However, we have traditionally experienced poor immunisation coverage, prompting a series of national initiatives, beginning with the National Health and Medical Research Council—the NHMRC—convening a panel to review services in 1993. By 1993-94 vaccine-preventable diseases were still occurring in Australia, with large outbreaks of measles and rubella. The only national immunisation coverage data came from a national survey by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, which in 1995 found that 52.1 per cent of children aged zero to six years were fully immunised for age, excluding Hib. The level of full immunisation for the same group from an earlier ABS survey in 1989-90 was similar, at 54.1 per cent.

Cases of measles and rubella continued to occur in the 1990s as the level of immunisation coverage remained below the level of 90 to 95 per cent, which is required to interrupt transmission. As a result, a national immunisation strategy was born that set targets for immunisation coverage and control of vaccine-preventable diseases and recommended initiatives to achieve these targets. The National Childhood Immunisation Program began in 1995 and the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register was established by the federal and state governments in January 1996. Once the coalition came to office in March 1996, efforts were made to build on this foundation to improve Australia’s poor record of immunisation. In 1997 the Minister for Health and Family Services, Dr Michael Wooldridge, initiated a seven-point plan to increase the proportion of fully immunised children in Australia. The plan included monetary incentives, commencing in mid-1998, for parents whose children received child-care assistance payments and incentives for GPs to fully immunise children. This was a fantastic initiative by the minister which showed great vision.

Since that time the coalition’s commitment to immunisation has been exceptional, bringing our immunisation system to levels which we can be proud of. Immunisation coverage rates for 12-month-old children have been higher than 90 per cent for the last five years. We have also seen a decrease in the number of cases of diseases which can be prevented through vaccination. These statistics are a result of the coalition’s commitment to protect its citizens from disease—which it has done through record levels of funding. In 1996 the federal government spent $13 million a year on vaccines, compared to $288 million in the 2004-05 period. This represents a 22-fold increase.

The coalition government is committed to ensuring that Australians are receiving immunisation through existing programs as well as new programs. At the beginning of 2005 a new universal childhood pneumococcal vaccine program began to provide free pneumococcal conjugate vaccine at the ages of two, four and six months for all children born on or after 1 January 2005. The program also includes a catch-up component. All children born from 1 January 2003 to 31 December 2004 are eligible for free vaccines during 2005.
The pneumococcal disease can lead to an infection around the brain, blood infection, pneumonia and middle ear infection. It is transmitted through coughing and sneezing or through contact with infected articles. It can be carried through the throat and nose. Initial signs of infection in children can include fever, refusal to eat, and the child looking unwell. Children may also become quiet or continually distressed. Older children may have puffy eyes and an aversion to bright light.

In 2003 the National Immunisation Program implemented a program to provide free meningococcal C immunisation for those aged between 12 months and 19 years. Meningococcal is an uncommon but life-threatening infection. It is caused by bacteria that live in the throat. About 10 per cent of our community has these bacteria at any given time. Not all carriers become sick. The bacteria spread through coughing and sneezing, but it is not easy to become infected as the bacteria do not live long outside body. Symptoms include sudden fever, headaches, drowsiness, stiff joints and vomiting. In children signs to watch for include a high-pitched moaning cry, difficulty waking the baby, blotchy skin or refusal to eat.

I will just go back to the issue of meningococcal C. I can convey a story from my time in my previous role in the Victorian Police Force. One day a young female constable was coming to work. She had to work the van shift. On the way to work she became ill and decided that she needed to head directly to the hospital. When she got to the hospital the doctors took her straight into casualty. They gave her two hours to live as she had meningococcal C. Luckily for her she survived but she spent six months in hospital. That is how life-threatening this can be for a 25-year-old, let alone a young child.

Earlier this year the Minister for Health and Ageing announced funding for a new program to provide free chickenpox vaccines for children at 18 months of age and for children aged 10 to 13 years who have not been vaccinated or who have not had the disease. Chickenpox is common among children, beginning suddenly with fever, headache, fatigue and feeling itchy followed by a rash which turns into scabs over a few days. The disease can cause serious complications such as skin infections, pneumonia, and inflammation of the brain—and in some cases the illness can be fatal. It is easily transmitted by children and if not vaccinated against the disease, children are likely to contract it at some stage. Approximately eight to 10 varicella-related deaths are recorded each year. That may surprise people. Over 40 per cent of these deaths occur in people aged 65 years and over.

The elimination of measles was targeted by the coalition and driven by the then Minister for Health and Aged Care, Dr Michael Wooldridge, as part of Immunise Australia: the seven point plan. Initiatives which were developed to combat measles included the sustained, optimal measles vaccination at twelve months and four years of age; enhanced measles surveillance and reporting; and a capacity and preparedness for a rapid control response to measles cases. The coalition also announced additional funding of $20 million to fund measles, mumps and rubella vaccination for young adults between 18 and 30 years of age as they proved to be a high risk category.

The coalition is not only committed to the immunisation of our infants; the government has implemented programs to protect our seniors as well. Programs for older Australians—such as the National Pneumococcal Vaccination Program for Older Australians and the national influenza vaccine program—allow free vaccines for those aged 65
years and older. The National Indigenous Pneumococcal and Influenza Immunisation Program also provides support for our Indigenous community as the pneumococcal rates are highest among Indigenous children. These programs are only some of the government’s commitments to protecting the health of Australians.

Our national immunisation policy is important as it directly impacts on our local constituents. The 2001 census indicates that around 7.4 per cent of La Trobe residents are under four years of age and require protection from serious disease. On Monday, 29 August this year I visited some of these tiny residents at the Belgrave South Maternal Health Centre. It was also a good opportunity to launch La Trobe’s growth chart, which highlights the importance of immunisation. The chart includes a hotline and, most importantly, will raise the awareness of immunisation throughout the electorate. There is also a website that provides details of new vaccinations that are available and a link to the Australian Immunisation Handbook, the bible of immunisation information. This website is essential in helping new parents come to terms with how best to protect their children in the early stages of their development. There is a question and answer section which covers most questions asked by parents regarding immunisation facts.

The Belgrave South Maternal Health Centre is run by the Shire of Yarra Ranges, which covers a substantial part of my electorate of La Trobe. Present at the launch of the growth chart were the Maternal and Child Health Coordinator, Jenny Fisher, and maternal and child-care nurse, Ann Ferguson. I greatly appreciated their hospitality on the day. They were joined by David Hodgett, Mayor of the Shire of Yarra Ranges, whom I can now congratulate as the Liberal candidate for the seat of Kilsyth, and local resident Sue McMillan. Kylie Henry, mother of baby Alysha Jade, was present to talk with me about early childhood development issues and immunisation. Baby Alysha also made her public debut in my local newsletter, and I am sure she will be very proud of that in the future.

The maternal and child-care nurse contacts every single parent associated with the maternal health centre to discuss issues regarding immunisation. These parents learn why immunisation is important, where it is performed, the latest research about immunisation, factual information and about the different types of immunisation. These parents are helped through this process by the maternal health centre from when the child is three weeks old up until the 12-week mark. These are the important weeks for immunisation, and I strongly encourage all parents to ensure that they follow through the entire immunisation process. I believe that the information and guidance provided by the maternal health centre is invaluable for local parents, particularly first-time parents who have not yet gone through the process of immunisation.

As we can see, the coalition government inherited a poor record on immunisation when we came to office, which had allowed our children to contract vaccine-preventable diseases. Since the coalition took up the challenge to improve this record, we have seen immense success in protecting Australians from disease, and I am sure that while we are in government this great work will continue. Therefore, I strongly recommend this bill.

Ms LIVERMORE (Capricornia) (8.46 pm)—There is no doubt, as all speakers in this debate have attested to, that immunisation is an important aspect of our health care system. As the saying goes, prevention is better than cure, and being immunised is an important safeguard against the world’s
worst diseases. There is no better protection that we can give our children than immunising them against disease. All parents should have access to vaccinations to protect against diseases that can be potentially fatal for their children.

Probably the best example of the immense value of immunisation is provided by looking at polio and smallpox. At its peak, polio, a debilitating and life-altering disease, infected 39.1 people for every 100,000 head of population. Australia has not had a case of polio since 1986 and was listed as polio free in 2000. Similarly smallpox was one of the world’s most feared diseases until a highly successful immunisation program throughout the world saw the World Health Organisation announce the eradication of that disease in 1979. The eradication of these diseases is a great illustration of the value of an effective immunisation program. So we know that immunisation works, but we can never become complacent and assume that the job is done.

The National Health and Medical Research Council stated in their 1993 National Immunisation Strategy that, in 1991, 2,352 cases of vaccine preventable diseases were reported in Australia. The report went on to say that, between 1980 and 1990, 86 Australian children died from diseases that could have been prevented with the appropriate vaccine. Thankfully, today the figures are much lower. But it needs to be stressed that in a country such as Australia death rates from vaccine preventable diseases should be zero. This is the only acceptable target.

We have seen before that keeping immunisation rates up to target levels requires constant vigilance by government. The 1990s saw a decline in the number of children who were being fully immunised against all of the then recognised diseases. The national health survey conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics between 1989 and 1990 found that only 53 per cent of children aged between zero and four years were fully immunised, and that 20 per cent were either totally unimmunised or their immunisation status was unknown. Recognising that these figures were completely unacceptable in a country such as Australia, the then Labor federal government introduced the National Immunisation Strategy. The National Immunisation Strategy was aimed at increasing the number of immunised children in Australia, leading to better health outcomes for these children and a subsequent saving on health expenditure caused by a reduction in the number of people at risk of contracting serious but preventable diseases.

Inadequate immunisation rates account for the sporadic number of disease outbreaks, including measles, that occur from time to time. In response to that and in order to further increase the immunisation rate the Howard government attempted to build upon the National Immunisation Strategy and introduced a seven point plan in 1997. This plan involved offering incentives for parents and general practitioners to ensure that children were vaccinated, creating awareness programs and increasing funding for education and research. I believe that what is lacking in that seven point plan is a truly effective education campaign aimed at dismissing the myths surrounding the dangers of immunisation.

This is an important aspect of any policy regarding immunisation, because the full value of immunisation programs is lost if immunisation is not universal. Immunisation programs should target all Australians in an effort to ensure universal coverage. Immunisation has been shown to be a great preventive tool, but it is only effective if everyone is being vaccinated. It is good to see that immunisation rates have improved over the last decade, to the point where over 90 per
cent of 12-month-old children are immunised. This is a positive step which is to be lauded, but that does not mean that we can rest on our laurels and allow the matter to continue of its own accord. Governments need to be continually educating the public on the necessity of vaccination, and they need to keep up to date as far as providing publicly funded immunisation as vaccines become available for those diseases identified as posing a risk to the population or certain sections of it.

Immunisation programs within Indigenous communities is another area that requires constant monitoring from government. Historically, levels of immunisation in Indigenous communities have been amongst the lowest in Australia. In 1993 the National Health and Medical Research Council offered several suggestions to improve immunisation rates in the Indigenous community. These suggestions included placing immunisation services near public transport and in easily identifiable places, and employing Indigenous health workers to overcome the cultural divide. Every effort to ensure that immunisation rates are as high as they can possibly be should be made with the understanding that money spent now will result in long-term savings to government and, of course, will contribute to improving the health and life outcomes of our Indigenous people.

Other groups with historically lower immunisation rates are children from families with low incomes, children with one or more unemployed parent, children whose parents lack postsecondary education, children of single parents, children of recently arrived migrants and those children living in rural and remote areas. This information reinforces the need for publicly funded immunisation programs and for a greater effort in ensuring that these sections of the community are able to access vaccinations.

Both the National Health and Medical Research Council and the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners place great emphasis on the cost benefit of universal immunisation. Both groups emphatically state that the cost of vaccination is well worth it, especially considering the long-term costs of not vaccinating. While this cost has not been exactly quantified, when considering ongoing medical costs, the costs involved in caring for children born with birth defects caused by rubella, the learning impairment costs associated with measles and the loss of productivity from parents being forced to miss work to care for sick children, it becomes apparent that these costs are quite considerable and worth avoiding on many levels.

The National Health Amendment (Immunisation Program) Bill 2005 currently before us does not address these issues, however. It instead focuses on reducing the costs to the government of providing vaccinations. The emphasis on reducing the costs of the immunisation program does seem to drive the government’s approach in this important area of public health policy. We have seen this in the government’s shameful reluctance to protect our children when it initially refused to fund the pneumococcal vaccine. Back in September 2002 the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation advised the then Minister for Health and Ageing, Kay Patterson, that the government should fund, among other vaccines, the pneumococcal vaccine. The other vaccines that ATAGI recommended should be funded at that time were the injectable polio and chickenpox vaccines. The government steadfastly ignored that independent, scientific advice for almost two years. Within that time the National Health and Medical Research Council backed up the ATAGI’s advice to the government with its own recommendation regarding the funding of those same three vaccines: chickenpox,
polio and pneumococcal. The 2004 budget came and went and there was still no announcement from Minister Abbott about funding for vaccines.

It was only in June 2004, following our promise that a Labor government would fund those vital vaccines, that the government was forced into its partial backflip when it announced that the pneumococcal vaccine would be funded. No-one should forget that it was only after Labor’s relentless pursuit of this issue that the government amended its original decision and made funding available for this lifesaving vaccine. Even then, the government decided only to fund the vaccine until 2007. We should also not forget that the government’s refusal to fund the vaccine was contrary to the advice of its own technical advisory group—the expert group charged with providing independent advice on the technical and scientific elements of the National Immunisation Program. Shamed into a pre-election backflip, the government finally promised to fund the vaccine until 2007. We should also not forget that the government’s refusal to fund the vaccine was contrary to the advice of its own technical advisory group—the expert group charged with providing independent advice on the technical and scientific elements of the National Immunisation Program. Shamed into a pre-election backflip, the government finally promised to fund the vaccine until 2007.

That announcement was made in June 2004. After ignoring the ATAGI’s advice on pneumococcal, polio and chickenpox vaccines since 2002, the minister made that partial backflip with respect to pneumococcal vaccine but still insisted that ATAGI reconsider its recommendation on the other two vaccines. It was not until March this year that the Minister for Health and Ageing finally accepted the advice of the ATAGI and, with nowhere left to hide on this matter, was forced to list the injectable polio and chickenpox vaccines on the National Immunisation Program. This announcement by the minister came 2½ years after the government first received expert advice on the importance of making those vaccines available on the NIP. It came almost a year after Labor had taken the issue right up to the government by promising to fund all three vaccines.

In the period during which the minister ignored the advice of his own advisory group, 19 Australians died and 3,300 were hospitalised as a result of chickenpox—a disease which is preventable by vaccine and which the government knew was a priority for inclusion on the National Immunisation Program. This is yet another example of this government’s mismanagement of health care in Australia—a case of saving money when it should be all about saving lives.

The National Health Amendment (Immunisation Program) Bill 2005 has the stated aim:

... to amend the National Health Act 1953 ... to improve vaccine funding advisory arrangements for the ... National Immunisation Program.

This will be done by expanding the role of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee to include evaluating the cost effectiveness of new vaccines under the National Immunisation Program—a role which was previously performed by the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation. The explanatory memorandum that accompanies this bill states that the changes in the bill:

... provide for a stronger focus on cost-effectiveness assessment by utilising ... the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) for vaccine funding recommendations.

It is this statement that concerns me. After all, it has been this government which has gone looking for ways to minimise costs through the PBS and has been actively pursuing opportunities to shift the costs of medicines to the consumer. We have seen this through the government’s 30 per cent PBS copayment. While the cost effectiveness of a treatment always has to be considered, and indeed was part of the criteria used by the ATAGI, the value to Australia of immunisa-
tion cannot be measured simply in economic terms, as this government would have us believe. An effective immunisation program protects Australians from long-term health issues, which has the flow-on effect of then assisting the economy through a reduction in health expenditure—not the other way around. Reducing spending on preventive measures now just means that the ultimate long-term outcome will be future governments having to shell out more and more in health expenditure to hospitals to treat vaccine preventable diseases. Imagine if this thinking had been applied to polio and smallpox vaccines 50 years ago.

Debate interrupted.

ADJOURNMENT

The SPEAKER—Order! It being 9 pm, I propose the question:

That the House do now adjourn.

Alternative Health Industry

Ms HALL (Shortland) (9.00 pm)—Tonight I would like to bring to the attention of the House a matter of national importance. Governments at all levels have failed to effectively address the alternative health industry, which is putting people’s lives at risk and allowing charlatans and shysters to prey upon them when they are at their most vulnerable. This failure has allowed the employment of dubious treatments, procedures and prescriptions of unidentifiable medication.

Throughout Australia there is more than $2 billion a year spent on alternative health products and procedures. That figure is from a New South Wales Health media release in November 2002. Along with the increase in spending on alternative medicines and procedures is the increase in people who are preying on the sick and most vulnerable in our society by offering cures that are of questionable medical benefit to the desperate person who is seeking a treatment of last resort.

Very little progress has been made in registering or verifying the qualifications of alternative medicine practitioners. Simply drafting laws for New South Wales, Victoria or Queensland alone will not overcome the problem. A person would simply move interstate and carry on business as usual. There is a good case for legislative reform on a national basis that could involve governments at federal, state and territory level. In other words, the only way to stop the exploitation of sick and vulnerable people seeking hope where there is none is for the federal government to legislate, take the lead and stop passing the buck to the states, as this is an issue of national importance requiring national leadership.

Greg Ray from the Newcastle Herald and the Hon. Richard Face, the former state member for Charlestown, have been fighting to have this issue addressed and have highlighted a dreadful litany of fraud and deceit that is hurting the sickest and most vulnerable in our communities. The husband of a constituent of mine, Mrs Marilyn Christie of Dudley, died in May 2005 following a fight with cancer. Mrs Christie’s husband was referred to Mr Paul Perrett of the Rutherford Health Clinic by another person who was suffering from cancer and who has subsequently died. Mrs Christie and her husband became suspicious when her husband failed to respond to the treatment and decided to research the medicines. Their research revealed that the medicines appeared to be unrecognisable and unregistered medication.

Extensive searches by the Newcastle Herald and by a pharmacology expert at the University of Newcastle have failed to discover any reference in medical or therapeutic literature to the medications provided by Mr Perrett. It is unknown as to whether his
medication are vitamins, veterinary products or even medications that can mask the signs of the diseases they are supposed to treat—for instance, hormone therapy to treat prostate cancer masks the disease—thereby placing the person at greater risk.

Paul Perrett was a serial offender and had a very dubious, dark history with questionable qualifications. Two of the most outlandish treatments he employed were the injection of urine into the veins of those unsuspecting, trusting people who sought his help and the use of peroxide drips. He portrayed himself as a person born in China, cured of childhood leukaemia by a Chinese herbalist, highly educated in the area of naturopathic medicine, widely travelled and a recipient of research grants. The fact is that he was born in Maitland, had a history of fraud and larceny and has spent two stints in jail for his fraudulent actions. He is hardly the type of person in whose hands you would be prepared to place your life.

His registration with the Australian natural medicine society was based on fraud, not fact, and this registration has enabled those unfortunate people he has treated to claim money from their health funds which, in turn, has given him legitimacy. This situation cannot be allowed to continue. It is time for the federal government to show leadership. I am so concerned about what is happening that today I have written to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Health and Ageing requesting that the committee conduct an inquiry into the regulation of the natural health and alternative health industry. It is time to protect the people of Australia and the reputable natural health practitioners in our country. It is time for action, not buck-passing. A whole-of-government approach is needed.

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**South West Rocks Heritage Committee**

**Mr HARTSUYKER** (Cowper) (9.04 pm)—Last Friday I had the opportunity to meet with a group of very special people in South West Rocks. The South West Rocks Heritage Committee invited me to meet with them at a site of great historical significance in Ocean Street. The site comprises a pilot station, an adjoining garage and two boatman’s cottages. The purpose of my meeting with the heritage committee was to discuss their concerns over a huge increase in the annual rent by the New South Wales state government and the subsequent decision by the Kempsey Shire Council not to renew the leases on the buildings.

The site has been substantially improved through the dedicated efforts of volunteers. The buildings currently house a museum, an art gallery and a tourism information centre manned by volunteers who provide an invaluable service to both the local community and visitors to the South West Rocks area. During the visit, I also had the opportunity to meet with a group of senior citizens who make toys, sell them and donate the funds raised. This group of men work in the garage which adjoins the pilot station, and their work and commitment supports the local senior citizens group.

The course of events which led to last Friday’s meeting has highlighted the worst aspects of poor public policy. Essentially, we have a state government which has mismanaged the windfall it has received from additional GST revenues and stamp duty receipts. That same government not only is in financial difficulty but can now claim the mantle of being morally bankrupt as well. With the growth in the New South Wales government’s bureaucracy at an all-time high, the Iemma government has ignored the opportunity to address its own inefficiency and chosen to target volunteers who are the back-
bone of local regional communities. The New South Wales Minister for Lands, Tony Kelly, has informed the leaseholder, the Kempsey Shire Council, that the annual rent on just one of the buildings, known as Boatman’s Cottage No. 2, will rise from $350 per year to $12,075 per annum. Let me say that again: it is going to go up from $350 a year to $12,075.

The Kempsey Shire Council has made it clear to my office that these rentals will have to be met by the community, not by the council. Further, a report from Kempsey Shire Council’s director of shire services, dated 5 September, claims that the council can further expect rentals to increase to $36,000 once the Department of Lands has completed a full assessment of all the buildings on the site. The increase in the annual rentals could not have come at a worse time for all the volunteers associated with the facilities on Ocean Street. The rent rises come hard on the heels of a risk assessment of the garage adjacent to the pilot station where the toy makers work. The assessment has identified occupational health and safety issues which, unless addressed, will effectively close the current operation down.

I would like to publicly acknowledge the good work of these toy makers—men who are enjoying their retirement by making wooden toys and raising funds for their community. Col Laverty, Les Thomas, Bert Searle, Don Cook, Henry Thurgood, Frank Lee and Bill Jackson are all doing an outstanding job. In my view, we should be encouraging this community work, not penalising those who have taken the initiative for the common good. Therefore, every effort should be made to ensure that they can continue their voluntary contribution. Placing a financial impost on those who are freely giving their time for the benefit of others is morally wrong, economically unsustainable and socially detrimental to the goodwill of the local community.

Volunteers for the arts and crafts association, the historical society and the tourist information centre will also lose out as a result of the proposed rental hike. All of these organisations, as well as the pilot station and Boatman’s Cottage, are a part of the social fabric of South West Rocks. That is why I have taken the opportunity to write to the Mayor of Kempsey Shire Council, Janet Hayes, to seek the council’s commitment to ensuring these facilities are protected and the work of the volunteers is allowed to continue.

I have been informed that the council has met with the New South Wales Minister for Lands, Mr Kelly, to discuss the situation. I look forward to the New South Wales government recognising their own morally reprehensible position. What is going on here is an attack on the spirit of voluntary work and the benefits which we all derive from such substantial community goodwill.

Breast Cancer Awareness

**Ms VAMVAKINOU** (Calwell) (9.09 pm)—Tonight I want to speak on the very important issue of breast cancer, as October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Whilst there have been improvements in breast cancer awareness programs and treatments, there is still lots of work to be done if we are to successfully continue the fight against this disease that affects so many Australian families. A recently released survey by the National Breast Cancer Centre uncovered some very disturbing findings about the lack of knowledge women had of this disease—a lack of knowledge which in some cases could cost women their lives.

The survey of 3,000 women across Australia aged between 30 and 69 found that only half the women surveyed knew that a woman’s risk of developing breast cancer
increases as she gets older; 28 per cent of women mistakenly thought a family history of breast cancer on their father’s side was an important risk factor; one in three women mistakenly thought that alcohol posed no risk; one in four mistakenly thought being overweight posed no risk; 42 per cent of women mistakenly rated stress as a big risk factor; and, finally, one in three women mistakenly considered a bump to the breast as a big risk factor.

More disturbing were the findings that one in three women who noticed a change in their breast waited more than a month before seeking medical advice and another 23 per cent—an alarmingly high number—who found changes did not see a doctor at all. Given that 50 per cent of breast cancers are found as a result of a change in the breast, it is particularly important that women know what changes to look out for and seek medical advice as soon as possible. It is clear from these survey results that, despite the excellent work done by all who are associated with breast cancer research and awareness, the myths and misconceptions around breast cancer need to be further clarified and the importance of early detection must be constantly reiterated. To do any less is simply putting women’s lives unnecessarily at risk.

One thing that is certain with breast cancer is that early detection provides the best chance for a woman’s survival. About 90 per cent of women whose cancer is diagnosed before it has spread outside the breast will be alive five years later. However, if the cancer is not detected early and has already spread to other parts of the body before diagnosis, only about 20 per cent of those women will survive for five years.

It is encouraging to note that breast screening is now available free of charge to all women over 40. However, more needs to be done to encourage more women and, indeed, younger women to participate in screening programs because, along with the misconceptions regarding breast cancer, there is still a great reluctance by many women, particularly women of ethnic backgrounds, to undergo a mammogram test. We need to turn our minds to how this issue can be better addressed.

I was very pleased to read last week that an education campaign was launched by the National Breast Cancer Centre, who have developed a range of resources to inform women of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds about breast cancer symptoms and the importance of early detection and to assist women diagnosed with breast cancer to make better decisions about treatment and support. This information is translated into Chinese, Vietnamese, Greek, Italian and Arabic languages. It is a bid to provide culturally appropriate and potentially life-saving information to women in their own language.

Given that one in 11 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer, it is vital we ensure that all Australian women, especially those of non-English-speaking backgrounds, have access to accurate information so as to make informed decisions about their health and, if necessary, about appropriate treatment and care. On behalf of the many women, particularly the women of my electorate, whose lives and whose families’ lives have been affected by this disease, I encourage the government to increase resources for the awareness of breast cancer and the importance of early detection.

With this month being Breast Cancer Awareness Month, it would be the perfect time for the government to participate in this awareness program, provide greater assistance to address the existing misconceptions and further promote early detection as the
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best means of saving the lives of the many Australian women who are diagnosed with this disease on an annual basis and who would have a far better chance of survival if detection occurred at the earliest possible time.

Corporate Governance

Mr FAWCETT (Wakefield) (9.14 pm)—I rise tonight to talk about governance. One of the good things that come out of the modern focus on governance is the concept of corporate citizenship that companies need to display in our society. Good citizenship by companies means that they consider what are known as ‘triple bottom lines’—they consider not only profit and the environment but also what they can add to the community as opposed to just taking from the community. I think people would be quite dismayed to think of a company that was going to implement something that could cost the community, damage the community, incite violence and incite a desire in young people to act contrary to civic standards.

I draw the attention of the House to a video game that has been marketed by Atari in Australia and that is due for release in November this year. This is a game where you can play as ‘Trane’, a graffiti artist. The aims of the game are to ‘risk your life battling city authorities’ as you attempt to get more and more graffiti up onto walls. It is a ‘Ground-breaking graffiti gameplay system, designed to sharpen your skills’, using a range of tools such as aerosols, rollers, markers, wheat paste, stickers and stencils. It has a ‘unique intuition system’, allowing you to find the best places to put graffiti. It actually gives examples: ‘Authentic tags from more than 50 real-life graffiti artists’. It teaches you fighting skills and other things as you evade the city police and authorities.

Some people would say that this is just a game and that there is no concern about that. But, as we all know, the reality is that films, games, even books can inspire young people and encourage them into taking certain courses of action. If that were not so, we would not have advertising. We know from studies on the impact of violent videos and other films that they cause some people—not all—to take these courses of action.

Is it a problem? In the electorate of Wakefield, just one of the council areas that I represent, the City of Playford, pays approximately $92,000 every year to eradicate the problem of graffiti. It has some 60 volunteers—they are not paid staff; that money does not cover paid staff—who work to remove the impacts of graffiti from around the city. About 35,840 tags were removed last year. In 2004-05, that represents a 39 per cent increase in the amount of graffiti.

I believe it is important to bring to the attention of the House the fact that companies do have an obligation to consider when marketing products not just their profit but also their impact. This product is due for release in November. I call upon Atari, its CEO and its board of management, to consider their role as a corporate citizen in Australia and whether they wish to contribute to the high and rising costs and social damage, as a result of the disfiguration—the damage to small business and public property—that graffiti causes. I challenge them to consider that carefully and to take appropriate decisions to support the community, to be a good corporate citizen and not to just push this product because it adds to the bottom line of profit.

Safeguards Against Viruses

Mr MURPHY (Lowe) (9.17 pm)—The Minister for Health and Ageing has recently published his proposals for responding to an epidemic of a potentially lethal influenza virus in Australia. What the minister apparently intends is that the government will re-
lease a limited amount of antiviral drugs to treat those infected in the first wave of an epidemic and to withhold the bulk of the four million doses stockpiled for ‘essential workers’. Those four million doses will be enough to protect only about 70,000 people for up to eight weeks—the period recommended by American experts for protecting people against infection during an epidemic.

The risk to public health that this virus poses is well understood. In 1918 and 1919, the Spanish flu killed an estimated 20 million to 40 million people world-wide—up to six times as many as were killed in World War I. For many years, the great mystery of the 1918-1919 Spanish flu had been its virulence. In 2001, Dr Mark Gibbs, Mr John Armstrong and Professor Adrian Gibbs, at the Australian National University, used tissue samples preserved from victims of that pandemic to show that the Spanish flu virus was a hybrid produced from parts of two other influenza viruses in a process called recombination. Their analysis indicated that one of the two progenitors of the Spanish flu virus was an influenza strain that probably infected pigs. In a warning, Dr Gibbs said:

Recombination has not been detected before within the genes of the virus. Now the possibility that current strains may recombine needs to be investigated as new recombinant viruses may pose a threat. We may have discovered part of the reason for the extreme virulence of the 1918 Spanish Flu virus.

More recently, scientists working at the United States Centre for Disease Control have determined that it is also possible that the Spanish flu was a bird flu that infected people directly. Until recently, the great fear has been that an avian flu virus could recombine with a human influenza virus. However, this latest discovery shows that a direct transfer from birds to humans is also possible.

There are two effective means of treating infections of new influenza viruses. The first is vaccination. This is a time-consuming process and is only possible if the virus can be cultured and transformed into a vaccine. The second is the administration of antiviral drugs that block viral reproduction. This means does not rely upon the manufacture of virus-specific vaccines. These drugs can be stockpiled in advance of a possible epidemic.

Professor Graeme Laver, the Australian molecular biologist who developed these antiviral drugs, is highly critical of the minister for health’s plans for withholding supplies for essential service workers. Professor Laver said recently that the government’s plan was madness, and a waste of resources that could lead to panic. He said:

The strategy is totally wrong: they—the antiviral drugs—should be available for people to get quickly. Imagine if one of your children develops fever and aches and pains and you know the bird flu is around. You will want that drug now but if it is all locked up ...

In the event of an outbreak of a lethal flu, under the government’s current plans the public are expected to wait for weeks or months while a vaccine is developed to combat the new virus.

It is not as if alternative strategies for combating a new influenza pandemic do not exist. In 2004 workers at the Rollins School of Public Health at Emory University, Atlanta, showed that the most effective means of responding to an outbreak would be to rapidly administer prophylactic doses of antiviral drugs to close contacts of suspected influenza cases. They showed that, for a virus similar to the Asian flu of 1957-1958, the influenza illness attack rate was 33 per cent of the untreated population, while targeted antiviral prophylaxis reduced the illness attack rate to two per cent. The mortality rate for the victims of Spanish flu was between 2.5 per cent and five per cent. Were these
figures to be translated into 33 per cent of the Australian population, the worst case would be between 165,000 and 330,000 fatalities. Is this the sort of mortality the minister for health is prepared to accept to ensure that ‘essential service workers’ are protected?

Workplace Relations

Mr BARRESI (Deakin) (9.22 pm)—I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the fundamental inadequacies of the ALP and the ACTU and their campaign against the government’s workplace relations changes. The arguments against the changes have been built on outdated class warfare, short-sightedness, fear and manipulation which have exploited Australian workers. Recent literature distributed by several key unions and opposition members of this parliament has been misleading and ill-informed. Against such a deliberately misleading campaign by the union movement, it is important that the government counter it with its own information. Such a misleading campaign has been particularly evident within my own electorate of Deakin, where the ACTU are currently running a pilot community campaign against the proposed new workplace relations changes. They boastfully proclaim that the trial project will commence in Deakin and, based on its success, will then be taken elsewhere in Australia.

There are two key reasons why the ACTU is initially targeting Deakin. Firstly, and not surprisingly, it is still the most marginal Liberal held seat in Victoria and they believe they have a real chance of unseating the sitting member—me. That in itself is of little concern to me, as I am used to batting back every self-proclaimed minority interest group, particularly around election time.

More significantly, however, the ACTU also has the assistance of compliant Labor councillors in the Whitehorse City Council. The conduct of this campaign to date has demonstrated the true stripes of the council’s six ALP councillors, in particular the Labor mayor, Councillor George Droutsas. To date, the ACTU President, Sharan Burrow, has held two public meetings in Nunawading to coordinate the Deakin campaign. Both of these meetings were held on council premises. I have been informed that, at the initial meeting, Ms Burrow outlined how the local media will be manipulated to assist in achieving the union movement’s principal political objective of unseating the local Liberal member. This clearly shows that the campaign of the ACTU has nothing to do with workers’ rights. This is a political campaign, not a campaign about the welfare and prosperity of Australian workers.

Interestingly, the ACTU’s second meeting was at a function for the Mitcham branch of the ALP. The contact person for this function was the Whitehorse Labor Mayor, George Droutsas, who is also the President of the ALP’s Deakin Electorate Council. Fellow office-bearers on the council include fellow Labor councillor Hayley Weller and the state Labor member for Mitcham, Tony Robinson. This campaign has so far underlined that the ACTU and the ALP are once again working hand in glove in playing politics. That fact was reinforced just last weekend at the Whitehorse Spring Festival. While it is unremarkable to see representatives of the Australian Services Union and the Electrical Trades Union distributing their material at such a festival, what was interesting was their location.

Whitehorse residents could be completely forgiven for wondering just what was going on. While the literature belonged to the ACTU, the stall from which it was distributed belonged to none other than the Labor member for Chisholm, Anna Burke, who herself has links to the ASU. Mr Beazley complains that the federal government is
aggressively advertising workplace relations reforms. It would suit the Leader of the Opposition and the ALP for this campaign to take place because the campaign is being run totally by their union comrades. On top of this, their campaign is being financed through the hard-earned union fees of workers who often do not have any say in how their money is spent.

Since 1996 the ASU—Ms Burke’s union—has pumped over $2,187,000 into the coffers of the Labor Party, so making available a stand paid for by the Australian taxpayer is a small return for the distribution of union material. The members on the opposite side of the House and the entire ALP structure are shackled to the interests of the union movement, which has seen millions of dollars poured into its coffers. The residents of Whitehorse deserve to know just whom their elected representatives seek to represent and who is paying for what. While that situation definitely applies to federal representatives, it also applies to local councillors. On this occasion we need to know where the resources, the facilities of the council and the ratepayer funded allowances to its Labor councillors are being used for a politically motivated campaign. The whole exercise has little to do with the employment and the economic security of Australian workers. It has more to do with positioning the ALP for the coming council and future election campaigns. *(Time expired)*

**Workplace Relations**

Mr PRICE (Chifley) (9.27 pm)—I am invited to join this adjournment debate through the remarks of the honourable member for Deakin. He was complaining about where the funds were coming from for the trade union campaign against the proposed industrial relations reforms. It is very clear where they are coming from; they are coming from the workers. The ACTU and the unions in New South Wales are spending a lot of money, unlike the government who are spending tens of millions of dollars on an advertising campaign that they are getting going. Mr Speaker, I am sure you are not aware, but the biggest advertiser in Australia is not a state government, it is not the collection of state governments—it is the federal government. The federal government has knocked off McDonald’s and they have knocked off Coca-Cola. Of course, the cigarette companies cannot advertise anymore, but you name the advertiser and the Commonwealth is spending more.

The Commonwealth is spending more taxpayers’ dollars, not on genuine advertising but on campaigns like this trade union campaign to try to get support. The legislation is not even before parliament and the federal government is advertising on TV. Labor moved a motion to suspend standing orders on Monday. We said: ‘Bring the legislation in. Let’s have a decent debate, let’s legitimise your corrupt advertising.’ I think it is corrupt, because there is not legislation in this House.

Mr Dutton—Mr Speaker, a point of order needs to be made in response to the comment by the Chief Opposition Whip that the federal government is unable to conduct an advertising program when the legislation is introduced into the House—

The SPEAKER—The minister will come to his point of order.

Mr Dutton—I do not know that it is fair for the Chief Opposition Whip to continue down such a line, which is clearly—

The SPEAKER—There is no point of order.

Mr PRICE—I think it is a corruption of process. If there is a legitimacy about advertising, the legislation should be before parliament. Let us have a decent debate about it.
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The SPEAKER—Order! It being 9.30 pm, the debate is interrupted.

House adjourned at 9.30 pm

NOTICES

The following notices were given:

Dr Stone to move:

That, in accordance with the provisions of the Public Works Committee Act 1969, it is expedient to carry out the following proposed work which was referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works and on which the committee has duly reported to Parliament: Refurbishment of Royal Australian Mint building, Canberra, ACT.

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: Fitout of an extension to leased premises for IP Australia in Woden, ACT.

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: Relocation of 171st Aviation Squadron to Holsworthy Barracks, NSW.

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: Construction of a new chancery building for the Australian Embassy in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

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: Construction of a new chancery building for the Australian Embassy in Rangoon, Burma.
The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. IR Causley) took the chair at 4.00 pm.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Gellibrand Electorate: Higher Education

Ms ROXON (Gellibrand) (4.00 pm)—On 2 September this year I met, as I do each year, with 12 students from a number of high schools within my electorate of Gellibrand. They were from Maribyrnong College, Bayside Secondary College, Caroline Chisholm College, Altona Secondary College, Braybrook College, Gilmore College for Girls and Footscray City College. The top-order issue that came up in these discussions was access to university places and the costs of attending university. These young people were universally concerned about their future and their ability to access higher educational opportunities—and, if they do access them, how they will be able to afford to pay for their spot.

Worryingly, research released last week from the Monash University study, Unequal access to university places, has given this discussion even more meaning. The study has shown that only 46 per cent of public school students who apply for university received an offer of a place, which is in stark contrast to the 77 per cent of young people from private schools. Approximately 67 per cent of schoolchildren in my electorate are attending government schools, and this study does not bode well for their future.

According to figures released in the Age on 6 November, the City of Maribyrnong ranks 29th out of 31 municipalities in Melbourne in terms of median entry scores. The figures for Hobsons Bay are not a great deal higher. These statistics are not good, but they also do not accurately reflect the range of challenges that many of these schools face, such as chronic underfunding by the federal government, English being the second language for many students, the large number of new arrivals, particularly refugees, and some of the relatively low education levels of parents. In fact, the schools do a marvellous job considering some of the difficulties thrown in their way.

Of course, there are many bright students, such as the ones I met with from schools in my electorate, who will achieve much higher entry scores, and for others who do not, there are often complex social factors involved. But the point I want to make today is that our education system should have the resources and support to help our children overcome these barriers, not entrench disadvantage. The increasing cost of university is becoming an issue for young people in my area and their parents. Average HECS fees have doubled under the Howard government and the repayment threshold is dropping in real terms. They are legitimately concerned about the financial burden their further education will place upon their families.

These young people who came to my office are just a handful of the many thousands in my electorate who have the opportunity to address disadvantage in Melbourne’s west. They are bright, active and engaged, but they are being shut out by the Howard government’s lack of vision in education policy. The government is tired and out of ideas and is neglecting the future of young Australians. The young people in my electorate deserve much more and the schools that they go to need more support from this government.
Fisher Electorate: Roads

Mr SLIPPER (Fisher) (4.03 pm)—There are several state-controlled roads in my electorate that once again have made the top 20 worst roads in the region list of the Royal Automobile Club of Queensland. These roads are controlled and supposedly maintained by the Queensland Labor government. This problem comes on the back of the well-publicised headache that is the Queensland health system as well as the problems encountered with the electricity network last year. I await with dread the onset of hot summer weather, which already appears to be arriving early on the Sunshine Coast, and wonder if the power grid will stand up to the demand for electricity from ordinary Queenslanders. I am glad that a state election is not really too far away and that the people of the Sunshine Coast and elsewhere in Queensland will have the chance to make things right by electing a Liberal-led coalition government.

The road that I am most concerned about is again Maroochydore Road between Kunda Park and the Bruce Highway. This road marks the boundary between my electorate of Fisher and the neighbouring electorate of Fairfax to the north. It is not the first time that this particularly poor road has made it onto the top 20 poor roads list—in essence, a list of the bottom 20 key roads in Queensland. It is a regular feature on the list collated by the Royal Automobile Club of Queensland, the most trusted and respected motoring organisation in the state.

Mr Deputy Speaker, you will be concerned to hear that this section of Maroochydore Road is littered with potholes, bumps and humps, and repair jobs have added to the hazards. The road is regularly flooded, and I dread to see what will happen when next the heavens open and we get a heavy downpour. How will Maroochydore Road stand up to it? It has a weary bridge at its Eudlo Creek crossing—one lane each way—that is also in dire need of an upgrade.

The remarkable thing is that this road is one of the main roads between Nambour and Maroochydore. For those visitors who follow the signs up the highway to Maroochydore this is their first glimpse of the centre of business of the Sunshine Coast. Heavy trucks use this road but, quite honestly, I do not think the surface is up to the task. One of my staff had a rock thrown up from a passing truck, damaging his headlight. That situation should never arise on the main arterial road into a growing area such as Maroochydore.

A second road on the RACQ list is Stanley River Road near Maleny. Respondents to this organisation’s survey have said that this road has a surface that is slippery and loose, the corners are tight, there are very steep gradients and no guardrails. Maleny also suffers with the Maleny-Kenilworth Road, which is affected by a long list of afflictions including loose surfaces, slippery surfaces, narrow lanes and narrow bridges. Motorists have suggested that parts of this road need rebuilding and that it needs more regular maintenance.

Frankly, the Queensland Labor government has made a mess of providing basic services to the people of the Sunshine Coast. I ask the Queensland Labor government to show some initiative and compassion and investigate repairing these many problem roads on the Sunshine Coast and elsewhere. (Time expired)

antallergy.org

Mr QUICK (Franklin) (4.06 pm)—Tasmanians affected by an allergy to jack jumper ant stings are biting back with the formation of a support and advocacy group. Calling itself ‘antallergy.org’, this group hopes to work with the health minister in Tasmania, David Lle-
wellwyn, to ensure that the internationally renowned jack jumper immunotherapy program, currently conducted at the Royal Hobart Hospital, continues into the future.

Over the past four years the program has seen the development of a 100 per cent effective vaccine, but further funding is needed before it can be made widely available to the 12,000 Tasmanians and over 50,000 Australians who are currently affected by jack jumper ant stings.

Representatives from antallergy.org met with the health minister, David Llewellyn, on 25 August this year and, I am pleased to say, were successful in gaining a commitment from the state Labor government to extending the existing program and retaining the Tasmanian-developed knowledge and expertise. Over the coming weeks the group will be in contact with the minister’s department to check on progress and assist in defining the ways ahead.

This group maintains an internet site, www.antallergy.org, which includes a discussion forum where others affected by jack jumper stings can share their experiences and their concerns. Through this web site the group has also launched an online petition to assist those whose lives are in danger through jack jumper ant stings. Over 860 people over the last few days have now signed the e-petition, which calls on the Tasmanian government to immediately allocate the funding necessary to provide lifesaving treatment to those Tasmanians at the greatest risk of death.

As the moves to an extended trial take shape we hope that those with expertise in ant sting allergy will contribute to the body of knowledge. The group is currently meeting on a weekly basis and other interested people who want to either provide or receive support can visit the web site or contact the group at antallergy@netspace.net.au.

I would like to place on the record my appreciation for the work done by the advocacy group and mention in particular the role played by my neighbour Marcus Allan, whose son Hamish’s life is in jeopardy if bitten by these jack jumpers. Marcus has worked tirelessly with my office to prepare an excellent article that features on the front page of my latest newsletter, the Franklin Focus. Not surprisingly, this article has generated a wonderful response from sufferers, who now realise that this support and advocacy group exists and are willing to ensure that the vaccine will soon be available to the many sufferers throughout Tasmania and the mainland of Australia.

**Flinders Electorate: Health**

**Flinders Electorate: Education**

Mr HUNT (Flinders—Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage) (4.09 pm)—I rise today to address two issues within the electorate of Flinders. First is the question of the health needs of residents around Western Port. In particular, I want to acknowledge the fact that the Lang Lang Community Medical Centre has been under threat over the last few months. It was under threat because of its success. The brilliant young doctor there, Natasha Aylen—who came in as part of a rural transaction centre program for Lang Lang—had been so popular that she had been overworked. The question had been whether or not she would be able to continue her work. To continue, she needed special approval for a doctor from the Commonwealth to come into this area—that approval would not have been available but for the intervention of Minister Tony Abbott.

I am delighted to inform the House and my electorate that we presented the case to Tony Abbott and we had a response from the minister within a matter of weeks. A new doctor has
been approved for the Lang Lang Community Medical Centre. The people of Lang Lang, Koo Wee Rup, Grantville and surrounding areas will all have access not only to the brilliant Natasha Aylen but also to the new doctor, Maria Sullivan. That is a tremendous result. Neither would have been possible without the work of the Commonwealth in providing for the rural transaction centre and the support of Minister Abbott in providing a special exemption for this area. It will build on providing new doctors for Grantville and Koo Wee Rup. The next project which we are working on is a doctor for the town of Tooradin and the coastal villages. These are tremendously important initiatives.

The second area which I wish to discuss today is in relation to primary and secondary school funding. I am delighted to be able to inform the House that we have just received Commonwealth approval for over $827,000 for 20 schools under the Investing in Our Schools Program. Schools such as Balnarring, Bass Valley, Bayles, Boneo, Cranbourne South, Crib Point, Devon Meadows, Dromana, Hastings, Hastings Westpark, Mount Martha, Pearcedale, Powlett River, Red Hill Consolidated, Somers, Somerville, Somerville Rise, Tooradin, Tyabb and Tyabb Railway Station Primary School were all successful. These are tremendous results, wonderful principals, great towns, tremendous students. Things such as playground equipment, classroom improvements and shade sails are all vitally needed.

I compare this with what is happening in relation to the Somerville Secondary College. The Commonwealth recently provided an additional $1.7 million in funding to the Somerville Secondary College, which is currently being constructed. The state’s response was to take that funding away and reduce its own funding by the very amount which the Commonwealth gave. I call on the Victorian government to return the $1.7 million and allow the Somerville Secondary College to proceed. (Time expired)

Mr MELHAM (Banks) (4.12 pm)—On 8 October this year, I attended a tribute to the late HT Lee. HT died on 26 July after complications from heart surgery. He was 56 years old. HT Lee was a remarkable and principled man who lived the values that he believed in. He fought for the causes that he believed in. HT was genuinely an activist in the pure sense of the word. He was born in Malaysia and studied in New Zealand before moving to Australia and becoming a citizen. HT was a photojournalist. He also worked for the union movement. As an activist he worked tirelessly on issues to do with East Timor.

In September 1999, HT was one of a handful of journalists who remained in the UN compound in Dili. The Indonesian military and militia were intent on destroying it. Many other journalists evacuated, but HT remained. He saw that the 3,000 East Timorese who had sheltered in the compound would be left behind. He organised a petition, persuaded the 20 or so remaining journalists to sign it and gathered UN police officers’ signatures in his own persistent way. As a result, all 3,000 East Timorese were evacuated to Darwin with the UN staff. This is a man who stood out from the crowd in his determination and his ability to make a difference. John Martinkus, in the Green Left Weekly on 3 August 2005, said:

HT was someone who worked on principles and often denied accepting payment for his work.

After the violence in East Timor, he went back to find the child he had photographed screaming in terror in the UN compound. At a time of great scarcity, he organised a birthday party for the child and his fami-
ily who were living as refugees and gave them money and food. I never saw him happier than on that day. That is the kind of person he was.

He was happiest when he was giving or doing something for the greater good whether it was saving lives or organising campaigns to change government policy. He believed in change and helped make it possible and should be remembered for that.

Max Stahl, a producer, director, cameraman and friend of HT is quoted on the crikey.com website in an article by Hugo Kelly. I doubt I would be able to articulate it any better. Max Stahl said:

HT was a real fighter in a just cause, and in his own personal life. He was the kind of guy you could count on when things got tough, when some might find themselves busy, or called away; the kind of guy who would stick with a struggle or an issue for as long as it took because he believed in it and because he believed the truth matters. He was a warm friend, a decent human being, a brave man.

I can think of no better epitaph for a man of this standing than to say ‘he believed the truth matters’. Vale, HT Lee.

**Herbert Electorate: Health**

Mr LINDSAY (Herbert) (4.15 pm)—About four months ago, at the time of the last Queensland state budget, I appealed to the Queensland government to provide an extra $23 million, as a minimum, to fund the ongoing, correct, proper operations of the Townsville Hospital. That appeal fell on deaf ears; no extra dollars were provided to the Townsville Hospital, and the hospital has gone on being 100 per cent full 100 per cent of the time. Indeed, time after time, people who have operations find that they cannot go into the recovery wards because there is no bed to go to or, if they come through emergency, there is no bed in the main hospital and they have to stay in the corridors in emergency. It is not satisfactory. So it was with quite some surprise and dismay that I noted that on Friday the Premier of Queensland, Peter Beattie, came to Townsville and made two announcements. He announced $3.7 million for the Townsville Hospital to address 800 extra operations when there are 12,000 in the queue and, at the same time, offered $5 million to the Dairy Farmers Stadium to put in 4,000 extra seats for the football. Our community was just outraged and appalled that is the way the Queensland government would get its priorities on health.

I have been doing a survey in my electorate. I have written to every person in my electorate in relation to the state of the hospital, and the feedback is that the staff who look after the patients are nothing less than wonderful but that the administration, the facilities at the hospital and the funding for the hospital are woeful. Also coming through very clearly in the responses that I have had to my survey of the electorate is the state of the dental services that are available to Queenslanders, in that people have to wait four years to get dental procedures done. Goodness me, what has happened to our state when you have to wait four years to have your teeth fixed? That is an appalling situation. It is no wonder that the Beattie government is under so much pressure in Queensland. The latest alarm bells sounded when my councils told me that the Beattie government has now instructed all its ministers to raid departments for as much money as possible to put into health. That means that there will be a knee-jerk reaction, where money will be spent inefficiently and all the other normal courses of business will not go on as they should; they will be very much affected by this raiding of cash. Please, Mr Beattie, fix the hospital system in Queensland. *(Time expired)*
Fuel Prices

Ms GEORGE (Throsby) (4.18 pm)—I want to raise the issue of the high cost of petrol and the impact it is having on the community I represent. Some time back, I took up the cost of petrol with the ACCC because I believed that collusion was occurring, in that price rises seemed to always spike on a Thursday, coinciding with pension day. I got little satisfaction from the ACCC then, and that was at a time when the cost of petrol was 94c a litre. At the peak of the petrol price increases, the cost of petrol went to $1.40 over a 20-month period. My concern for the people I represent is that higher petrol prices will inevitably lead into an inflationary spiral and will put upward pressure on interest rates. The very token tax cuts that 90 per cent of my community received through the last budget have been eroded with the increased costs that petrol, education, child care and the like have forced onto our community. Despite the recent drop in prices over the last few weeks, all the predictions are that the price of crude oil could hit somewhere in the vicinity of $US80 a barrel, which would inevitably push up the price of petrol at the bowsers to about $1.50 a litre.

My concern on behalf of the community I represent is that this government does absolutely nothing in the face of these pressures. It has washed its hands of the problem and has failed to take any decisive action. In the last couple of days I looked at the petrol-pricing snapshot released by the ACCC which showed that between 30 June and 30 September 2005 refiner margins actually doubled from $4 to $8 per barrel. I would have thought that the least the government could do was to instruct the ACCC to undertake a formal investigation of recent pricing practices in the industry to help put an end to the obvious profiteering that has gone on in the post Hurricane Katrina era. Further, with a record surplus of $13.6 billion, I believe the government has scope to ease the pain either by cutting the excise or by further taxation relief measures.

Interestingly enough, in 2001 the government listened to community opinion and froze the excise at 38c a litre and abolished automatic indexation increases. Why isn’t it taking action now, given the much stronger budgetary position that the government finds itself in? Excise is a regressive tax and is hitting families on lower incomes very hard. It is estimated that a cut of even 10c a litre in the excise would cost the government about $3.8 billion less than— (Time expired)

Hinkler Electorate: Australian Labor Party

Mr NEVILLE (Hinkler) (4.21 pm)—Yet again the ALP has trampled on its own grassroots in Hinkler by overriding the decision of local branches when preselecting a candidate to contest the state seat of Bundaberg at the next state election. Because of the shadowy backroom and factional deals, the ALP powerbrokers have recently overturned a 60 per cent vote for one candidate in favour of another. There is no doubt the party would have struggled to hold the seat in the wake of the Dr Death scandal and the Beattie government’s clear neglect of the region. This will only compound it.

One of the privileges of party membership is being able to take part in the selecting of candidates for local upcoming elections. For factional deals to overrule the choice of the grassroots membership shows a total disregard for core supporters and for local party members. Members of Bundaberg’s ALP branches must wonder why they bother to pay their membership fees at all, since this is the second time in a row that their favoured candidate has been vetoed by factional considerations. In last year’s preselection a clear winner was knocked
back because of Labor’s affirmative action rules and, although I do not want to enter into a
discussion of the personalities or the qualities of the candidates, many people are appalled at
the process used to select ALP candidates in the Bundaberg area—one of them being my
predecessor, the former member for Hinkler, Brian Courtice. At the local level, party preselec-
tions are generally closely contested, with only a handful of votes between the leading con-
tenders. If the head office or state organisation controlling half the votes degenerates into a
factional arrangement, the weight of these out-of-town votes will always swamp the local de-
cision.

The ALP state director, Milton Dick, said to me that the National Party had its own prob-
lems. Not true, Mr Deputy Speaker. The National Party, at its preselections, allows its head
office only four votes, a token representation in the selection of candidates. So, if these dodgy
ALP practices and the impotence of local ALP members continue and if they continue to de-
liver unrepresentative results, what confidence can the wider general public have in Labor
candidates when it comes to casting their vote on polling day? And, more particularly, what
confidence can they have after the fiasco of the Bundaberg hospital scandal?

Mr Sabin Zahirovic

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler) (4.24 pm)—It was my privilege to be at West Leagues Club
some months ago for a school based community function. There I met and heard speak Mr
Sabin Zahirovic. He is the school captain of Ashfield Boys High School. I think Mr Zahirovic
represents the best of people who have come to Australia from underprivileged backgrounds
in other countries. Mr Zahirovic came from war-torn Bosnia to make Australia his home. I
have a copy of a letter that Mr Zahirovic wrote to Mr Gary C Smith and members of the 3
Transport Association about Anzac Day of this year. I want to read some of it into Hansard:

Following my nomination to be the bearer of the 3 Transport Association banner, I have come to the
realisation of the gravity and the honour and pride this opportunity has invigorated in me. To be part of
the Anzac Day procession was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for someone like myself. I cannot em-
phasise the gratitude that I feel towards you personally, the RSL and members of 3 Transport Associa-
tion.

My family, peers and teachers are extremely proud, and rightly so. It is an immeasurable honour for a
young person to be associated with such an integral part of Australia’s history and identity. As a survi-
vor of the war, genocide and ethnic cleansing in my birth country of Bosnia I recognise more than most
people the value of Defence Force Personnel.

I also empathise with those who have lost loved ones in war, as one life is an immense loss for the na-
tion as a whole.

That is why I recognise that it is a necessity to allow the ANZAC legacy to continue transcending the
generations who are yet to come. The privilege of carrying your banner in the ANZAC Day March is
one way which you have cemented this process of remembrance.

As I have said to Mr John Walsh, it is a true honour to be associated with such a dignified organisation
and part of the Australian identity. It is important to continue the strong ties between the school body
and the military history and association of the area. That is why I will do everything possible to inform
others of the school’s affiliation with 3 Transport Association, the Coo-ee Marchers and other military
contingents over the last century.

This is the best of the Australian story. Here is a young man who was born overseas, who has
gone through war himself and who has come into this country and, within a very short period
of time, identified with the Anzac legacy, with the contribution that past generations of Aus-

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tralians have made to secure freedom and the lifestyle that we in Australia are so dearly proud of. I wish Mr Zahirovic well and hope that I have done my bit today to publicise the connection between Ashfield Boys High School and the 3 Transport Association in accordance with his wishes.

**Eden-Monaro Electorate**

Mr NAIRN (Eden-Monaro—Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister) (4.27 pm)—In recent times there has been some criticism from the other side of politics regarding the government’s regional programs—various regional assistance programs we have had over a number of years. What those opposite have done in recent times is effectively cherry picking. In fact, when put to the real test, it has been shown that the criticisms are totally political and not substantial.

I thought that today I would quickly provide an example of the benefit of regional programs. Often you do not see the benefit until a little further down the track. In that sense, a few years ago, after the announcement that we would have a multipurpose wharf at Eden for Defence, the local community, particularly Sapphire Coast Tourism, saw an opportunity to utilise this facility beyond the use by Defence. Sapphire Coast Tourism was successful in getting $31,900 under what was then our Regional Assistance Program. The aim was described as follows:

The project will promote the potential of Eden as an International Cruise destination. To harness Eden’s potential, an innovative creative promotional concept will be used to promote Eden as an International Cruise Destination and capture the current focus on Australia as a place to visit.

That was on 8 February 2002. I am pleased to say that on 7 November, in a few weeks time, we will see the first cruise ship, the 30,000-tonne P&O Pacific Princess, with 700 passengers, coming to Eden. Another six cruise ships will come between now and March. The ships range from P&O’s 45,000-tonne Artemis, carrying 1,200 passengers on an around-the-world cruise, to the much smaller Oceanic Princess, carrying 76 passengers on a cruise from Sydney to Hobart.

This is great news—seven big cruise ships between now and March coming into Eden, spending some time there, with international visitors or locals coming and looking at that part of the far South Coast. It is a great example of how a relatively very small amount of money, $31,900, has translated. The money was given to Michelle Robinson from Sapphire Coast Tourism to go out there, market Eden, find out about the cruise ships and ensure that our tourism industry, which is 10 per cent of our work force in Eden-Monaro, continues to grow—and grow substantially and in a new area that was not there before.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. IR Causley)—Order! In accordance with the resolution agreed to on 10 October 2005, the time for members’ statements has concluded.**

**INDONESIA: TERRORIST ATTACKS**

Debate resumed from 10 October, on motion by Mr Howard:

That this House:

(1) expresses its strong condemnation and outrage at the barbaric terrorist bombings which took place in Bali on 1 October 2005;

(2) extends its deepest and heartfelt sympathy to the families and loved ones of those Australians killed, missing or injured in this brutal attack;

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(3) offers its condolences to the families and friends of the Indonesians and citizens of other countries who have been killed or injured;

(4) condemns those who employ terror and indiscriminate violence against innocent people;

(5) commits the Australian Government to work with the Indonesian Government and others to bring those who are guilty of this horrendous crime, and all those who harbour and support them, to justice;

(6) reaffirms Australia’s commitment to combating terrorism in our region and in the rest of the world;

(7) recalls with deep sadness the tragic Bali bomb attacks of 12 October 2002; and

(8) extends once again its deepest sympathies to the families and loved ones of those Australians and others killed in those brutal attacks.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. IR Causley)—Before I call the first speaker, I note that there was no timing of speeches in the House and there will be no timing of speeches here in the Main Committee, but I would ask members to be reasonable with their speeches.

Mr DANBY (Melbourne Ports) (4.31 pm)—Yesterday the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition, followed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, spoke eloquently in condemning the latest terrorist atrocity in Bali. I am pleased to hear the ABC referring to it as a terrorist atrocity. It was not undertaken by militants; it was undertaken by terrorists—terrorists who killed four of our fellow Australians as well as 15 Indonesians and a Japanese citizen. The speeches were followed by very dignified and moving remarks by two local members whose constituents were particularly affected by the murderers in Bali—the members for Paterson and Newcastle, from the Hunter, where three of the four Australians who were killed lived.

I would like to take this opportunity to add my condolences and those of all of the people in my electorate to the families of Colin and Fiona Zwolinski and Jennifer Williamson, all from Newcastle, and Brendan Fitzgerald, of Busselton. Let us also remember the families of the 15 Balinese killed—hardworking people who died providing the services which we as tourists take for granted.

I visited Bali more than 20 years ago and have had an abiding affection for the place since. Like the Minister for Health and Ageing, as seen in his article in the Courier-Mail, I will probably go back there simply as a way of defying the terrorists and showing support for the people of Bali.

I want to add my voice to the praise expressed yesterday for the rapid and effective response to this latest atrocity by both the Indonesian and Australian governments and by the defence forces, law enforcement agencies, emergency services and health and other professionals, including those of Indonesia. I saw General Pastika there on the spot; I had the honour of being at a dinner with him when I attended an Australian ministerial conference in Jakarta two years ago. I expect the Indonesian security forces will eventually hunt the terrorists down as they so efficiently tracked down the murderers and terrorists from the first Bali bombing.

We have witnessed a most impressive and efficient cooperation between all these agencies in the care of the wounded and the bereaved. I hope Indonesia will track the terrorists down as it did with our cooperation before. Australians have shown again how magnificently we as a nation respond to challenges like this, whether the challenge is a natural disaster or a terrorist
attack. The four Australian dead in Bali join the 88 killed in the first Bali bombing in October 2002. They join Sam Ly killed in London in the July bombings. They join four other Australians who died in the 11 September 2001 attacks in the United States. They also join a former constituent of mine, Malki Roth, who was killed at the Sbarro pizza shop, also by a suicide bomber with a backpack—the first Australian killed that way—back in 2000. These Australian victims of the jihad against Western society being waged by jihadists, whether al-Qaeda, its South-East Asian franchise, Jemaah Islamiah, or Hamas, should all be remembered.

Today I want to look at why these Australians died, at the people who killed them and at what our response might be. Once again this week we have been told by various commentators that these attacks were the result of the presence of Australian forces in Iraq. But when we look at the pattern of attacks it is clear that Australians have been a target since at least 2002, before the invasion of Iraq. We know from statements by Indonesian jihadists that their grievances against Australia go back to our role in the independence of East Timor, which they see as part of an Islamic world stolen by perfidious Christians—even though the great majority of East Timorese were and are Christians.

These murderers and terrorists also noted our participation in the first Gulf War of 1991 and our role in the liberation of Afghanistan from the mediaeval regime of the Taliban. Of course, our participation in the war in Iraq has made us a target for attacks of this kind, but that is only part of the picture. This is obviously true, and I do not know why the government bothers denying it, but the connection is not as simple as those commentators who want to blame the war in Iraq exclusively are willing to admit. The Madrid bombings and the London bombings struck at capital cities of countries prominently identified as members of the coalition of the willing. So far there has been no such attack on Australia.

Yet I note the concerning comments of the Deputy Commissioner of the Victoria Police in the immediate aftermath of Bali 2. He said that it is only a matter of time—that it is inevitable that these people will be able to penetrate the so far marvellous work of the security agencies and the defence forces and bring their evil to Australia. I note his remarks in the context of the forthcoming Commonwealth Games that the Commonwealth government has some 1,800 people from the defence forces deployed for Melbourne. The Victoria Police have 20,000 people ready for the Commonwealth Games and a further 5,000 private security people prepared as their auxiliaries in Melbourne. Victoria is as well prepared as possible—I have personally looked into this; some of the activities will be in my electorate—and I congratulate the state government. But how can anyone prepare for a single person, a fanatic who comes with a backpack full of explosives and, more devilish, ball bearings and nails? The next step will be for these people to do what they so infamously did in other places—to cover the shrapnel in rat poison and other things that prevent blood coagulating or poison so that the victims suffer afterwards.

Al-Qaeda seems to have franchised its South-East Asian operations to Jemaah Islamiah. However, Jemaah Islamiah has an agenda of its own, which is allied with al-Qaeda but not identical to it. JI’s agenda is not primarily to attack Australia or to kill Australians; its objective is to take power in Indonesia, to make Indonesia the centre of a great Islamist state in South-East Asia, embracing Malaysia, Brunei, East Timor, southern Thailand and the southern Philippines. Its means to that end are to attack the Indonesian economy and political system and to prevent Indonesia becoming a stable, prosperous democracy and thus immune from the
poisonous doctrines of jihadist Islam. It is abusing a great monotheistic religion, Islam, which has nothing to do with the political ideology that these people seek to perpetrate.

Twenty-year-old Joe Frost asked if this was about religion. The brilliant speech of that young man in the Newcastle cathedral made me think about the motivations of the terrorists. As I have said, it is true that Iraq is a factor: it is a small factor in a world view, particularly with the terrorists in Indonesia. The Jemaah Islamiyah people have other agendas, mainly against the Indonesian government, but they all, like all the Jihadi International, have a pervading world view that transcends all their dark deeds. It is best described by Bassam Tibi, a Muslim professor at Gottingen University, who said a few months after September 11:

Both sides should acknowledge candidly that although they might use identical terms—

A division having been called in the House of Representatives—

Sitting suspended from 4.39 pm to 4.58 pm

Mr DANBY—Before the suspension, I was quoting Bassam Tibi, a Muslim professor at Gottingen University, who was talking about the difference in the understanding of terms. He said:

Both sides should acknowledge candidly that although they might use identical terms, these mean different things to each of them. The word peace, for example, implies to a Muslim the extension of Dar al-Islam—or House of Islam—to the entire world. This is completely different from the Enlightenment concept of eternal peace that dominates Western thought. Only when the entire world is a Dar al-Islam will it be a Dar a-Salam, or House of Peace.

That is the view of an extremist jihadist ideologist; that is not the view of mainstream Islam.

Driving Australians out of Bali and wrecking the Indonesian tourism industry centred in Bali is key to part of Jemaah Islamiyah’s strategy. Tourism is an engine of growth in developing countries, as Thailand, in particular, has demonstrated. The whole of Indonesia has huge tourist potential, but at the moment Bali is by far the country’s biggest tourism revenue earner. It is also a major portal for Western ideas and Western influence to enter Indonesia. JI want to destroy it for both those reasons. From their point of view, Bali is a target and killing Australian tourists is a collateral benefit, however macabre that sounds.

The fact that the Balinese are Hindus is convenient from the jihadist point of view, as they are polytheists, not ‘people of the book’. They are worse than Christians, even worse than Jews and can be killed with impunity, according to this mad, evil ideology represented by the tiny minority that supports JI in Indonesia. It is important for Australia to continue to support the people of Bali and Indonesia and to continue to support the great democratic experiment in Indonesia and the wonderful work of President Yudhoyono. In May this year, I had the opportunity to meet 25 people from the new democratic parliament at a seminar at the Centre for Democratic Institutions here in Australia, which was cojointly held in Jakarta.

Someone recently showed me a T-shirt which is currently popular in London. It says, ‘Stuff al-Qaeda—I’m taking the tube.’ The actual word used is stronger than ‘stuff’, but I will not use the expression in this parliamentary venue. Knowing the spirit of Australians, we will soon say, ‘Stuff JI—I’m going to Bali.’

After the 2002 bombings, the Indonesian police and courts acted with great speed and efficiency in tracking down those responsible. I hope that they will be equally successful in this case, although, as the bomb carriers are dead, it may prove more difficult this time. But catch-
ing the small fry is only a relatively minor part of the necessary response to these attacks. More important is finding and breaking up the political leadership behind these attacks—the ones who recruit deluded village youths and turn them into homicidal zombies. It is true, as many commentators have said, that groups like JI are not hierarchical organisations which can be killed by cutting off their heads. They are loose networks with many heads. By reducing the heads the network’s effectiveness is reduced—at least for a while.

It was very alarming to hear Sidney Jones, probably the best acknowledged expert on Indonesian jihadism from the International Crisis Group, say that Jemaah Islamiyah has established a new super secret special force unit. She argued that there are major cleavages in extremist Islam in Indonesia—cleavages which, I suggest, intelligent people in the Indonesian and Australian academic, security and police establishments ought to be able to use to help divide and capture the extremists who are behind the murders of our fellow Australians and the innocent people of Bali in the most recent attack. The jihadi terrorists seem to be led by Azahari and Noordin Top, who are the bomb maker and financier of the particularly violent subfraction of JI which Sidney Jones identified in her interview on Lateline on 3 October, the week after the Bali bombings.

I know from examples in Israel that democratic societies learn to adapt strongly to suicide bombers. United action by a society like Australia or Indonesia can effectively end support for terrorists. Defeat of terrorism will require strong efforts by Indonesia. I spoke in praise of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono before, and I retain my high opinion of him. He is a vast improvement on his predecessor. He was elected by a coalition of forces which include Islamic parties whose views are not necessarily all that different to JI’s—although they are democratic parties and not terrorist groups. No Indonesian president can afford to alienate moderate Islamic opinion in Indonesia. This is presumably why he has been reluctant to tackle JI’s—which in Indonesian means Islamic community—head-on. The people of Indonesia probably understand that this group—as the recent ASPI paper shows—has a long history going back to Darul Islam, which killed 20,000 to 40,000 people in Indonesia in the early 1960s. This militant, extremist minority has a long history in Indonesia. We should not underestimate the difficulties under which the Indonesians have to act against those who would return the whole world to the 12th century.

However, the failure to ban JI formally would not matter so much if we could be confident that Indonesia was serious about putting the organisation out of action in practice. Unfortunately, the saga of the trial of Abu Bakar Bashir does not necessarily engender such confidence. It is striking that moderate opinion leaders in Indonesia who supported President Yudhoyono’s election are starting to lose a bit of confidence on this issue. Endi Bayuni, the influential editor of the Jakarta Post, wrote last week:

No-one is blaming the president for Saturday’s attack but the public expects him to do better than his predecessor. There will be no rest for the president and his security advisers until they catch the perpetrators.

Of course, the President of Indonesia has a difficult task; he cannot just arrest people and throw them in jail as Suharto used to. Indonesia must become a society ruled by laws, not by presidential decree. Both Indonesians and Australians have a right to expect him to take firm action against terrorist groups like JI. At the moment, Indonesian law does not give the government the same powers that Australia has, and perhaps the new democratic parliamentarians
of Indonesia, whom I met in May and who are such decent people, ought to consider those kinds of things.

I will conclude by saying that the second Bali bombing is the latest twist in Australia’s tangled relations with Indonesia since the fall of the Suharto dictatorship in 1998. This relationship reached a low point during the liberation of East Timor and a high point during the outpouring of sympathy and money in the aftermath of the Boxing Day tsunami. Now it is under strain again, with many Australians asking questions about a country which allows a man like Abu Bakar Bashir, who is responsible for the deaths of hundreds of Indonesians as well as 92 Australians, to get away with a few months in jail while nine young Australians face the death penalty for drug offences—offences for which I believe they should be prosecuted with alacrity but not face the death penalty. I am not defending their stupidity or their activities, but in my view the disparity in treatment is striking and serves only to undermine what is Australia’s most important bilateral relationship. Australia must continue to work closely with Indonesia both at the government level and at the level of civil society to make that relationship grow closer and stronger. The people who carried out the Bali atrocity hope to wreck that relationship. We must make sure that they do not succeed.

Mr HARDGRAVE (Moreton—Minister for Vocational and Technical Education and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister) (5.07 pm)—I am pleased to join this debate but—like, I am sure, all those contributing to it—I wish it were not necessary for the parliament to hold it. We are, in a condolence motion, combining our concern for those who have been killed in natural disasters in Guatemala, where the entire side of a mountain has swamped all beneath it and where the hand of God has wreaked havoc upon the unsuspecting, and, equally, our concern for those who have been killed in Pakistan, India and Afghanistan, where the hand of God has shaken hard, just as it did on Boxing Day in the same general region. Our concern for people in the subcontinent region is most profound—they are people who are very familiar to us—as it is for those in Guatemala.

The member for Melbourne Ports made an expansive contribution to this debate—quite understandably so, because he is proudly a member of the Jewish community of Australia. Whilst he did not mention that, he can speak with great observation from that perspective about the real hurt and impact of those who seek to create a disruption in the good conduct of people of many different religious backgrounds. He was right to talk about the evil of Bali both in 2002 and 2005. Perhaps this debate will centre more on that than the other two God-induced natural disasters.

The Bali bombings in both years make no sense to anybody with any intelligence, but unfortunately we are dealing with people who are preying on those who are, in a lot of ways, illiterate—unable to read and write the language that they speak. They are simply persuaded by those with the biggest voice, the biggest set of guns or the biggest set of thugs around them. They are told simplistic stories such as: ‘If you’ve got a problem, blame them. It is because of them that things aren’t working the way you want them to, so extract more than a pound of flesh by targeting them; they don’t matter.’ Yet those who are the true followers of Islam, as the member for Melbourne Ports reflected, know that the Koran itself talks about how God created many tribes. The Jewish traditions talk about the same thing, just as the Christian traditions talk about the same thing—that God created many tribes so that they could travel the world and all get to know each other. Out of that sense of travelling and get-
ting to know each other comes a sense of knowledge, just as the very best science outcomes come from the catalyst of difference introduced to something that is the same.

In homogenous, monocultural societies around the world, there are people who stand out. I had a Korean girl on an exchange program in Rockhampton some years ago say to me that the thing she found most astonishing about Australia was all the differences in the faces and the range of people in our community. She said—and I do not know if it is right—that in Seoul if you see someone who is not Korean you know they are a tourist. That is simply not true in Australia. In fact, I have the most culturally diverse of all the electorates in Queensland. I have people who have come from all the faiths and all the lands to be a part of the Australian family. It is critically important that every one of them feels a sense of confidence that they are connected to, belong to and have a responsibility for the business of Australia.

It is the time of the holy month of Ramadan for the Muslim community, and the Islamic Society of Algester throw a big barbecue on Saturday nights during Ramadan. The community fast between sun-up and sundown—I do not know how they manage to do that—to test their faith; I do not know how they do not get cranky in the process. But many of my mates do not seem to have that problem. But at 10 o’clock on a Saturday night there is an enormous barbecue and everyone comes together. Last Saturday night at Algester mosque was a time of enormous sombre reflection on the hurt inflicted upon innocents in Bali both in 2002 and 2005 and upon the hurt inflicted upon those innocents in Pakistan in particular.

Members may have forgotten, but in my electorate was the first mosque anywhere in the world that was burnt or damaged as a result of the September 11 bombings of 2001, the Kuraby mosque. The Islamic Society of Kuraby responded by not blaming the broad Australian community for the actions of one person. Instead, they said, ‘Let us not condemn all Australians because someone has done something so silly as to torch the mosque.’ It was an old Anglican Church building in Kuraby which was used by the Islamic society as a mosque. They built a new mosque in its place. To their great credit, the people around Sunnybank, Eight Mile Plains and, indeed, Kuraby, came to the mosque the morning after the fire and apologised to Imam Yusuf Peer for what had occurred.

Equally, the Bosnian born community that worship at the Islamic Society of Eight Mile Plains—and they are not the only ones who worship there—have walked away from hurt and conflict based on ethnic and religious lines in their old country to find a real peace and certainty here in Australia. They cry tears of concern for Australians killed. They fight back tears of real concern for all who have been killed. That is their way. They have been through too much hurt themselves. They understand very clearly the sorts of bloodshed and torment that happen along ethnic and religious lines. I know that the Somalian born community equally have been through all of that, and they are in my own electorate.

I think Australians in reflecting upon the very poor conduct of a very small group of people in Bali need to remind themselves that we as a nation have to do better than those people that we are angry at. We are as a nation literate; we are as a nation intelligent; we are as a nation multicultural, culturally diverse in every possible way. Not only are we a nation which says to people new to Australia, ‘You are free to be who you are,’ but we challenge them on an everyday basis to be that for Australia. We are an example to the rest of the world of a nation where difference is celebrated and where people are challenged to contribute something that is perhaps different to the business of growing a stronger nation. We are as a nation not a coun-
try which pushes people to hide away in corners. It is absolutely critical that we do not create a set of victims in our own society on top of the victims that exist in other societies, that we in fact go out of our way to cross the street and embrace the difference that might happen to be in our schools and in our suburbs, that we invite people to be part of community groups and challenge them to contribute all that they are to the business of Australia. That is what we do as a nation; we do it darn well, and so we must.

Australians are and must continue to be an example to those few with the loud voices and the big guns and the big thugs that violence and attack on innocents is not ever the way to get your point across, that this cowardly way of killing innocents should never be rewarded and that there is no place in paradise for Jihadists, there is no place in paradise for extremists and there is no place in paradise for those who set out to murder others to try to prove a point.

I make one point which some might think I should be careful to make, because the popular view is that maybe we should try to contain that difference and try to get people to assimilate—in other words, change who they are and fit into the mould. I make the point about the dress code that Australia does not have. We actually do not have a dress code in this country. If we did, we could introduce on-the-spot fines for bad fashion, I suspect. The other week I went and talked to students from the Islamic School of Brisbane and found bright and intelligent young ladies making choices. I said, ‘Freedom of choice, as long as you freely make that choice—you are not being forced to wear clothes that your parents or others are inflicting upon you—then I respect the choices you make.’ One girl said, ‘I wear a hijab because I want people to know of my virtue and of my love of God.’ That was an interesting comment. I told her that it was a pretty proud statement to make and that she should continue to hold that view and congratulated her for it.

Whilst others might say, ‘Let’s not have this; let’s do something different,’ we need to understand the fundamental point that we do not have dress codes in Australia and that people who make and exercise their right to wear certain things must take a certain amount of responsibility for the decisions they make. We need to be very certain when we have discussions about dress that we are not in fact feeding into the fervid hate behind the few who perpetrated the crimes against us all in Bali. We need to make certain that we do not create victims in our own society. We need to make certain that we give a sense of attachment and commitment and connection and that we challenge people to be part of this nation and do not drive them away. We need to make certain that people have confidence in their belonging in Australia.

The way in which the Islamic community is now reacting strongly to violations of their religion by those few in other places and rightly condemning those actions needs to be noted in this place. We need Muslims in Australia to take charge of their religion and the public relations associated with their religion at this time. We need Muslims in Australia to stand ready as an example to the evil in other places that their actions are not going to change the way in which we are bringing people of all backgrounds and beliefs together for the business and best benefit of Australia as a nation.

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler) (5.18 pm)—Tomorrow it will be three years since the tragic day at the Sari Club in Bali. We will not forget the horrific events of 12 October 2002 and how a favourite place for so many Australians changed forever. Following the attack I spoke in this House of how the event had scarred my local community. Today I again want to honour
those from my electorate who lost their lives: Debbie and Abbey Borgia, Robyn Webster and Louiza Zervos. Our thoughts are again with their families and loved ones as we remember, three years on, the loss and grief that they have had to endure.

They have been recognised by the local community. I attended the funeral service of Robyn Webster at St Clement’s church next to my office in Marrickville where Brian, her husband, and Kristy, her daughter, who was also severely injured in the Bali bombing, were present, along with other family members. It was indeed a moving ceremony, one which I will never forget. I also attended the service at St Bridget’s in Marrickville for Debbie and Abbey Borgia, who were remembered by Debbie’s husband, John, and the rest of their family and school friends. Since then the community have indeed united.

Outside Petersham Town Hall—thanks to the assistance of the then mayor, Barry Cotter, and the Marrickville Council—on Crystal Street, is a permanent memorial. The Debbie and Abbey Borgia Community Recreation Centre is an extraordinarily fine facility down at Steele Park in Marrickville. It is a facility where young people from the local community and schools practise basketball and martial arts and where people have community meetings. It is a focal point for the community, just as the Robyn Webster Centre in Tempe is a focal point particularly for young people in the community. There, recently, as I understand it, was the largest Indigenous art mural in the world. I say to those present here in the House and to others, as you fly into Kingsford Smith airport—and you may recall this from my comments on other issues—you will fly very close and low over my electorate. Literally, as you fly in from the north and also from the west, on landing you can see that mural. It is indeed enormous. The community has continued to rally around.

I remember the function that was held at the Anzac club in Marrickville. I got an invite through a phone call. I do not think there was a letterbox drop. I think it was just word of mouth. I turned up there about 15 minutes before the function was to start. You could hardly get into the club. The local community—the working class people of Marrickville, St Peters, Dulwich Hill and Tempe—showed the best of what makes this country a fine place in raising funds to give assistance and support to people in their hour of need. Marrickville identities such as Jeff Fenech made contributions and donations of memorabilia which was auctioned; local businesses kicked in. From that tragic event there was unity in the community.

The community’s young people were particularly affected. In Bali at that time were members of the Dulwich Newtown Basketball Club, and students from Casimir college in Marrickville and Dulwich Hill High School were caught up in the tragedy. Many of them were injured, and all who were there experienced the trauma that only those who were there could have understood. These were young adults with their lives ahead of them—lives cut so cruelly short. Many of them, and we know the football team from Western Australia, were sports-people—young, active and engaged in their communities—who were celebrating their end-of-season victories.

Whilst three years ago we grieved with many families who had lost their youngest members, today we think of the children who have lost their parents. Families have again been split apart in the cruellest of ways. As families were enjoying a meal together on the shores of Jimbaran Bay, that peaceful beachfront was overturned by an evil act. I was moved by the words of the young man from Newcastle who spoke on behalf of the families at the commemorative service at the Sacred Heart Cathedral last week. Joe Frost explained how that
bomb had hit our whole community. Joe Frost showed incredible strength in the face of this cowardly act. He asked the questions that plague us all: why did this happen? He asked how having dinner on the beach with your family and friends can be so offensive to these people, the people that their fundamentalist supporters now call heroes. It is quite clear that these people must be brought to justice. They must be caught and brought to trial. Jemaah Islamiah must be outlawed.

Today I want to focus on the communities and the families that have been so terribly affected. As Joe Frost said, we will stand together and make it through. We must all stand together as caring local communities—and, indeed, together as a nation. We must fight this evil with compassion, humanity and tolerance. We have to make sure that in our response to these actions the terrorists do not win. Terrorists do win if we give up the important civil rights that give us in Australia our freedom and that make us proud as a community.

We must reach out to our Balinese neighbours, whose families too have been torn apart, whose businesses are empty and whose communities have been divided. We must also reach out to the members of our local communities who have suffered vilification as a result of acts of terrorism across the world. As a society we must foster tolerance. Division on the basis of religion has no place in Australian society. Terrorism is the act of cowards. It is wrong whether it is committed by individual suicide bombers, by terrorist groups or by states. Terrorists promote fear. In the face of this fear, we must encourage the opposite. When our children now ask us the hard questions, it is humanity and compassion that must frame our answers.

It is with compassion and humanity that we must also reach out today to those who suffer in South Asia in the aftermath of a horrific natural disaster. The devastating earthquake measuring 7.6 on the Richter scale has taken many lives. Over 30,000 lives have been lost in Pakistan alone. These figures are set to rise. The United Nations has estimated that there are over 2.5 million people now in need of shelter. Many of these people are in remote areas. The need for international aid is urgent. The scale of this need is overwhelming. The nation of Pakistan has been the hardest hit. Classrooms that were full of children have been reduced to piles of rubble. Many villages and townships have lost a generation of their people. We must stand in solidarity with the people of Pakistan at this horrific time.

Our thoughts are with the members of the Pakistani community in Australia, including those in my local electorate in the inner west of Sydney who have friends and relatives in the affected areas. Australians gave generously in 2002 when our friends and Balinese neighbours needed our assistance. Now again we must do all that we can. We again gave money and showed great generosity in the aftermath of the tsunami. The Pakistan High Commission has launched an appeal for the victims of the earthquake. Medicines, tents and emergency food provisions are all desperately needed. I urge all Australians, local businesses and indeed the government to dig deep and to show once again what compassionate, generous people Australians are.

Mr WOOD (La Trobe) (5.28 pm)—I stand in support of the condolence motion. I have spoken numerous times about the need for strong counterterrorism measures. My background was in the Victorian police force, where I was a senior sergeant at the counterterrorism coordination unit. The reason I am so strong on counterterrorism is that I want to prevent a condolence motion like this arising from a terrorist attack on home soil.
With the member for Prospect and other members of parliament, I recently had the great opportunity to go to the Australia-Indonesia youth exchange forum. Whilst in Indonesia, we had the great opportunity of meeting Indonesian people and experiencing their great way of life and how friendly they are. We spoke about various issues, including terrorism. The big wake-up call was when we drove past the Australian Embassy, which had previously been the subject of a terrorist attack by JI. The person behind that attack, and also the Bali bombings, was Dr Azahari. I am not sure what type of doctor practises and preaches terrorism.

I stand here today after the latest attacks—the Bali bombings on 1 October 2005. Again Australians experienced a tragedy and the death and injury of Australians in Indonesia. On 1 October 2005, with horror, I watched our TV screens to see a terrorist attack. It was like deja vu, knowing that young Australians and also those on family holidays had been subjected to a horrific attack. Straightaway when I saw this attack I realised that one of the people behind it would be Dr Azahari.

On my trip to Indonesia, I had the great pleasure of seeing the Australian Federal Police at the Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation, which is probably the best $35 million the Australian government has spent in Indonesia. At that time they had a large number of international police in charge of various counterterrorism units; I think there were approximately 28.

I also had the pleasure of seeing Dr Rohan Gunaratna, the world expert on al-Qaeda, give a presentation. He went through the Australian Embassy attacks and showed the suicide bombers. Quite amazingly, we looked at how these people are indoctrinated. The suicide bomber on that occasion did not even know how to drive a motor car. Two weeks before the bombing, he had his first drive. He would have been a lot more devastating if he had tried to drive through the gates, but he did not have the skills to do so. During his presentation Dr Rohan Gunaratna showed us a safe house which Dr Azahari had stayed at and since left. In this house he had left behind a number of incendiary devices—explosives which had various nails and ball bearings—on little lunch boxes. The sad thing is that a number of these were still out in the community ready to go.

When the news coverage after the latest bombings occurred, we learned that 22 people had been killed, including four of our own. A 16-year-old boy from Western Australia, Brendan Fitzgerald, perished in the Kuta explosion. Jennifer Williamson, one of the many holiday-makers from Newcastle, New South Wales, also perished. Husband and wife Colin and Fiona Zwolinski, also from Newcastle, whose safety was uncertain for some days, have now been confirmed as having been killed in the blast.

Australian survivors being treated in hospitals include Bruce Williamson, husband of Jennifer Williamson; Paul and Penelope Anicich; Terry Fitzgerald, father of Brendan; Jessica Fitzgerald, sister of Brendan; Eric and Jenny Pilar; Maryanne Purkis; Nicolas and Jennifer Scott; George Drake; Aleta Lederwasch; Kim and Vicki Griffiths; and Anthony Purkis. An Indonesian man and two Japanese nationals are also being treated in Australia. Sadly, all these people, as I have said before, were holidaying. Did they deserve this? The answer is no.

The saddest thing is that these terrorists honestly believe that they are enforcing God’s will and that, if anyone has been killed, God has chosen those people to be killed. If the victims, innocent people, are killed, they believe that these people go to heaven as they will.
In the days following the bombings, images from the Kuta explosion began to appear on our news coverage, particularly images of a young man with a backpack who was subsequently identified as a suicide bomber. We cannot escape these images of explosions as we see amateur footage of people fleeing from restaurants amidst the chaos.

Australia’s response to the attack was efficient and timely; unfortunately, we are now more prepared for these incidents. Having the emergency response team on the ground in Bali the next day was an exceptional effort. A team of experts arrived, including medical personnel, counselling staff, consular officials and emergency management and bomb blast specialists, to offer their expertise. The AFP sent disaster victim identification specialists to Bali. I am sure you will find that other state police will be helping in this task.

Australia is committed to helping our partners in South-East Asian countries and ensuring that we can give the best possible assistance in preventing further terrorist attacks. Our relationship with Indonesia has been stronger since the first attack on 12 October 2002, when 202 people died—tragically, 88 Australians.

Today we are commemorating the third anniversary of the 2002 bombings at Kuta’s Sari Club and Paddy’s Bar as we mourn more loss of Australian life. These attacks are a result of a growing global terror threat, which in our neighbourhood is currently led by JI in Indonesia. Again, I have no doubt that Dr Azahari would be behind these attacks. JI has claimed responsibility for attacks on Australians. Abu Bakar Bashir is serving a prison sentence for his role in the 2002 attacks. Further Australian interests have been targeted by JI since 2002, as we saw in 2004 when a suicide bomber drove a van into the Australian Embassy in Jakarta. Australians were also injured in 2003 when the American-owned Marriott Hotel was targeted by a suicide bomber.

As we mourn the loss of Australian life in 2002 and 2005, we cannot help but mourn the loss of the Balinese people. Australians have developed a warm relationship with these people for many years as Bali has grown to be a popular holiday destination for Australians. The Balinese have experienced not only much loss of life but also loss of means of survival. Tourism is their main economic sector, supporting roughly 58,000 jobs, with more than 20 per cent of the population directly dependent on this sector. Tourism contributes between 60 and 70 per cent of Bali’s economy.

Travel warnings have had a serious impact on Bali, with the level of international arrivals in Bali dropping from 150,000 in September 2002 to 31,000 in November 2002. Unfortunately, the same thing will occur again. The Bali tourism industry had begun to improve in recent times, but I do not know the future of the Balinese people and their tourism industry. Sadly, the terrorists would look at this as some sort of victory—to destroy a person’s life and income. As we remember today the victims of the 2002 and 2005 Bali attacks, who came from all corners of the globe to enjoy the beauty and wonder that Bali offers, we can only hope that, as Australians rebuild our strength and resolve against global terror, so can the people of Bali.

Mr BEVIS (Brisbane) (5.37 pm)—It is a matter of great regret that the parliament is once again discussing a condolence motion after a tragedy where innocent lives have been lost at the hands of extremists who have no regard for other human life—indeed, would seem to have no regard for their own or for those who they claim to support and act on behalf of.
I am sure that the recent bombings in Bali brought back to the minds of all Australians the terrible events of 2002. It is hard to comprehend how people can set upon a course of action to take lives of innocent people who, as Joe Frost quite dramatically commented, were doing no more than having dinner with their family and loved ones. Yet, in some respects, that appears to have been the cause of the anger.

It is a factor of modern political life in the world in which we live that some groups involved in non-state terror will take it upon themselves to conduct these sorts of atrocities. Whether it is in Bali, London, Madrid or New York, the actions are largely predicated on the same basis—that these indiscriminate acts of terror will somehow break the spirit of the people who are the targets of these attacks and that that will somehow advance the cause of those involved. The resolve of the people in Bali and of many of the tourists whom we saw on television demonstrates the folly of that, as did the resolve of people in London, New York and Madrid.

We should pay special tribute to those who were involved in the hours immediately following the tragedy for the work that they did in looking after the wounded and the ill. For the Balinese people themselves—who have had to endure these attacks, the lasting effects on their lives and the short-term effects on their economy and livelihood—this is a terrible burden that they have had to deal with through no fault of their own. I think that most Australians would want to convey a warm and heartfelt sense of thanks to the people of Bali.

Our own personnel—our Defence Force, the Australian Air Force, Federal Police officers and others—that have been involved in the immediate relief work and the subsequent investigations of these bombings know that they have the full support of the people of Australia and the parliament of Australia. They did their work in the immediate days after the explosion with the professionalism and dedication to which we have become accustomed. I am sure that the work of the AFP officers who are there now conducting the investigations will, in the end, bring those responsible to justice.

It is a matter of great concern that these events occur and that we, as a parliament, are then confronted with the need to respond to terrorism in order to ensure that Australian safety is improved. I agree with the comments of my friend the member for Grayndler in saying that it is important in conducting those matters that our response does not take away from us the very liberty that distinguishes our free society. I am reminded of a very prominent United States civil liberties lawyer from the early part of the last century, Clarence Darrow, who said: You can only protect your liberties in this world by protecting the other man’s freedom. You can only be free if I am free.

There is a message in that that we can take on board here in terms of our own domestic response. Also, hopefully, we can echo to others around the world that in those words lies an important message.

It strikes me as more than coincidence that the region in which these attacks occurred happens to be an area in which there is a degree of instability and organised criminal activities. I was recently looking at the global incidence of piracy and ships being hijacked and was a little surprised to discover that the greatest number of those incidents occur in South-East Asia and, overwhelmingly, in Indonesian waters. You have to wonder whether or not these are also activities of the people involved in financing some of these terrorist operations, in much the
same way that the poppy fields of Afghanistan are used to finance al-Qaeda’s operations elsewhere in the world.

The figures are somewhat startling for the year 2004. There were some 68 ships boarded and an additional four were hijacked. That is better than one a week. There were another 20 where there was an attempted boarding. If you include Malaysia, the Malacca Straits and the surrounding areas, you arrive at a figure of about two acts of piracy a week on ships in our immediate north and north-west approaches. It is time that we increased our efforts to work with our neighbours as partners in dealing with this problem.

The people who perpetrate, finance and organise these acts pay no regard not only to human life; they pay no regard to international boundaries and borders. These issues are not going to be addressed by any single nation acting unilaterally. It requires the close cooperation of a broad coalition. In this we share a common interest with all of the countries of our region. I am aware that the government has undertaken measures in this regard and the opposition has advocated it on many occasions. We need to double our efforts in this area. Without the cooperation of all the nations in the region, we will continue to be on the back foot in this debate and sadly find ourselves on similar condolence motions in the future.

Before I conclude, I want to add a couple of words about the natural disasters in Pakistan. It is not that long ago that General Musharraf was in this building and many of us attended a dinner in his honour. There was a genuine closeness at the function that evening between the Australian members of parliament and the visiting Pakistanis—certainly between General Musharraf, the Prime Minister of Australia and the Leader of the Opposition. There was a warmth and common purpose, not least of all in dealing with the question of responding to non-state terrorists.

That warmth should now translate to action on our part as a nation. The Australian people have demonstrated their generosity in the past. The government had made an announcement of some financial support, and I would urge the government to act swiftly and generously. These are times when Pakistan needs not just fine words of comfort but also material support, and it needs it urgently. There have been 30,000 deaths, with a total death toll anticipated to increase substantially above that level. Entire towns have literally been swallowed up and villages no longer exist. Where once a village stood on the hillside, there is now a valley, a large mass grave. The people of Pakistan need compassion but, more than compassion, they need material support. We have the opportunity to do that, and we should be providing the sort of assistance they need. Pakistan authorities have urgently requested airlift capacity, for obvious reasons: the areas that require support are not able to be accessed by road. They also require medical support and field hospitals, and we are one of the few countries in the world that can rapidly mobilise a field hospital and have it on site in a matter of days.

I strongly urge the government to take on board these measures, in addition to the financial support that has been provided so far, as a concrete means of supporting the humanitarian effort. It is important for the humanitarian effort that countries like Australia provide swift support. It is also important, and not unrelated to the other discussion we are having here today, that we provide the maximum amount of support that we possibly can to General Musharraf in dealing with the problems he has within his own borders and on Pakistan’s border with Afghanistan. I strongly encourage the government to do that.
Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth) (5.47 pm)—Tomorrow is the third anniversary of the bombings of the Sari Club in Bali on 12 October 2002, in which 91 Australian citizens and residents lost their lives in an act of savage, mindless violence designed to terrorise free people—the free people of Australia and the free people of Bali. It was a destructive, mindless, terrorist act. That act on 12 October 2002—12-10—was for us as much a loss of innocence as 9-11 had been the previous year for the people of the United States.

Of course, wherever disaster strikes in the world, there are likely to be Australians. There are one million Australians spread out all over the world; we have an enormous diaspora. In many respects, every corner of the world is a part of Australia—and nowhere more so than Bali. The awful tragedy of 12 October 2002 has now been repeated, with another bombing on 1 October, almost on the anniversary of that first tragedy. This time, we have lost four Australians: Jennifer Williamson, and Colin and Fiona Zwolinsky, all of Newcastle, and Brendan Fitzgerald, a 16-year-old boy from Busselton in Western Australia. These add to the list of Australian victims of international terror, and they add to the Australians killed and injured in the London bombings on 7 July this year. London, in a different way, but in many respects in the same way, is as much a part of Australians' sense of the familiar, known world as Bali is.

Tomorrow there will be a commemorative service at Dolphin Point in Coogee to commemorate the third anniversary of the Bali bombing. It will be dedicated to all the Bali victims, and there is a special place for the survivors and the victims' families. It is a place that is visited daily by people who wish to pay their respects and is a focal point of Coogee Beach. Whilst we do not need a monument to ensure it, it re-enforces the assurance that we will never forget that tragedy, and we will never fail to celebrate the life and resilience of the Australians who perished in the Sari Club. When we attend tomorrow's ceremony, we will also be thinking of the Australians who perished only a few days ago in yet another act of terrorism. A new plaque will be unveiled at the ceremony with a photo engraving of each of the 20 eastern suburbs victims, many of whom were members of the Dolphins football club from Coogee.

This battle against terrorism in which we are engaged is one that will rely for its successful prosecution on, above all else, intelligence and education—intelligence, so we can find out what is in the minds of the terrorists first; education, so we can ensure that young minds do not become terrorist minds. Good intelligence is the key to counter terrorism. Of course, the pressure on the forces fighting against the terrorists are enormous. Our counter-terrorist agencies, our police, our soldiers, have to be right 100 per cent of the time; the terrorist only has to be right once. So it is right that we have increased our resources in intelligence; it is right that we have increased and improved our relationship at the level of every federal agency with our neighbouring states and in particular with Indonesia.

In that sense, disaster—the disasters in Bali and late last year the extraordinary tsunami—has brought Australia and Indonesia closer than the two countries have ever been before. Not all of the human tragedy with which we seem to be dealing in successive condolence motions in this House has been the result of terrorism, but much of it has been. That is avoidable if we are successful in identifying the terrorists before they can strike, if we can root them out and if, above all, we can ensure that those people who seek to pervert the minds of young men and women are stopped from persuading young people that their highest religious service is to destroy themselves in the company of dozens or hundreds or thousands of innocent people.
It is an extraordinary thing, this phenomenon of suicide bombing. There has been, I fear, a neglect on the part of many nations to recognise what was welling up in their communities. It comes back to me again and again that one of the bombers in London on 7 July was a young man, the son of a small business man, from a comfortable family; he loved cricket and taught in a school. Surely this is not the profile of a murderous terrorist—at least we did not think it was the profile of a murderous terrorist. Something strange is happening in the Islamic communities outside of the traditional Islamic world. It is a matter that many writers have struggled with in Europe. What is happening that is making young Muslims outside of the majority Islamic countries of North Africa and the Middle East—the Muslims of Europe—so radicalised? What is turning them into the bombers? Nine-eleven had more to do with the mosques of Hamburg and London than it did with the mosques or madrassas of Saudi Arabia or Afghanistan.

There is a real challenge for the traditional Western world to understand and engage with the Muslims among us. That is why it is greatly reassuring that in Australia, while we should not be complacent at all, we have seen very recently our Prime Minister engage directly and compellingly with the Islamic community. He sets a great example for all of us, because we must be one family of many religions and faiths—and of no faiths. We must be engaged together for a common Australian purpose.

Before I leave the subject of terrorism, like many other speakers in this House, I want to refer to what will, I suspect, be one of the great Australian speeches. It was not given by a great statesman or a great orator, it was not given by a general, a prime minister or a president; it was given by a 20-year-old man, Joe Frost, a survivor of the bombing in October this year. He said at the memorial service in the cathedral in Newcastle:

Now one question on my mind is: why did this happen ... And apparently it’s about religion ... But we were eating dinner on the beach with our friends and families. Who does that offend? Who doesn’t eat dinner with their family and friends? It’s the most common thing in the world.

And now the cowards who planned and who advocate and champion this horrific act say that they are heroes and that the people who did it are heroes. But what’s heroic about murdering the innocent and leaving families ruined?

He concluded his magnificent speech with this:

These are our darkest hours, the worst days of so many of our lives. This sad and sickening act has torn us open. But we’ll stand together and we’ll make it through.

And so we will. The challenge of global terrorism is the greatest political challenge the Western world has faced, certainly since the fall of the Soviet Union. It is a more intangible threat but it is one that we can deal with with determination, collaboration and remembering always that the keys are good intelligence and a focus on education, ensuring that there will be no more young men, cricket loving or not, who decide that their mission in this world and the next is to bring death and destruction on other people.

This has been a year of natural disaster as well. We have had the tsunami, of which much has been said in this House and where Australia has played a heroic role in every respect. The Australian nation played a heroic role in assisting our neighbours struck by that disaster, in particular, of course, the Indonesians.

We have had more recently the enormous earthquake near Muzaffarabad in Pakistan-administered Kashmir. The death toll is expected to go well beyond 20,000, without counting
the dead from neighbouring North West Frontier Province. Muzaffarabad, a city of 100,000, is without power and water, and food is getting scarce. The sewerage system was also ruptured by this quake. Ahead lies the risk of more deaths from disease and exposure in this bitterly cold, mountainous part of the world for nearly 1½ million Kashmiris.

India’s offer of help is a positive sign for the peace process with Pakistan. The two countries have both been hit, of course, but Pakistan by far the worst. Again, it may well be that disaster brings these two countries, which have had so many differences, closer together. The Australian government has been quick to help, with the provision of $500,000 for immediate medical and relief assistance. The gulf state of Kuwait has pledged $100 million in aid to Pakistan, while a plane has landed at Islamabad in the last few days with the first shipment of a $50 million United States aid package. The World Bank has earmarked $20 million and the Asian Development Bank, $10 million. Authorities estimate that it will take up to six months to complete the rescue and relief work. All the time, the rescue workers are battling against the clock, because by the end of this month Kashmir’s harsh winter will have begun.

We live in a world beset by troubles. Some of them are acts of God, or nature, such as the earthquake and the tsunami. We have to deal with those, and the tragedies are no less real. Others are the work of our fellow men and women, misguided and destructive. Whether these disasters are wrought by man or by nature, the response must always be the same. It must be founded in teamwork, in a love of humanity, in collaboration with the people of other nations and, above all else, in a deep commitment on the part of all Australians to work together and, as Joe Frost said, ‘to make it through’.

Ms GILLARD (Lalor) (6.01 pm)—I want to make a contribution on the Bali condolence motion and the other tragedies that this condolence motion unfortunately comprehends. Like many hundreds of thousands of other Australians, I have had the opportunity to visit and to holiday in Bali. I have done that on two occasions: on the first occasion with my sister and her children, my niece and nephew; on the second occasion with my sister, my nephew and a friend of my nephew’s.

As we recall—and as this motion tells us—the first Bali bombing was on 12 October 2002, on a Saturday. I returned from my second trip to Bali on the Friday morning, so when the bomb went off on 12 October 2002 I felt very much how near I was to being there at the time of those events. With this dreadful tragedy on 1 October, you can imagine yourself in the settings where these tragedies have occurred. I visited Raja’s with my family members on many occasions to eat a meal there. I have eaten a meal on the beach, watching the sun go down and eating freshly cooked seafood, as have so many other Australians who have holidayed in Bali. So many hundreds of thousands of Australians can imagine themselves or their loved ones in that space because they have been there, they have seen it, they have enjoyed it, they can visualise it. The very fact that they can imagine themselves or their loved ones in that space brings home to all Australians in a very graphic way the callous randomness of these acts of savagery. You do not know who it could have been or who could have been there. There are people enjoying very simple holiday pleasures, only to find themselves confronted, maimed or possibly killed by a barbarism that seems beyond understanding.

It is on that basis that this parliament is working its way through these condolence motions and trying to come to grips with something that has so deeply affected our nation. It has affected the Australians involved, those who have been killed or injured and their loved ones,
but it has affected us more broadly, because, as the member for Wentworth has said, there was a loss of innocence on 12 October 2002, and that loss of innocence has been compounded on 1 October this year. The fact that we can imagine ourselves or our loved ones there brings home that loss of innocence in a very clear way to each of us.

On 16 October 2002, I spoke in the Bali condolence motion about the dreadful events of 12 October 2002. On that occasion, I spoke particularly of a member of my electorate, Mr David Stewart, who is known as Spike Stewart. On 16 October 2002, I said of Spike Stewart:

His son, Anthony Stewart, 29 years of age, is still missing. He is a member of the Kingsley football team. He was last seen on the dance floor of the Sari nightclub. Obviously Mr David Stewart and his wife, Marilyn, have been devastated by anxiety as they have waited for news. Mr David Stewart is actually travelling to Bali today to look for his son. His trip is being paid for by his employer, in a wonderful act of generosity. Mr Stewart is in contact with consular officials and they will meet him on his arrival in Bali. My heart goes out to David and Marilyn. I note that this family has already suffered a great deal, having lost Anthony’s twin brother four years ago in a car accident. Our thoughts are with you in this very terrible time of suffering.

Tragically, when David ‘Spike’ Stewart made that trip to Bali, commencing on 16 October 2002, it was to discover that his son Anthony Stewart, 29, was not missing but had been killed in the Sari nightclub. It was a special tragedy for a man who had lost Anthony’s twin brother some four years before. To have lost twin sons is obviously a special kind of tragedy for Spike Stewart and his wife, Marilyn. It is something that I think people would struggle to understand and come to grips with—how anybody could get beyond such a series of tragic events and go on to live any form of life beyond it.

Speaking to this condolence motion, I can report that Spike Stewart has gone on to confront and deal with this tragedy. He is someone who has played an important organising and supporting role for those who were affected by the devastating events of 12 October 2002. He has organised events like family barbecue days for the Victorian people who were touched by the events of 2002, to create an opportunity for them to meet and catch up. He was a prime mover in encouraging the Victorian government to dedicate a memorial to the victims from Victoria. He is often a spokesman for those who have lost someone in Bali or whose loved ones have suffered. Indeed, I suspect that many Australians have seen Spike Stewart on their TV screens in recent days with words of wisdom about how those who have suffered in the current events can get through it and beyond.

Our condolences obviously go to the current victims of the 1 October bombing and to those who are still grieving, mourning and affected by injury from the bombings on 12 October 2002. As Spike Stewart’s example shows, there is a way to rebuild and to show, even in the darkest of events, some positive flicker of spirit. He certainly continues to do that.

As well as the Australian victims, our thoughts turn to the Balinese. Like many Australians who have holidayed in Bali, I have been struck by the gentleness of the Balinese people. In these times of crisis, they certainly have done much to assist Australians and other foreign nationals caught up in these devastating events. We know that many Balinese people were killed both on 12 October 2002 and 1 October this year. Many were injured. Beyond those who were killed and injured, many face the loss of their livelihood because of Bali’s dependency on tourism.
Last time that I spoke in the condolence motion for the 2002 event, I talked about meeting a man in Bali who acted as a tour guide for my sister and me. He had gone to work in a hotel as a 14-year-old houseboy in exchange for the hotel owner paying his school fees. Some 16 years later he was still working in that hotel. He talked to us about the nature of the Balinese medical system and the fact that it was very expensive and that people had to pay for medical treatment. He said that the birth of his first child had cost two million rupiah, a huge amount of money from his perspective.

He talked about the problems with the tourism industry at that stage. There were some concerns about date rape drugs in Bali night clubs, and he was worried about the effect that that would have on the number of Westerners who came to Bali. One can only imagine the despair of Balinese people such as this man looking at Bali’s tourism industry and now knowing that these acts of brutality not only have caught people in the immediate incidents but are likely to devastate the economy, with all of the implications that that has for life prospects and opportunities for the Balinese involved. Today, we must grieve for and note the hurt that is being experienced by the Balinese people as a whole.

It goes without saying that any right-thinking person would condemn without reservation the acts of savagery that have resulted in these deaths and injuries and so much beyond. In this place from time to time there are obviously differences of opinion about the best way of fighting terrorism. Finding the right balance between the competing interests of ensuring security, to the best of our ability, and valuing our precious freedoms is not an easy task. It is a task on which reasonable people can differ and do differ and have the opportunity to debate those differences.

One thing that saddens us as we have those debates in this parliament is that sometimes, when they proceed on a partisan basis, it is assumed that there are people in this parliament who lack the will to fight terror, who do not want to fight for democracy and who do not see the need to stand up to terrorists. Of course, none of that is true. Every member in this place understands the need to fight terror. Every member in this place loves democracy and would be prepared to fight for it. Every member in this place is a true Australian patriot, and I think we cheapen the debate by questioning those things about each other. Rather than engage in that cheapening of the debate, we should recognise that working out a strategy to fight terrorism is a very difficult task that requires all our goodwill and intellectual labour. It is a task about which reasonable people can differ, and those differences should be debated through in civility rather than partisanship. We have seen too much of that.

I turn to congratulating those members of our health services who, both in 2002 and in the past few days, have once again gone above and beyond to assist the victims of these incidents in Bali. Our health services on both occasions have performed magnificently. Whether it is doctors on the ground who have rushed to provide aid to the victims, whether it is the Royal Darwin Hospital, whether it is those who have come up with an innovative treatment for burns—which happened in the 2002 bombing—or whether it is the John Hunter Hospital, doctors, nurses and hospital staff across the country have been involved in providing support. I want to record my thanks for their heroic efforts. Each and every one of them does much beyond what they are paid for, particularly when it comes to dealing with events like these.

As other speakers have remarked, this has been an amazing year for disasters. We are obviously focused now on the pain that has been caused by terrorism so recently, but it has also...
been an amazing and tragic year for natural disasters. Whether it was the tsunami, whether it was the hurricanes that have devasted America—particularly the suffering of the people in New Orleans—whether it is the suffering we are now watching on our TV screens in Guatemala and tragically in Pakistan, this will always go down in our memories as a year where nature wreaked a terrible toll on humanity.

It is important, as it was with the tsunami and with the catastrophe that hit the United States—most particularly New Orleans—and as it is now with Pakistan and Guatemala, that a nation such as ours, which enjoys comparatively with the world such great levels of wealth, does everything that it can to assist those in need. I add my voice to those who have already spoken in this debate about the tremendous, urgent need in Pakistan as people continue to go through the amazing search for survivors and still manage to find, almost beyond hope and reason, under piles of rubble, children and adults who have somehow survived for days in those circumstances but will only survive further if they get good medical assistance and aid. Then there are the many who have not been directly injured but, without the benefit of food and shelter, will ultimately pay with their lives for this natural disaster.

That concludes my remarks on what I think is a very difficult and emotional motion for this parliament and something that gives us cause to reflect on the very great luck so many of us experience in our lives. We are very lucky not to have been caught up individually in these events and we are very lucky that we have the opportunity, safe and well here, to do something to assist those who are far from safe and far from well.

Mr HUNT (Flinders—Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage) (6.15 pm)—In rising to address this motion of condolence, I acknowledge all three tragedies which are recorded. Firstly, and most recently, is the Pakistan earthquake. There has been tragic loss of life, with well in excess of 40,000 souls lost and potentially many more. Numerous families have been sundered and communities have been damaged. Secondly, I acknowledge the tragedy in Bali and the atrocity which brought it about, the killings there on 1 October 2005. Thirdly, I recall those whom we have lost and those who have survived the killings of 12 October 2002 in Bali, the first Bali bombing.

In looking at this condolence motion, I wish to do three things. First, I give my sympathy to all of those who have survived but have lost loved ones along the way in each of these tragedies. I wish to focus particularly on the most recent Bali bombing. We have had the deaths of three Australians from Newcastle and another from Western Australia, and each is survived by people who have expressed their love and have suffered loss. And there have been many other Australians who have connections with those in Bali. To all of those people from Bali, Indonesia and other countries, I also pass on my genuine sympathy and the sympathy of my constituents in the electorate of Flinders—the people of the Mornington Peninsula, Western Port and Bass Coast.

I also want to acknowledge, on behalf of my constituents and myself, the great debt of gratitude we owe to emergency workers, to authorities, to hospital workers, to our military forces and to Indonesian forces who have placed themselves in harm’s way. They have worked without any desire for recompense or favour but simply out of a sense of common humanity and of commitment to others. That sacrifice, that willingness, is a wonderful testimony to what we are, to what Indonesia is at its very best and to the relations between the two countries.
In looking forward, I think it is very important that the message which has come out from survivors and those who have known and been close to the deceased is that they would not want us to give up. They would not want us to lose that sense of optimism and resolve and celebration of life which was part and parcel of a visit to Bali. It is the reason that people go: to mix both cultural experiences and joie de vivre with a beautiful environment and the wonderful Balinese people. That sense of Australia’s openness is something which we have to protect. It is critical that we protect that sense of national spirit. I do not feel that we are at threat of losing it, but it is indispensable. We must recall, remember and recommit to retaining that sense of who we are.

In doing that, I think it is important to examine two key additional things in this speech. Firstly, there is the matter of condolence. Then I want to move on to the question of the threat we face and the response.

In dealing with the threat, what we see in Bali—both this time, in 2005, and on 12 October 2002—is this. I am speculating, but everybody is of the view that it was Jemaah Islamiah or an affiliate that was involved on this occasion. What we see is an attempt to do a number of things. At the grandest level, it is an attempt to try and remake the world as we know it. What we see is a philosophy, whether you call it Wahabism or it is an offshoot of that, and the way in which it has transpired in Afghanistan as the legacy of the Taliban amongst some of the affiliates of al-Qaeda or direct al-Qaeda linked people in Iraq—those who carried out activities in the United States on 11 September, those who have acted under Jemaah Islamiah’s banner in Bali and those who are acting as supporters of al-Qaeda in the London bombings.

This is a group of people who seek to do two things. Firstly, they are seeking to break down the order and structure of the principal Islamic societies within our world today. What they are seeking to do is to impose a Taliban style regime, whether it is in Indonesia, Pakistan, Egypt or Saudi Arabia—to break down the internal structures within those societies, which are essentially Islamic, and to try and take them as their own, to recast them in the model of the Taliban.

We saw what this would mean to the world when, in one of the poorest countries of the world, Afghanistan, they had a fundamental base. That base was lost after September 11, but they have now sought to move onto a broader stage, to capture one of those countries. That is part of the 30-year vision. The 30-year vision is of establishing a base, a platform, for themselves on a grand scale by destabilising the authorities, by breaking down the economies, by severing the links with Western society and by causing as much damage and harm to people of Islamic faith as possible so as to break down confidence in the existing governments and, through that, to remake those societies in the image of the Taliban, al-Qaeda, Jemaah Islamiah and those who would create a perverted form of Islam.

This is not in any way representative of true Islam or mainstream Islam, a religion with a great history. It is an attack upon mainstream Islam. One of the means is either attacking the West directly or attacking the areas where the West engages with these societies on their own lands. The bigger goal still is to establish a caliphate in some of these countries and spread that throughout the world. That is a 100-year vision, as can be seen when you go back over the writings of many of the thinkers who have informed the work of al-Qaeda, Jemaah Islamiah and their affiliates.
In response to that, there are a number of things to say. The first is that those people are utterly perverted in their objectives. These objectives cannot stand, do not represent Islam and must be resisted. It is worth noting that on at least three occasions in the last decade the West has stood in defence of Islamic societies against attacks upon them—in Bosnia, Kosovo and Somalia. All involved activity of a military form and risks to our troops—to our sons and daughters who serve in the alliance and in the cause of the defence of our shores, whether in Australia, the United States or the European nations. On each of those occasions, our troops—whether ‘our’ applies to Australia or to our allies—have been put in harm’s way to defend the right, the structure and the organisation of Islamic societies. That is a fundamental point to remember.

As we look forward, the question must be: what is our response? What is the response to this sort of threat? The first thing is not to panic. Our fundamental nature as a democracy is dependent upon ourselves. These threats succeed not through the wholesale destruction of human lives but if they disrupt our social order, our thinking and our confidence in ourselves. That is what these threats are attempting to do. As one person has put it to me, the statistical likelihood of being caught in a bombing is infinitely less than that of being in a road accident. But the nature of these propaganda attacks and these activities is such that they are intended to produce fear on a wide scale. It is important that we keep it in perspective. These are attempts to disrupt our society by disrupting our confidence, and in response it is important that we retain our sense of who we are. That is the single thing which we must do first: we have to look internally as to how we respond.

Secondly, in dealing directly with the threat, there is, of course, a united need to act with a defensive military response. Whether that means on the Afghanistan front, on the Iraqi front or in other areas, we have to work in cooperation with authorities in each of those countries to defend and protect and to wipe out the elements that have no ground for compromise, that have no basis for discussion and that seek nothing other than the destruction of Islamic society and Western society and the re-creation of the world in a form utterly foreign to anything we know.

In addition, in our response we have a critical role in looking at democracy—the spread of democratisation around the world. That process, which is slow, painful and difficult, is nevertheless something which, over time, will be a fundamental bulwark against this sort of outrage. One of the criticisms of the West, legitimately, over the last 50 years has been an over-tolerance of authoritarian regimes if they were supportive of a Western presence. Those authoritarian regimes have ultimately provided breeding grounds for people who have been unable to express their views. Of course, there will be some for whom nothing other than absolute violence is the response, but democratisation is an end in itself and is also a means for dealing with this problem.

Finally, we have to contribute directly to the construction of new societies in Iraq and in Afghanistan and to the development and spreading of greater access to wealth and productivity within a lot of the Islamic world. There is no doubt that that will contribute. It will not solve the problem: when we look at September 11 we see that many of the people involved were extremely well off. Nevertheless, it is important to try and deal with some of the possible wellsprings of dissent and grievance within these societies.
What is the way forward? Firstly we have a responsibility to ourselves. Secondly, we have a defensive task from which we do not shirk—whether that is in Afghanistan, in Iraq in cooperation with other forces or in Indonesia in cooperation with the Indonesian government. Thirdly, we have a responsibility in relation to democratisation. Fourthly, we have a contribution to make in terms of development. That is the way forward. That is the way to honour those whom we have lost and whose lives have been taken from us. Ultimately, in recalling the meaning behind this condolence motion, it is a very simple thing: it is to say to those whom we have lost that we will miss you, to say to those who remain that we are with you and to say ‘we thank you’ to those who have helped restore order to protect us and to search for and save people at risk.

Mr Rudd (Griffith) (6.29 pm)—In this place I think we look forward to the time when we do not have to deal with motions such as this again. This is a time to mourn those who have died; it is a time to remember those who have helped in the rescue; and it is a time to resolve afresh to defend our liberties in the face of the threats which now present themselves to those liberties. I would like to support the Prime Minister’s condolence motion and express my heartfelt sympathy to those who have lost loved ones in the terrorist attacks at Jimbaran Bay and Kuta Square on 1 October. My thoughts and prayers are with those who are grieving right now the loss of family members and friends but also those who are still recovering from their injuries, many of whom will continue to suffer from those injuries for some time to come. The horror of this attack on Australian families enjoying their holidays in Bali has of course been exacerbated by the timing of the blasts, almost three years to the day after the terrorist attacks of 2002 which killed nearly 200 innocent civilians, including nearly 100 Australians.

Rather than reflect only on the horror of this attack, I would like to take this opportunity to reflect also on those who responded to that horror with humanity, with practicality and with compassion. I would like to formally pay tribute to the many Indonesians who extended the hand of friendship and offered their assistance and support to Australians who were injured in the bombings. The list is long. It includes the doctors, the nurses and the medical staff at Sanglah Hospital and the smaller medical clinics across Bali who treated and tended the wounds, both physical and psychological, of those affected by the bombings; the Indonesian government officials, including the Immigration Customs officials at Ngurah Rai Airport, who facilitated the use of a hangar which became the unofficial departure lounge for the most seriously injured; the Indonesian Air Force officers who facilitated diplomatic clearances, including the RAAF evacuation flights to land and take off from the airport with speed and without impediment; the Indonesian police who immediately went to work securing the crime scene and beginning the hunt for those responsible; and, here in Canberra, the staff of the Indonesian embassy who helped around the clock to make much of the above possible.

In addition to those I have already mentioned, who performed their professional duties with such skill and dedication, I would also like to acknowledge the many Indonesian citizens who went out of their way to assist a stranger, to assist Australians and other victims of the bombing that night. I would like to pay tribute to these unnamed, unknown and unrecognised individuals—the Indonesians on the beaches and on the streets of Bali who offered their assistance that night, including the taxi drivers, the bar staff, those waiting on tables from nearby cafes and restaurants, local shop owners, hotel staff and security guards as well as simple passers-by who stopped to help those affected by the bombings.
I would also like to thank the many Australians who assisted, including the staff of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and particularly the staff of the Australian consulate in Bali, the Australian High Commission in Singapore and the consular staff answering the phones in the DFAT crisis centre in Canberra, who have unfortunately become only too skilled at handling crises of this nature. I also thank the Royal Australian Air Force flight crews from RAAF Base Richmond No. 36 Squadron and the crews and medical staff from RAAF Base Amberley who tended to the most seriously injured and ensured their safe and early return to Australia. We should also thank the Australian Federal Police officers and staff in Bali, Singapore, Darwin and Sydney who, in addition to their investigation into the terrorist attacks, provided an invaluable family liaison service to those affected by the bombings. I also thank Centrelink counselling staff, who continue to provide support services to victims and their families. I thank the surgeons, doctors, nurses and other medical staff at Royal Darwin Hospital, the John Hunter Hospital in Newcastle and the Prince of Wales Hospital in Randwick for their care and treatment of the injured and the doctors and staff of International SOS who evacuated severely wounded Australians to Singapore.

This condolence motion is an opportunity for us to reflect on the underlying strength of the relationship between Australia and Indonesia. Nowhere is this more evident than in Bali. Nowhere is this more evident than at times such as this when our two peoples are brought together to face a common enemy, that enemy being terrorism. Cooperation between Australian and Indonesians at all levels—government officials, medical staff, police, military and, just as importantly, at the people-to-people level—has left many of us deeply impressed. We have seen in these tragic events of recent times the best of our common humanity on display, just as we saw that common humanity on display tragically three years ago in the bombings of October 2002.

Reflecting on this motion, we are also required to think again about how we best deal with the continuing threat posed by terrorists and terrorism. Our approach as the alternative government of Australia has always been simple and straightforward: when we are dealing with terrorists, when we are dealing with terrorism, our policy must be one of zero tolerance. We must, therefore, in terms of law enforcement procedures, security and intelligence work, adopt a hard-edged approach. There is no alternative to that. Equally, however, for that hard-edged approach to work, we must embrace a comprehensive strategy which deals also with the social and economic conditions in countries like Indonesia, elsewhere in South-East Asia and elsewhere in the developing world, where underlying conditions make it easier for terrorist organisations to recruit.

Any serious analyst of the challenge which terrorism represents today will tell you that any effective strategy for dealing with terrorism and terrorists must have both these dimensions operating simultaneously—a hard-edged approach to the difficult and dangerous work of intelligence, security and police operations and, at the same time, an embracing, compassionate approach to the underlying social and economic challenges confronted by much of the developing world, where the presence of poverty and degradation is such that terrorist organisations find it easier to recruit members. These then must be the elements of our approach to the challenge of terrorism in our region, and for these reasons we as the alternative government of this country advanced our approach to a comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy for South-East Asia some 12 months ago. That is part of our challenge. The other part is this: in defend-
ing our country’s civil liberties, we must be careful not to concede the ground to terrorists by circumscribing our civil liberties so much that we in fact concede defeat.

Achieving this balance between the defence of our civil liberties and empowering our police, intelligence and security services with the powers necessary to deal with terrorists on the ground is one of the greatest general challenges confronting modern parliamentary democracies today. We must be vigilant on this question. We must get the balance right. We must proceed in our debate on these questions in a rational and informed way which clearly identifies what additional powers our agencies may need but which does so in a time-limited fashion and in a manner that explicitly acknowledges the loss of civil liberties which must temporarily be suffered in order to enable our police and intelligence agencies to be equipped with those new powers.

One of the great concerns on our side of politics, and I believe it is shared more generally by the Australian community, is that, if we simply have a continued accretion of additional powers to our police, intelligence and other agencies over time and we roll the clock forward a decade or more, we will in fact have created circumstances under which Australia itself, its fabric and our assumptions about our civil liberties then change. The argument on our side of politics is that we must not allow that change to occur by default.

If we are going to embrace these sorts of changes, and some of these changes must be embraced because of the nature of the challenge we face, then we must do so in an explicit, conscious fashion, particularly in this institution, the parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia—the parliament where the people, through their representatives, makes laws. Preceding parliaments in other countries have established over many centuries, through careful deliberation, the proper balance between the powers of the state on the one hand and the liberty of the individual on the other. That dilemma confronts us again today. Let us be conscious of that dilemma; let us weigh it carefully as we continue to weigh the challenges which will again present themselves to us afresh if and when, God forbid, another terrorist attack occurs.

In conclusion, as we contemplate this motion, our nation must be vigilant; we must be vigilant in the fight against terrorists and terrorism. We must be vigilant in our defence of civil liberties and we must as a people maintain the commonsense which is the essence of the Australian character and nature to make sure that we achieve continued balance in reconciling these two great objectives. We support the motion.

Mr LINDSAY (Herbert) (6.39 pm)—On behalf of the people of Townsville and Thuringowa, I too would like to express my support and my community’s support for the Prime Minister’s motion. As we all struggle to come to terms with the terrorist attacks in Bali over the weekend, my community starts to question why it happened—as we all do. Why would anybody choose to kill innocent men, women and children?

Many articles in the media have claimed that holiday-makers from Western countries have been directly targeted, perhaps because of our country’s involvement in Iraq or other countries’ involvement in Iraq. But I do not think that argument can be sustained; it is far from the truth. We all know that there have been a number of bombings all over the world. More Muslims have been killed than Westerners. There have been a number of terrorist attacks in countries spanning the globe in the last three years, including in India, Israel, Russia, Tunisia, Pakistan, Turkey, Morocco, Spain, Egypt, the Philippines and Great Britain.
Early reports on the Bali bombing indicate that the bombers might have belonged to a radical militant brigade believed to be a splinter group of JI. What concerns many of us is that these terrorist groups claim to carry out these acts of terrorism in the name of their Islamic faith. If you have a look at what the Islamic faith means, you will see that Islam does not preach or condone any form of terrorism. The Arabic word ‘Islam’ actually means ‘peaceful submission to the will of Allah, the sole creator of the universe’. Therefore, Islam is opposed to all antihumanitarian terrorist activities, detrimental aggressive use of power or the infliction of torture and miseries on the poor and the downtrodden.

I want to make this quite clear: there is no question that these fanatics are members of the Islamic community. They do not come from Islam; they come from fanaticism, from terrorism. According to the tenets of Islam, if any individual kills one human being of any religion or caste, he is believed to have killed all mankind on earth and stands convicted for punishment accordingly. Certainly the very good people in Australia who are Muslims do not deserve to be in any way condemned for what we are seeing in these outrages, and I think the people of Australia understand that.

In July this year, three months ago, I was on the beach at Jimbaran Bay at one of the restaurants. Those of you who have been there will know that there are perhaps 30 or 40 restaurants all lined up side by side on the beach. It is the last place you would expect a terrorist to strike. I made that comment to my family, who were with me. But the horrible reality is that I could have been there this time. The terrorists could have struck while I was there. Earlier speakers in this debate from both sides have made the point that the people of Bali are gentle and kind. After the first Bali bombing their economy suffered terribly. Think about the people of Bali. A taxi driver’s total income for the day is $A7. It is an economy that just exists, and they need the tourists to come. Yet these terrorists have just set the scene for their livelihood staying away. It is a terribly distressing situation.

A week and a half ago I was in Pakistan. I was in the area adjacent to where the earthquake occurred last Saturday. Again, when I found I was going to Pakistan, I had some reservations. But when you go to Pakistan you find the people of Pakistan are just as friendly and open as the people of Bali or as friendly and open as the people of Australia. These days, we all live on the one planet. We all live together. We are all the same. We might have different colours and creeds but deep down we are all the same and the people of Pakistan are no different.

I pay a tribute to General Musharraf. He is kind of a benevolent dictator, but Pakistan is a democracy: it has a national assembly and it has a senate. They have the same problems as we do—with the Senate, that is. They have a clerk of the parliament. He is as wise as the Clerk of our parliament, but he has more hair! They have the deputy speakers from the opposition as they have the deputy speakers from the government. President Musharraf is presiding over the headlong rush to modernise Pakistan. He has made some very brave decisions. He rejects terrorism, just as we all do. It is such a pity to see this terrible tragedy happen to his country.

There are still issues in Pakistan. When I was in Lahore, perhaps five days earlier, there had been two bombings. They were bicycle bombers. When I was in Lahore I had to travel with police motorcycles front and rear, police cars front and rear, special service commandos front and rear and an ambulance in the rear with a doctor just in case something did happen. But Pakistan will grow out of that, because the country, the people, are determined to reject the militancy.
I went to a madrassa and the first thing the head of the madrassa said to me was: 'Never misunderstand. We are a peaceful people and we preach peace and harmony in this madrassa to all of our people. We utterly, utterly reject the terrorism that has been going on. These people are not of the Islamic faith. We utterly reject them.' It was good to hear that message. I guess all of our hearts go out to the people of Pakistan, who have been so dreadfully devastated by this earthquake. I know that the Australian government’s initial response has been welcomed by the Red Cross and Red Crescent organisations. I know that the Australian government will provide further assistance when it becomes clear what that assistance required might be.

The member for Griffith was absolutely correct: the Australian Labor Party’s policy of zero tolerance of terrorism is the same as the government’s—we are of one mind. All of us must continue to utterly reject these atrocities that have been going on from time to time. Again my condolences on behalf of my family and my community go to the people of Bali and Pakistan.

Mr LAURIE FERGUSON (Reid) (6.48 pm)—I would certainly associate myself with previous speakers who have emphasised the question of Bali, the bombings and the deaths and the suffering of the families involved and the assistance given to those who were affected, by churches, by hospitals, by Australian government employees, by Indonesians et cetera. Tonight, however, I will emphasise the question of Pakistan. It is quite close to home in one sense, insofar as the husband of my adviser, Aisha Amjad, is working for the Pakistan government at the moment. Where he was residing has huge cracks in the walls, and the airconditioning fell down and he suffered concussion. He is very fortunate in a sense because he had contemplated moving to one of the buildings that was totally demolished during these events. So he was very fortunate indeed.

This is close to my heart insofar as my region of Western Sydney is characterised by significant Pakistani migration. Admittedly, Pakistanis are less concentrated than many other ethnic groups in Australia. However, of the 11,000-odd Pakistani born and the 12,500 people who said that they were of Pakistani ancestry in the last census, it is fair to say that the significant belt of suburbs from Auburn out to Campbelltown and to a lesser degree parts of the seat of Mitchell, held by Mr Cadman, are the main centres of the population in Sydney. It is indeed a very devastating series of events, with 30,000 people seemingly dead and speculation about another 30,000, with four million people affected.

On a personal note, I understand that one Pakistani government minister has lost 15 family members and now has a grandchild who is alone. Similarly, there is one report of a family with five children who were all in their first classes for the day and are now all dead. In a broader sense, there are a number of problems that increase the difficulties. There is the onset of winter and the major devastation of roads linking the region. It is also the second week of Ramadan, when many of the people who are giving assistance are fasting for long periods each day, but they are still making very significant efforts to save people.

The UN has launched a flash appeal. I am pleased to note that the Australian government today increased their initial commitment of $5 million to $10 million. It is interesting to note that this has hit home with the Australian public. I do not for one moment claim that telephone polls in the Sydney Morning Herald represent Australia; however, it is interesting to note that 60 per cent of respondents have said that government assistance should be increased. The situation is also reassuring insofar as large numbers of countries have responded positively.
Amongst them are Australia, the US, the UK, Russia, the United Arab Emirates, the Netherlands, Spain, Malaysia and Turkey—in a very significant way. There have been reports of Israeli assistance as well, which would be a very good gesture by the Israeli administration.

I note that, on the Australian front, a number of charities have launched donation appeals: the Red Cross, World Vision, CARE Australia, the Fred Hollows Foundation, Oxfam et cetera. The Pakistan Australia Association’s president, Ejaz Khan, is a very respected lawyer, migration agent and businessman in the Western Sydney region. He is well known to me. The member for Parramatta, Julie Owens, is tonight chairing a meeting of the Pakistan Australia Association and other interested organisations to move towards a major fundraising event. I also note the activities of Councillor Saeed Khan on the Marrickville Council, who has ensured that the Local Government Association of New South Wales will write to all councils seeking financial support. I hope that the gesture earlier this week of a $5,000 contribution from the Parramatta City Council, in the area where I reside, leads to that donation despite a few initial difficulties. The Sydney City Council has promised the use of Paddington Town Hall for a fundraiser. Generally, there has been a strong reaction in Sydney towards the people affected.

Whilst the earthquake largely concentrated on the north of Pakistan, parts of India and disputed Kashmir have also been affected. A pleasing aspect is that there has been a degree of cooperation in Sydney between the Muslim and Hindu, Indian and Pakistani communities. President Musharraf stated, ‘It is a test of our nerves, our government and the whole nation.’ We are all aware of the major difficulties that Pakistan faces with regard to extremist elements in the country, which have targeted Ahmadi and Shiite religious centres in an attempt to exacerbate religious tensions like they have in Iraq, where that is also part of their strategy. We know of the very real inequities in Pakistan and the need for modernisation—towards which the Musharraf government has strongly moved. I recognise the efforts made in Sydney and internationally and join with others in trying to make sure that assistance is mounted strongly and quickly.

Guatemala is a nation with far fewer migrants in this country. The main international coverage of Guatemala is about the deprivation of the indigenous population and their suppression over many decades and, in more recent years, a major problem being created by the United States sending back delinquents from California to increase the street gangs in the capital cities of Guatemala and Honduras, increasing their inability to control crime problems there. It is a society that is very challenged. It will not get that much interest in Australia. But this latest hurricane, Hurricane Stan, is leading to very significant devastation, with whole villages wiped out. Officials have basically decided that some villages will just be regarded as cemeteries. These mudslides, these hurricane rains, have meant that 118 communities are still unreachable because the water is so dense with mud. The devastation is far worse than that caused by Hurricane Mitch in 1998, and it is estimated that rebuilding will cost at least $2 billion.

Once again, we join in feeling compassion towards these people. Many of them do not have the benefits that we have. They do not have the society that we experience, even in the best of times, and this is obviously a very grave challenge to both of these societies.

Mr RICHARDSON (Kingston) (6.56 pm)—I rise today in support of the motion moved by the Prime Minister about the 2002 and 2005 Bali bombings and the Pakistan and Guate-
mala national disasters. I extend my deepest sympathies to all victims and their families. On a beautiful Sunday morning in Adelaide I, like everyone else, woke just over a week ago to the tragic news that more lives had been lost in yet another Bali terror attack. My heart sank as I turned on the TV and searched the newspapers for word of Australians caught up in the tragedy, my horror compounded by the fact that only 10 weeks prior my wife and I had celebrated our wedding anniversary in Bali at that same beach.

As I watched the images of people lighting candles on a beach where I had recently walked and of the restaurants where I had eaten now blown apart, what shocked me so much was the realisation of how easily a life can be changed or lost at the whim of a terrorist. We are again reminded of the indiscriminate nature of terrorism—that those who embark on a mission to kill and maim do not limit their attacks to a targeted group but will ruin or end the lives of any individual, black or white, Hindu or Christian, Australian or Indonesian. In my mind there simply is no justification for an act of terror—no cause so worthy, no belief so strong that it would justify the mass killing of innocent people and the intentional and determined injuring and maiming of as many others as possible. What I will never understand about those who embark on terrorist acts is their determination in spite of their failure. The rest of the civilised world will never embrace their cause or sympathise with their plight because they embark on a systematic attempt to kill our people and instil a sense of fear in those remaining.

The thing that has struck me so incredibly after these most recent attacks, as well as following the 12 October 2002 attacks, is the acts of kindness and courage of those who work tirelessly to help the victims in the aftermath. These selfless acts stand eternally as a message to those determined to break our spirit that we will not be broken, that the human spirit, the Australian spirit, is stronger than any attack they can mount and that every time they attack one of our own it serves only to bring us closer together as people and to make us more resolute in our determination to defeat them.

My heart goes out to the Balinese victims of these attacks, not just those who suffered direct loss in the bombings but those who will suffer long after the TV cameras have gone and the victims have left the hospitals—those whose livelihoods will be destroyed by the inevitable decline in tourism which will follow this devastation. I can assure you from personal experience that the Balinese are a beautiful people, a kind people, who suffered heavily after the 2002 bombings. There are entire families who rely on the tourism trade as their only means of income, and those people will suffer incredibly in the months and years to come.

I listened in the House yesterday as the Prime Minister spoke of the call for the Indonesian government to outlaw the terrorist group Jemaah Islamiah. I wholeheartedly support the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister in their calls. This group is directly responsible for the taking of so many Australian and Indonesian lives. Its purpose it is to kill and maim the people of our nations in an attempt to terrorise those left behind. There is no justification for condoning their behaviour by allowing them to lawfully exist. We should and we must condemn them and their behaviour from every corner of the globe.

There is no more appropriate response to terrorism than to simply go on living life in a free and democratic society, refusing to be afraid. Australians who stand by each other determined not to be afraid ensure day after day that terrorists continue to fail. In closing, I reiterate my sincere sympathy to the families of those who lost their lives and who were injured in this
tragedy. Whilst I cannot personally feel the pain they are suffering, my heart goes out to them and I assure them that they will be in my thoughts and prayers over the coming weeks.

_Ms VAMVAKINOU_ (Calwell) (7.01 pm)—I want to join with my colleagues in this place in expressing my horror at the senseless loss of life in the recent Bali bombings. This recent round of attacks on innocent people is a sober reminder of the serious threat that terrorism continues to be for Australians, for our neighbours in Indonesia and for the entire world community.

As so many of my colleagues before me have said, Bali is a much loved place, frequently visited by people from around the world, who consider it to be a very special place. Bali has for years been a popular holiday destination for many Australians. Many from my own electorate of Calwell flock there with friends and family. Although I have never had the opportunity to visit, I have many friends and family who have holidayed in Bali. On returning home, they are forever smitten by its beauty and in particular are impressed by the friendliness and charm of the Balinese people.

The 2002 Bali bombings horrified and outraged the entire world community. No-one could believe that this much loved island paradise could have been violated in such a vicious and lethal way. We came together and mourned for the huge loss of life, including the significant number of Australians, and we struggled to cope with and to understand the motivation for these bombings and their tragic consequences. We came together with our Indonesian neighbours and we forged a new relationship based on our cooperation and acknowledgment that we were all facing a common threat and that, as such, we had to stand together.

The healing process has been a long and difficult one, but we could have said—until recently, that is—that in recent times a new-found confidence had emerged in Bali. Tourism was thriving, people were beginning to return and everything appeared to be back on track. The events of 2002 were slowly being put behind everyone. But then the second Bali bombings took place, and they leave us once again mourning for our dead and wondering why.

No-one can make any sense of these senseless killings. They are horrific acts that leave pain and suffering in their tracks, acts that in a split second cause loss of life for innocent people and a lifetime of grieving for those who have lost their loved ones. As a nation and as members of the world community, we must again stand together with Indonesia and offer support and compassion to the victims and their families.

However, today I want to take the opportunity to reflect on the actions of terrorists who are prepared to take their own lives in a cause that is committed to nothing more than murdering innocent people. As we all know and have seen, suicide bombing attacks result in widespread carnage. As is the nature of indiscriminate acts of terrorism, the action itself is wilful, calculated and well planned. It is not the spontaneous action of uncontrolled rage or mental illness; it is the premeditated action of killers with a cause.

As we struggle to understand the motivation of terrorists, we constantly ask ourselves questions. Is it a case of a clash of civilisations? Is it religious fundamentalism? Is it poverty and disadvantage? Is it the result of dominant foreign policies and military activities? Can the resentment bred by the war in Afghanistan and the ongoing war in Iraq be to blame? Whatever the mix of reasons that seek to explain the motivation behind terrorism, one thing is certain: no cause, divine or secular, can ever justify the deliberate taking of innocent life. These ac-
tions are criminal. They are immoral and they are sins against faith. Indeed, in this instance, they are sins against the teachings and principles of Islam. My very large Islamic community constantly reminds me that, like other religious faiths, Islam teaches peace and compassion. It requires its faithful to practise in a manner that is benevolent and loving and rejects totally the killing of innocent people in its name.

We need to reflect on this tragedy, both as a nation and as an active member of our geographical region. We also need to consider our relationship with our largest and closest neighbour, Indonesia. People are brought together during times of adversity. The tragedies of the Bali bombings in 2002, the bombing outside the Australian embassy in 2004, the Boxing Day tsunami and now the most recent bombings in Bali have forged, and indeed strengthened, our relationship with our closest neighbour, Indonesia.

In July, I and the member for Melbourne Ports were members of a delegation that visited Jakarta. We were there with other colleagues from the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade and the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties, and our visit was sponsored by the Institute for Democratic Studies. The delegation aimed at developing relations between Indonesian and Australian members of parliament. I want to record the warmth of the reception we received from our Indonesian colleagues. I was very impressed, as was my colleague the member for Melbourne Ports, by the interest they took in learning about Australia and its people. This is the basis upon which we build our mutual relations—getting to know each other fosters better understanding; it helps demystify and breaks down barriers.

We have a lot to learn about our neighbours, but they, too, want to know more about us. Communication and cooperation at all levels between governments, parliamentarians, diplomats, security officials and ordinary people in general are an effective way of tackling the propaganda and prejudice of radicals and fundamentalists who prey on the hearts and minds of malleable people, leading them to commit mass murder and leading them to their own self-destruction in the service of an evil cause.

As a country, Australia can play a significant role in maintaining the communication channels needed to allow for the exchange of dialogue between ourselves and the Indonesian people. We are already doing this, but we must increase the effort. Our national security depends largely on the success of the dialogue and on cooperation between our two governments—indeed, between our people. To this end, we also need to acknowledge and commend the work of all the people who have rallied yet again, starting with the Balinese medical staff, the Indonesian police and the Indonesian government officials. In relation to the Australian relief effort, commendations must go to the Department of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade personnel, the Australian Defence Force, the Australian Federal Police, the Royal Australian Air Force, the medical teams at the Royal Darwin Hospital, officials at the Australian embassy and, in particular, our ambassador Mr David Ritchie, whom I met on our trip to Indonesia in July. Most of all, we have to thank the public for their assistance in this great time of need.

I also take this opportunity to offer my sympathy to the people of Pakistan and India who are enduring massive loss of life and destruction of property as a result of last Saturday's earthquake, which has, as we know, devastated north-east Pakistan and the Indian-held areas of Kashmir. We are looking potentially at a loss of up to 40,000 people, and this is a staggering number. In addition to dealing with so many deaths, the people of Pakistan and India who have survived this crisis will now face the long and difficult task of trying to rebuild their

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lives. Australia needs to do whatever is possible to assist in the immediate aftermath as well as into the future. Rescue efforts, I understand, are being hampered by mountainous terrain, but I want to commend our efforts and the efforts of the international community. In the midst of the tragedy we will also learn of happy moments, such as the story of the rescue of the young boy and girl who were pulled alive from the rubble of their collapsed school. This is so typical when natural disasters unfortunately strike. In the last 12 months our world community has been stricken with natural disasters that have claimed hundreds of thousands of lives.

I would like to take this opportunity to express some thoughts for the people in Guatemala who are also experiencing hardship and loss because of the hurricane activities and the rains which have resulted in severe flooding and mud slides. In countries like Guatemala, which many Australians do not know very much about, there is extreme poverty. People, particularly those in the indigenous community, are forced to live in the most difficult and deprived conditions. These floods and mud slides have wiped away homes and livelihoods on a grand scale. There does not appear to be any hope of recovery. Again another corner of our world community faces grief and an uncertain future.

These natural disasters are a constant reminder that we live in a world that is very fragile and unpredictable. For those of us who are fortunate enough to live in better circumstances, such as we who live in Australia, our duty must always be to lend the best possible assistance we can. We have a good record of doing so and we must continue to do so. We must be fully aware that a great number of people in the world community rely on our support.

Mrs GASH (Gilmore) (7.11 pm)—We stand here today to extend our condolences to the families of the four Australians murdered in Bali just over a week ago. The moment of death captured on television footage brought to our living rooms the graphic illustration that this is a war that has no national boundaries. The victims are innocent casualties in a conflict that has nothing to do with them; rather, the action is directed fanatically at another regime.

I well remember the bombing of three years ago, when the toll was much higher. I suppose in that respect we should be grateful that the toll was contained this time, tragic though even one death is. Three years ago we just could not believe what had happened. It took some time for the impact to sink in. It brought home the fact that we could not feel insulated against what was occurring elsewhere in the world. This was reinforced to the people of Newcastle, where many of the victims came from. My sympathies go to you, for I know what you are going through. My sympathies also go out to the peace loving people of Bali, who have also suffered as casualties of a war in which they too are innocent bystanders. This is a time when courage and understanding are required.

In the first Bali bombing, two local boys from my electorate were lost from the small community of Ulladulla on the south coast. Because it is such a small community, the impact was far reaching and emotion ranged widely. As a result of that loss, the family and friends of Craig Dunn and Danny Lewis, who died in the first Bali explosion, resolved to erect a memorial to them. The Australian government will be contributing a quarter of a million dollars to the cost of the construction of a memorial recreation centre in Ulladulla.

The impact of the event three years ago was far reaching and led us to realise that our geographical remoteness was no insulation against a terrorist attack. Nor is time an effective dilution when you are dealing with the fever of religious zeal. Those who went to Bali probably felt that, after three years without an event, it was safe to go there again. Can you imagine
what it must have been like to be sitting there one minute, relaxed and comfortable, enjoying
time with friends, and in the next experiencing the shock of the explosion, followed by confu-
sion and then the pain and horror of it all?

My friend Sandra McCarthy, the Mayor of Kiama, and her husband and son, must have
been thinking, ‘There by the grace of God go I.’ They were there barely four hours previously.
She told me of her experiences and was particularly concerned to praise the men and women
of the Australian Federal Police who are assisting the Indonesian authorities. Too often we are
quick to condemn those in authority. Therefore I would like to read her letter to endorse the
fact that we do recognise and appreciate those trying to do a job under extreme circumstances.
The letter states:

Dear Mrs Jo Gash

As you may be aware, Jeff, my son Michael and myself have just returned from Bali. We were the first
flight (Australian Airlines) out of Bali after the Saturday night Bombings.

Australian Airlines did a wonderful job, keeping people calm on the flight and also waiting for those
passengers who had been delayed by the incident so they could fly home.

On our arrival at Sydney Airport I was impressed by the conduct and professionalism of our Federal
Police. They boarded the plane and each passenger was asked to complete forms listing personal details
for data (i.e. so the Government can determine who is missing) and we were also asked to list our
whereabouts on the trip and evidence of any suspicious behaviour or circumstances.

It was very comforting on our return to Australia to see the quick response of the Federal Police and
immediately we felt safe and secure. It is reassuring to Australians to see the role the Federal Police are
performing in Bali and their assistance to the Balinese people.

Would you please convey our thanks and appreciation to the Federal Police. They are doing a great job.

Yours faithfully,

Councillor Sandra McCarthy

Mayor

I commend all those Australians who step in to lend a hand in moments like this without any
thought of reward or recognition. I also take this occasion to express my condolences to the
people of the Kashmir region of Pakistan who were devastated by the earthquake.

Having spent considerable time in that region in past years, I can well appreciate the extent
of the devastation that has been caused by an earthquake of this magnitude. The remoteness of
the area has been made even more so by the extent of the damage to roads and infrastructure
and will add to the suffering of the survivors. It is my earnest hope that the world can marshal
aid quickly to bring relief to all those in need due to the Guatemalan disaster.

We need to contribute as best we can and join with other countries in delivering aid that
will be needed in the weeks and months ahead. These are terrible tragedies but they can serve
to unite the peoples of the world in the common good and distract us from a preoccupation
with the obscenity of terrorist acts. We cannot fight nature but we can unite to overwhelm the
insanity that drives these fanatics to kill themselves and others with them.

Thank God we live in a country as stable as Australia where we can still live in peace and
harmony and continue to be masters of our own destiny. Yet Australians have always been
able to demonstrate great compassion to others in times of need. Let us hope we can again
turn to our neighbours in their time of need, saying, ‘How can we help?’
Mr HATTON (Blaxland) (7.16 pm)—In this motion put forward by the government and supported by the opposition, we are dealing with acts of God, from one end of the world to the other, and acts done in the name of God. We are dealing with natural disasters in the earthquake in Pakistan and by Hurricane Stan and the hurricanes that have occurred recently in Florida. We are dealing with the impoverished peoples of Guatemala and Pakistan and those people who earlier, in an associated way, had their lives completely torn to pieces by the hurricanes that had an impact in Florida, Texas and Louisiana.

Violence on that scale in the natural world is hard to comprehend for anyone who is not directly in the middle of it, but, in the series of natural disasters over the past 10 years, we have seen a great deal of it. It instructs us again that we live in a turbulent and violent natural world where there is not a centre of safety for people. It is a world of turbulent natural change impressed upon us particularly by the hurricanes occurring around the Gulf of Mexico through to Guatemala and also in the Asian region with the recent one that was visited upon Vietnam. Over both historical and geological time, these are natural phenomena that occur readily. There seems to be enough scientific evidence to indicate that not just the regularity of the storms’ occurrences but their strength is related to an increase in temperature caused by excess greenhouse gas emissions and that, as the oceans heat, we will get more and more of these hurricanes and typhoons that can wreak such terrible damage on the natural world and on the peoples who suffer from them.

The level of natural violence and the numbers of people killed are very high. In the Kashmir incident, it looks as though they are somewhere between 30,000 and 40,000, and they may go higher than that. We remember what happened in Banda Aceh and the associated provinces in Indonesia with the tsunami, which was caused by earthquake activity. People in their hundreds of thousands were killed. The magnitude of those natural disasters is very difficult to deal with. But we have seen the United Nations organisations, the Red Cross, the Red Crescent and governments such as Australia’s pledging $1 billion to assist those people affected in Indonesia. We have seen Australian efforts not only from the government but also from individual people giving to relieve the effects of those natural disasters all around the world. We have seen the goodness of humanity where people, either individually or through organisations or government instrumentalities, have sought to redress the damage done by the natural violence of the planet and its emissions. In insurance terms, they are called ‘acts of God’—acts which have wreaked so much damage over the history of this planet.

Our world population is now so high, at six billion plus. We are moving towards a world population of nine billion by the year 2050, with the possibility that the world population may stabilise at that level then. We are dealing with a period of time where, with increasing climatic change, the level of intensity of hurricanes and typhoons will have a greater impact on people in littoral areas. That greater impact will be because of the greater densities of population. So we can expect to have to plan for and take into account more disaster recovery action, and more of our national production will have to be directed towards ameliorating the consequences of natural disasters, which may increase in frequency and certainly in ferocity.

All of the governments, individuals and organisations that have played their part in trying to mend what was broken deserve our greatest and deepest thanks. All of those people who have suffered so greatly as a result of the disasters need speedy help, help that is directed towards trying to put back their societies into a shape that is strong and good.
In a way, it is easier to deal with the natural elements—in insurance terms, the ‘acts of God’—and the great numbers of people who have had their lives shattered by them than it is to deal with the actions taken in the name of God. Quite rightly, the general thrust, the common thread, of commentary since the original attacks on Bali, the attacks that we have seen in London, New York and Washington and these most recent attacks in Bali is that, although these things are done in the name of God, you have to separate out the people who believe in a particular religion—in this case, Islam—and the fundamental tenets of that religion, from the people who, from an extremist or a fanatical base, attempt to distort it.

The member for Herbert quite rightly said that Islam means ‘peaceful submission to the will of Allah, the sole creator of the universe’. Most of the commentary coming from Islamic groups—and also other commentary—has stressed the fact that in Islam there is no place for violent action against others. There is no place for taking people’s lives, whether in a deliberate way or just as a consequential action of attempting to overthrow a government, a state or a people. They have used a series of quotes to show that it is not on and that you have to separate it out.

I think it is important to make a qualification to that. Historically, particularly during the period of the crusades between Christendom and Islam, there was great devastation and great violence in the long wars between those two groups and the country groups that were driven forward and that used as their excuse either Islam or Christianity. At base they had justifications which they sought to make and to have embedded in their religion because they were the fundamental ideological purpose for what they were supposed to be doing. If you look either in the Old Testament or in the Koran, because of the nature of the human beings seeing these things through their eyes, you can find express conditions which could justify a just war in the case of the Christians or which could justify actions that are violent towards those you are against in the case of Islam. When most people talk about the fact that there is absolutely no place for terrorism or violence in Islam, they leave out a rider in the Koran; there is a specific provision that this is seen to be done against the will of Allah. So they are leaving out the conditional extra that the fundamentalist groups tag on to an interpretation of Islam that is at odds with modern, tolerant Islam but that is certainly there and capable of being used.

Yesterday in the party room the Leader of the Opposition said something that was profoundly important in relation to this. He said that basically we are dealing with a confrontation between the 21st century and the 12th century. It is between modernism and medievalism. It is between progress, both technological and social, and a drive to either bomb us back or take us back into the past and embed us there forever. These are not isolated incidents. You can go back to 1979 and Ayatollah Khomeini’s revolution in Iran. You can look at the nature of modern democracies, whether it be Pakistan or Indonesia, and think about their attempts to build their countries as modern democracies and to be forward-looking, to be Western-like, to take account of a secular approach to these things. If you look at the contra in relation to this, it is simply that, in 1979, the Iranian revolution took a modern, advanced, Westernising, secular state in Iran and turned it upside down. It was the template for the Taliban to attempt to overthrow and then succeed in overthrowing the government of Afghanistan and to impose an Islamic state that was based on a severe, extreme fundamentalism. They provided another template for people world wide.
We know that the Taliban have been directly connected to al-Qaeda, Osama bin Laden and all of the works of ‘the base’, or al-Qaeda, from the early 1990s on. The core of their appeal is an appeal for their brand of fundamentalist Islam and an attempt to use that as a rallying call to people around the world but also to use it to subvert and overthrow Islamic states in the Middle East and, in the case of Jemaah Islamiah, to create, in concert with al-Qaeda and other groups, an Islamic state in South-East Asia. The people who are pursuing this have utterly no concern for the value of human life whatsoever. Whether people are of the Islamic faith, the Christian faith or the Judaic faith, where the value of life is placed as a central element of Yahweh or Allah or a Christian God, where the centrality and importance of human life is valued, all of that is utterly swept away by what these fundamentalists are attempting to do.

From this point on, as we have since the September 11 actions in the United States in 2001, we can and must prosecute the war on terror against these people. We must hunt them down and bring them to justice. Otherwise, they will know that they do not need to extend any justice to any individual being on this planet and, therefore, that without being brought to task they can continue to do what they have done in Bali this time, what they did in Bali three years ago, what they have done in London, what they have done in the United States and what they would seek to do here in Australia.

These are people who are extreme and fanatical and who have had bred into them an ideological passion. Inculcated in them is a drive towards nihilism, towards creating a state of nothingness, with a deliberately fractured view of what religion should be. It is right for all of those people in my electorate who follow Islam to directly debate, repudiate and refute all of the tenets that these organisations are putting up and all of their attempts to destroy, in the name of their God, those people who have lost their lives.

I commend the motion before the House and I commend the fact that both the government and the opposition fully support it. I link myself to the previous speakers on this. We must continue to do all in our power to overcome both the natural and unnatural disasters that have been visited on people.

Mr PROSSER (Forrest) (7.32 pm)—On Saturday, 1 October at about 7.30 pm Australians were once again caught up in a terrorist bombing in Bali. Three closely timed explosions took place—one at Raja’s restaurant in downtown Kuta and two at Jimbaran Bay at Cafe Nyoman, a beachfront seafood restaurant—killing 24 innocent people and wounding a further 100. These were popular tourist places where many Australians have spent memorable holiday time.

I wish to support the motion and extend my condolences and support to the families of all those who were either killed or injured by these cowardly and barbaric acts of terrorism, including those of the four Australians who lost their lives. Sadly, the youngest Australian among those killed was Brendan Fitzgerald, a 16-year-old Western Australian boy from a Busselton family. Brendan apparently took the brunt of the blast from the explosion in Raja’s bar in Kuta, together with his father, Terry. Brendan’s father, Terry Fitzgerald, had taken his children—Brendan, 16, and Jessica, 13—to Bali for holidays. The Fitzgerald family were enjoying a week’s holiday in Bali and were due to return home the following day. I understand that Brendan’s body is being returned to Perth today.

The Busselton community has paid tribute to Brendan Fitzgerald. He has been described as a perfect friend and team-mate as well as a keen sportsman. Brendan enjoyed playing football
and was a talented cricketer whose skills were highlighted as an opening bowler in the country week tournaments in 2004 and 2005. Brendan was in year 11 at Busselton Senior High School. He was a very popular student with many friends. He will be sadly missed.

The Fitzgeralds are a close-knit Busselton family and very strong supporters of the Busselton community. The Busselton and wider communities are ready to support the Fitzgerald family in any way they can with the Fitzgeralds’s grief and recovery.

Brendan’s father, Terry Fitzgerald, and 13-year-old sister, Jessica, who is a student at the Georgiana Molloy Anglican School in Busselton, were flown to Singapore General Hospital for emergency treatment for burns and shrapnel injuries. Jessica suffered burns to the front of her body and multiple serious shrapnel wounds and extensive facial injuries and is said to be in a serious but stable condition. The condition of Terry Fitzgerald is reported as critical, with serious abdominal wounds and serious spinal injuries. We hope that as each day passes there are signs of improvement.

Terry’s parents, Trevor and Win Fitzgerald, along with Brendan and Jessica’s mother, Lisa, are in Singapore now to be with Terry and Jessica to assist in any way possible with their slow recovery. Indeed, I am informed today that Terry Fitzgerald has shown encouraging signs of movement, albeit small, but we can be assured that both Terry and Jessica are receiving the best possible care and treatment.

Bali is a very popular holiday destination for many south-west residents, and the Busselton community is unfortunately no stranger to the horrors of the terrorist attacks in Bali. Indeed, nearly three years ago today, on 12 October 2002, when the previous terrorist bombings ripped through the Sari Club and Paddy’s Bar in Bali killing 202 people, including 88 Australians, and injuring more than 300 people, Busselton resident Carol Johnson, a teacher from the Busselton Senior High School—the very school that Brendan attended—was one of those killed. Another Busselton resident, Connie Watson, was also seriously injured and is still recovering, just recently having a second lot of skin grafts. Since 2002 Indonesia has experienced two other bombings, both in the capital Jakarta. Those blasts were at the JW Marriott Hotel in 2003 and outside the Australian Embassy in 2004, killing 23 people.

I would like to praise the tremendous efforts of all those involved in the provision of assistance to the victims of the bombing, most particularly the emergency response personnel, the health providers in Indonesia and all those individuals and volunteers who assisted in the aftermath. The efforts of Qantas, state emergency service and health officials and Australian government officials should be commended for the expedient and professional coordination of medical evacuation and hospitalisation plans.

The emergency response team, including consular, medical, counselling, emergency management and bomb-blast specialists, remain in Bali and a consular and counselling team are also in Singapore. All Australians share the grief of the people of Bali and the wider Indonesian community, who have suffered this terrible crime on their soil. The Australian government supports the Indonesian authorities in their efforts to hunt down and capture those responsible for the latest terrorist acts. The Australian Federal Police are working closely with the Indonesian National Police in the investigation.

Many Australians, particularly Western Australians, have enjoyed holidays in Bali. It is a fun-loving place to be. It is very much like Busselton in a lot of ways—it is friendly and re-
laxed. Indeed, my family and I have visited both places. We have eaten at Jimbaran Bay Beach. It sends a shudder up your spine that it was just another family at the wrong place at the wrong time when these cowardly acts were perpetrated upon the people of Bali capturing innocent Australians in their wake. I wish to extend our sympathy to the families of all those affected by these cowardly attacks, which tragically underscore the importance of our ongoing efforts in our fight against terrorism.

Mr GARRETT (Kingsford Smith) (7.38 pm)—I rise to join with parliamentary colleagues across the chamber to register my profound sympathy for the families of those who lost their lives in Bali and to express my very strong condolences to the families of the victims and all those involved. Parliamentarians will have the opportunity tomorrow morning to gather outside the parliament to again express both our sympathy and our support for those affected by this terrible event. One thing we can say is that we see the best of people in the worst of times. I think that has been very much in evidence both here in the parliament with the speeches that have been made and the acknowledgements by members of the efforts not only of family members but also of Foreign Affairs staff, Federal Police and members of the community both in Australia and Indonesia who, when something as terrible as this does happen, jump in and help.

We might describe the events in Bali—the bombing of two years ago and most recently—as the end of innocence for Australians as they travel abroad. Most Australians up to that point in time would not have had exposure to terrorism in any shape or form, thankfully. It is a terrible conclusion to the innocent period of Australians taking their holidays in other countries to find that a fate of this nature can befall them. That end of innocence that has happened in Bali is made all the more poignant because of the nature of the island itself: its very precious physical beauty, its distinct and unique culture and the nature of the Balinese themselves. What a capacity for compassion and solidarity with Australians they have demonstrated through both of these horrible events and associated events.

Yet it is something of a shockwave when it happens again and Australians again lose their lives. I know it is difficult for many people to discern any reason, any sense of coherence, in a random act of violence of this kind. It is clear that the intention is to harm people, and that goes against the grain of all communities, of all countries and certainly of all people who believe that we need to live with a view to peace and peaceful coexistence.

With regret, I note that the shockwaves have been felt very strongly in my own seat of Kingsford Smith. A number of Australians lost their lives in the first Bali event: members of the Coogee Dolphins football team, members of Souths Juniors, members of Brigidine College and members of the Coogee Surf Lifesaving Club. A number of those who lost their lives were living in my electorate and were valued members of the community. Their families and friends, their school friends and their sporting club mates experienced not only the shockwave but the grief of losing people they loved and also the task—which I think is as difficult, particularly after the first Bali event—of coming to terms with what had happened. The unexpected, shocking, sudden and violent nature of people’s passing means that communities experience the psychology of grief and grieving, and it takes some time for them, even with the very good assistance of counsellors, people in the church and school communities and families who provide that support. Notwithstanding the support that is there, the community takes some time to adjust to that psychological grief, and the grief remains.
But I have to note that the community response has been a profoundly empathetic one. In fact, in Kingsford Smith, on the north head of Coogee, we now commemorate the passing of those who lost their lives in the first Bali bombing. I attended that event. It was one of the first official duties I had as a member of parliament. Despite the great sadness associated with that event, I also came away from it with a sense of the capacity of the community and people to stick together and provide support.

Again, last Sunday, the local community at Malabar held a family day of remembrance for those lost in the Bali tragedy. I will record in the Hansard that this smaller and more private gathering did take place at Cromwell Park at Malabar Beach, where Malabar families of the Bali victims had organised an informal community and family day of remembrance. Each year, nine Australian flags are raised—the flags which covered the coffins of the nine locals who died in Bali—and subsequently there is an opportunity for the community to gather for a sausage sizzle. This year there was a talent quest as well. All members of the community in that particular area—it is a close-knit community—are invited to come along for the day.

I want to take the opportunity to note both victims’ names and also the names of family members who were commemorated on 9 October at Malabar: Gayle Airlie and her family Mr and Mrs Patricia and Noel Minton, Mr Michael Sant, Mr and Mrs Gary and Leanne Forster and Ryan Sant; Abbey Borgia and Deborah Borgia and the surviving family members Mr John Borgia and Mr Ben Borgia; Gerardine Buchan and Steve Buchan and the surviving family members Mr and Mrs James and Brinald Brougham, Candice Buchan, Mr and Mrs Jim and Maureen Buchan, and Dave Seelin and family; Chloe Byron and surviving family members Mr and Mrs David and Tia Byron and Jarrod Byron; Shane Foley and surviving family members Mr and Mrs John and Colleen Mavroudis and Ms Jane Mavroudis; Lynette McKeon and Marissa McKeon, a mother and daughter, and surviving family members Mr Ross McKeon, Ms L McKeon and Mr Steve McKeon; Ben Roberts and surviving family members Mr and Mrs Alan and Janice Roberts, Ms Lucy Roberts, Ms Caroline Chan and Mr Kevin Lynch; Kathy Salvatori and surviving family members Mr and Mrs Noel and Barbara Hackett, Mr Craig Salvatori, Olivia and Eliza Salvatori, Mr and Mrs Simon and Angela Morgan and Mr and Mrs Bryan and Lisa Briggs; Catherine Seelin and surviving family members Mr Dave Seelin, Matthew and Todd Seelin, Mr and Mrs Jim and Maureen Buchan and Candice Buchan; Julie Stevenson and surviving family members Mrs Azelda Stevenson and Mr Rolfe Brown; Tom Singer and surviving family members Mr and Mrs Peter and Megan Singer; Clint Thompson and surviving family members Mr and Mrs Robert and Sandra Thompson, Mr Trent Thompson and Brock, Fallah, Kaleb, Ryan and Ziade Thompson; Robyn Webster and surviving family member Mr Brian Webster; and Gerard Yeo and surviving family members Mr Paul Yeo, Mr and Mrs Paul and Kier Yeo and Ms Judi Yeo.

We remembered those people in a ceremony that was simple and meaningful and that brought together the community of Kingsford Smith, and particularly Malabar, to express not only their sympathy but their memory of what this loss means and how the community can respond in a positive way to something as traumatic as this.
What do we take from the Bali experiences? Apart from the great and ongoing necessity to provide support for the families of those victims and apart from the fact that we see a resolve amongst community and friends to commemorate—to move on but also to honour the memory in events such as the one I have described at Cromwell Park at Malabar Beach—in a broader sense we take on a commitment to maintain a connection with the people of Bali to support, through the offices of the parliament that we speak in and also more generally in the community, the democratic impulses in Indonesia which will be so necessary to counter terrorism.

As well, we need to more extensively build our capacity in the region, where the challenges are great—not only the challenges of managing and containing terrorism but the challenges of allowing for people to grow out of poverty and have fully realised lives. Finally there is a better understanding of what all of us can take from the commemoration—a recognition of the preciousness of life and the necessity always to honour and remember those who have gone before us.

Mr BAIRD (Cook) (7.50 pm)—Here again we have the tragedy of another Bali event. It seems such a short time ago that we were all shocked by the events in Bali. In the last event some six young people from my electorate were killed. It was a great tragedy. I spent a lot of time, when I was requested by the members of the family, ringing hospitals, ringing morgues, ringing the consul-general, trying to find the loved ones of those in my electorate. How horrified they were when we confirmed that their loved ones had died.

There was one particular family who had gone to Bali. There was a group of four young women—all under 30, all good friends, two of whom were sisters and a sister-in-law. They went to Bali and all four were killed; they had been to the Sari nightclub. To speak to their mother, even to this day, is a time of sadness for me. The mother cannot quite bring herself to face the reality of two young, beautiful girls who were just destroyed.

In the centre of Cronulla, very close to the beach which was loved by the members of my electorate, particularly the young women who were killed—and the six who were killed were all young women—there is a memorial that reminds us, every day that we go down there, of the unnecessary loss of life. They were young women who were full of life, full of adventure and full of love of the water and the surf, which of course was why there were so many from my area who went to Bali—the surf culture is part of the way of life in the Sutherland shire. Going to the funerals of those young people was a great tragedy. Listening to the heartfelt comments and to eulogies from husbands, lovers, mothers and fathers was just so heart-wrenching. You thought to yourself: ‘Do the terrorists have any idea what they are about? What is the sense of this? From what do they gain their momentum and their purpose in perpetrating such awful deeds?’

I am sure that all of us here in the House know fundamentalism in its various guises. But there is no thing such as the fundamentalism that encourages young people to blow themselves up and take others with them in a great desire to promote the values of a cause which others do not relate to. Moderate Muslims cannot relate to the terrorism ideology that they believe.

I was in Israel in July this year. They had a special monitoring service of Palestinian television which showed programs, particularly for teenagers and even children, promoting the great glories of terrorist suicide and saying that young men would be greeted by 72 virgins in
paradise. They discussed on the television programs that none of them wanted death but, if it meant that they would die as martyrs, it was something different.

In the Western world, we cannot understand this. We see the great devastation wreaked on families, on people who were there with no political agenda—young people just out to have a good time in Bali. It is devastating. For us this event brings forth memories of September 11, as we watched the collapse of the World Trade Centre towers and the destruction of several thousand people. We recounted those events as we watched what happened in Bali, with over 100 Australians being killed. We all felt caught up in global terror.

Some six weeks after the terrorism attack at the Sari nightclub, I went to the Christian memorial service in Bali. We had the Hindu cleansing service, which the then minister for health went to, and then I went to the Christian service after it. For me, it was a very moving occasion. Some 10,000 Balinese people gathered to remember those who were killed or injured and to reach out to the families of those who were affected. I met those who had been injured and burnt in the Sari blast and the families who had lost loved ones—Indonesians. We often forget that the majority of those killed were Balinese people.

After the service I got into a taxi and the taxi driver expressed vehemently his opposition to those who had perpetrated this event. There are no more wonderful people on earth than the Balinese people. They are gentle, carefree and loving in their approach. This event is a great travesty. We had a real paradise on earth in Bali—the wonderful environment, the wonderful waterways that surround Bali and, of course, the lifestyle. Bali is predominantly Hindu; there are also Christians and Muslims. Undoubtedly, there is resentment from those in other areas of Indonesia: they see the prosperity of Bali as they respond to the tourism demands of the West. We joined with some 10,000 people in the rain that night. There was a sense of oneness from people who had come from different parts of the world but also of great sorrow that we lived in a different world.

As we think of these latest events in Bali, our hearts go out particularly to those from the Newcastle area but also, obviously, to those from different parts of the world and the Indonesians involved. We express our sorrow for them and our heartfelt sympathies for the families who mourn them. As the Hobart Mercury said on 4 October:

For many Australians, Bali is a paradise. But in the wake of the latest bombings on the Indonesian island it is more like a paradise lost—

to use the Milton phrase. I was invited by the Indonesian tourism people to be part of a group that went up there after the bombings to try and look at what they could do to redevelop tourism in Bali. Of course, we looked at many ways. Now that we have had these terrorist attacks at Jimbaran Bay, which is where many families from Australia would stay and go out at night to have dinner on the beach, it changes the whole dimension. We thought the Sari club was perhaps just a one off: perhaps it was just an accidental thing that some terrorists got together and it will not happen again. The fact that we have had three bombings—one in Kuta and two in Jimbaran Bay—gives it a whole different dimension. I think it is unlikely that we are going to see tourists return to Bali in anything like the numbers we have seen in the past. Every Australian who loves the place would love to go back, in sympathy for the Balinese, and yet they cannot ignore the realities of terrorism that exist.

I commend the Australian Federal Police for their efforts in working with the Balinese and Indonesian police to track down those who brought this crime about. Obviously, it is too late
for the three young people who acted as suicide bombers, but tracking down those who were responsible is the main ingredient.

On behalf of my electorate, I extend my sympathy to those who have suddenly lost loved ones as a result of this terrorist attack. We have experienced the loss of six young people from the area. We went through it as a community—we had services together—and it brought the community together. Terrorism has changed the world in which we live. We want to support the Indonesians—it is a time of great terror for them—as they come to grips with the changed tourism dimension on the island of Bali. Most importantly, we think of the loved ones of those who were seriously injured and those who were killed. Our sympathy and hearts go out to them. On behalf of my electorate, I express my great sorrow at the events that took place in Bali such a short time ago.

Mr PRICE (Chifley) (8.00 pm)—Mr Speaker, you know how indebted I am for the call; I will be very brief. I want to associate myself with the remarks of the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and all those who have participated in this condolence motion about the terrorist attacks in Bali. In particular, I pay attention to the two backbenchers who participated in the House—the honourable member for Paterson and the honourable member for Newcastle. I thought they both made very good contributions.

Obviously, Bali is a special place for Indonesians and the Balinese, but for Australians it is almost a rite of passage for so many of our young folk. Notwithstanding this second tragedy, I have some sympathy for the Minister for Health and Ageing, who advises people that we should always pay attention to the travel advisories that are issued but that we should not let the Balinese down either. We just hope that this will be the last such atrocity, the last such outrage. To the victims and their families in Newcastle and to the family of Brendan Fitzgerald in Busselton, I extend my deep felt sympathy, not only from me but from my electorate.

I have a very large Pakistani community in my electorate. I am Deputy President of the Australia-Pakistan parliamentary group and every year I travel to Ryde to celebrate Pakistan Day there. The earthquake in Pakistan, which has also affected Afghanistan and India and appears to have taken 40,000 lives, is a horrific tragedy. I support the government totally in its donation of some $5.5 million to date. I hope we will be generous and dig deeper if we can help and if there is a continuing need. I know that the President of Pakistan, Pervez Musharraf, has asked all Pakistanis living overseas to be generous and to dig deep. I know that Ejaz Khan, President of the Pakistan Australia Friendship Association, and his members will indeed organise most generously on behalf of the victims. I know that the children of the King Abdul Aziz school in my electorate will dig deep, and I ask all those who attend the mosque adjacent to the school to be generous and to dig deep. The loss of 40,000 lives is something we find very hard to understand and to come to grips with. On my behalf and on behalf of all my constituents, I express my heartfelt sorrow at the tragedy that has unfolded in Pakistan.

Mrs GASH (Gilmore) (8.00 pm)—I move:

That further proceedings be conducted in the House.

Question agreed to.

Main Committee adjourned at 8.05 pm
QUESTIONS IN WRITING

Massage Service
(Question No. 998)

Mr Bowen asked the Minister for Veterans’ Affairs, in writing, on 10 May 2005:

(1) Does any agency for which the Minister is responsible pay for massages for its staff; if so, what sum did each agency spend on this purpose in 2004.

(2) What was the cost per massage.

(3) How many staff made use of this service.

Mrs De-Anne Kelly—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) Yes. $3,193.00 - The massages were provided as part of a special health promotion program for Department of Veterans’ Affairs Staff. There is no ongoing program that provides massages for staff.

(2) $11.70.

(3) 273.

Media Training
(Question No. 1066)

Mr Bowen asked the Minister for Veterans’ Affairs, in writing, on 10 May 2005:

(1) Did the department or any agency under the Minister’s portfolio engage the services of a media training company in 2004; if so, how many individuals (by agency/department) received media training.

(2) Did the Minister personally receive any media training.

(3) What was the cost of the media training.

(4) What was the name and postal address of each company engaged to provide media training.

Mrs De-Anne Kelly—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) No.

(2) No.

(3) Not applicable.

(4) Not applicable.

Consultancy Services
(Question No. 1102)

Mr Bowen asked the Minister for Veterans’ Affairs, in writing, on 10 May 2005:

(1) Did the department or any agency under the Minister’s portfolio engage the services of a public relations, public affairs or media management consultancy in 2004; if so, what was the (a) purpose and (b) cost of each engagement.

(2) What was the name and postal address of each company engaged for these purposes.

Mrs De-Anne Kelly—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) No.

(2) Not applicable.
Victory in Europe Commemorations
(Question No. 1122)
Mr Kelvin Thomson asked the Minister for Veterans’ Affairs, in writing, on 10 May 2005:
(1) In respect of the 180 nominations received from World War II veterans throughout Australia to take part in the Australian Government’s commemorative mission to mark the 60th anniversary of Victory in Europe in May 2005, can she confirm that, of the 18 veterans selected, 2 are from the ACT, 6 are from NSW, 2 are from WA, 3 are from Vic, 3 are from Qld, 1 is from Tas, and 1 is from SA.
(2) From which federal electoral division was each of the 18 individual successful nominations chosen.
Mrs De-Anne Kelly—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:
(1) Yes.
(2) One each from Boothby, Corangamite, Cowper, Curtin, Denison, Dunkley, Fairfax, Farrer, Goldstein, Hughes, Maribyrnong, MacKellar, Newcastle, Petrie, Swan, Wentworth, and two from Canberra.

Telstra Mobile Online Short Message Service
(Question No. 1176)
Mr Martin Ferguson asked the Minister for Veterans’ Affairs, in writing, on 10 May 2005:
(1) In respect of the provision of Telstra Mobile Online SMS Business Services or similar services to the Minister and the Minister’s staff, (a) does the Minister’s department provide such a service to the (a) Minister and (b) Minister’s staff; if so, when was the service first made available to the (i) Minister and (ii) Minister’s staff.
(2) What has been the cost of providing the service to the (a) Minister and (b) Minister’s staff since it was introduced.
Mrs De-Anne Kelly—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:
(1) (a) No, (b) No, (i) Not applicable, (ii) Not applicable.
(2) Not applicable.

Utilities Allowance
(Question No. 1179)
Ms Hoare asked the Minister for Veterans’ Affairs, in writing, on 10 May 2005:
(1) Can she confirm that recipients of the veterans’ affairs pensions of age pension age receive a utilities allowance twice a year; if so, what is the amount of the utilities allowance paid to (a) single and (b) couple pensioners.
(2) Can she explain why veterans in receipt of veterans’ affairs pensions under age pension age do not receive a utilities allowance.
(3) Is it the case that the living costs of veterans receiving veterans’ affairs pensions is independent of age and that all veterans would benefit from the payment of the utilities allowance.
(4) Will she ensure that all veterans eligible for veterans’ affairs pensions are paid the utilities allowance; if not, why not.
Mrs De-Anne Kelly—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:
(1) The utilities allowance is paid to veterans’ affairs pensioners who receive service pension and income support supplement and are of veteran pension age (5 years younger than age pension age). The utilities allowance is paid in two instalments of half the annual rate each March and September. The rate is currently:
(a) $100 per year paid to eligible pensioners who are single, or who are members of an illness separated couple or respite care couple; and
(b) $50 per year paid to each eligible member of a couple.

(2) The utilities allowance was introduced as part of the Government’s 2004 election commitment “Recognising Senior Australians – their needs and their carers” and was directed towards senior Australians. The payment recognises the difficulties some older Australians have in meeting regular household bills.

(3) While living costs for veterans’ affairs pensioners of all ages may be similar, those over pension age are less likely to receive outside sources of income such as wages and therefore rely more heavily on income support. The utilities allowance was directed to older Australians, in recognition of this.

(4) There are currently no plans to extend the utilities allowance to veterans’ affairs pensioners who are below veteran pension age.

**Foreign Affairs: Contracts**

(Question No. 1378)

**Mr Rudd** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs, in writing, on 12 May 2005:
Can he provide a list of all contracts to the value of $100,000 or greater entered into by (a) AusAID, (b) Austrade, (c) ACIAR, (d) the Australia-Japan Foundation in 2004-2005.

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

**AUSAID**

Please see Attachment A

**AUSTRADE**

The following list identifies contracts to the value of $100,000 or greater entered into by Austrade in 2004-05:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aristotle Corporation</td>
<td>IT Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Augment Communications</td>
<td>Event Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Business Limited</td>
<td>TradeStart - Bega</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Business Limited</td>
<td>TradeStart – Tweed Heads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre for International Economics</td>
<td>Economic Analysis of EMDG Scheme</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elcom Technology</td>
<td>Internet Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eMarketing Matters</td>
<td>Internet Marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excelerated Consulting</td>
<td>Reporting and Analysis Software and Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frontier Recruitment</td>
<td>IT Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frontier Recruitment</td>
<td>IT Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Geoff Alford Research Services</td>
<td>Survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>Icon Recruitment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Impact Employee Communications</td>
<td>Human Resource Services</td>
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<td>Innerspace Commercial</td>
<td>Client Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ironbark Group</td>
<td>Freight Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kent’s Transport</td>
<td>Freight and Storage Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Martin Energy Products</td>
<td>Security Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Monitors Australia</td>
<td>Media Monitoring</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**QUESTIONS IN WRITING**
During the period in question, Austrade also entered into 19 residential leases and 5 office leases in overseas markets that were each in excess of $100,000 for the total period of the commitment.

ACIAR
Please see Attachment B

AJF

The Australia-Japan Foundation did not enter into any contracts to the value of $100,000 or more in 2004-05.

Attachment A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contractor</th>
<th>Subject Matter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACIAR</td>
<td>Building Integrated Pest Management Capacity In Iraq Initially Concentrating On Control Of Jasmine Whitefly In The Citrus/Date System Of Central Iraq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACIAR</td>
<td>Better crop germplasm and management for improved production of wheat, barley and pulse and forage legumes in Iraq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACIL Australia Pty Ltd</td>
<td>PNG ECBP Annual Program Plan Peer Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACIL Australia Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Web-based Database Development Specialist for the eastern Indonesian Information Exchange (BaKTI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACIL Australia Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Indonesia Learning Assistance Program for Islamic Schools - Technical and Coordination Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACIS Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Provision of IT Technical Services - Infrastructure Operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACIS Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Provision of IT Technical Personnel - Applications Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AdPartners Group Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Implementation of AusAID’s positive.negative photographic exhibition rural and regional tour 2004-2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventist Development and Relief Agency</td>
<td>AAP Year 1: July 2004-June 2005</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agresta, Robert</td>
<td>Solomon Islands Institutional Strengthening and Capacity Building project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alexander and Lloyd Australia Pty Ltd</td>
<td>PNG Manus Island Schools Upgrading Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alliance Consulting Group</td>
<td>Provision of IT Technical Services - Application Development - Quality Assurance</td>
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<td>Allied Mills Australia Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Wheat Flour to WFP EMOP 10141.2 DPRK</td>
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<td>Altis Consulting Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Student Datamart Development</td>
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<td>Anglican Board of Mission - Philippines Cordillera Water Program</td>
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<td>AngliCord</td>
<td>Provision of annual ANCP funding 2004-2005</td>
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<td>Contractor</td>
<td>Subject Matter</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANU Enterprise Pty Limited</td>
<td>ECBP Peer Review and Contractor Performance Assessment Adviser</td>
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<tr>
<td>APAC Services Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Procurement of Surgical Equipment and Medical Supplies for Australian Medical Teams in Banda Aceh</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asumen Ventrue (FSM)</td>
<td>Federated States of Micronesia - In-Country Procurement of Computer Hardware, Supply, Installation and Training for the Border Management Systems Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AusAID National Roads</td>
<td>Department of Works Retrenchments POSF Contribution - The Loloata Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUSTCARE</td>
<td>Special Indian Ocean Rim Disaster Fund</td>
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<td>Kiribati Customs Division Institutional Strengthening Project - PC/Trade Implementation</td>
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<td>United Process Solutions</td>
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<td>Unitng Church Overseas Aid (UCOA)</td>
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<td>University of Queensland</td>
<td>Indonesia Mortality Registration System Strengthening Project (IMRSSP) Phase One</td>
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<td>Yayasan Kanaivasu</td>
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<td>Young, Lincoln</td>
<td>APEC Quality Assurance Framework</td>
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<td>Zonta Club of the Adelaide Hills</td>
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<td>3ST Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Provision of Professional Services - Chief Information Officer</td>
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**Attachment B**

### 1. CONTRACTS FOR INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH PROJECTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contractor</th>
<th>Project Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australian Bureau for Agricultural and Resource Economics</td>
<td>Institutions and policies for improving water allocation and management in the Yellow River Basin, China</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australian Institute of Marine Science</td>
<td>Planning tools for environmentally sustainable tropical finfish cage culture in Indonesia and northern Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australian National University</td>
<td>Fiji sugar industry; assessing international sugar market reforms and their impacts and defining appropriate responses Achieving food security in China - implications of WTO accession</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>International food safety regulation and processed food exports from developing countries: A comparative study of India and Thailand</td>
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<td>Technical change in Thai and Indonesian agriculture: measurement, socio-economic impact and policy implications</td>
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<td>Managing groundwater access in Tay Nguyen (Central Highlands) Vietnam</td>
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<td>Sustainable land use change in the north west provinces of China</td>
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<td>Economic and market analysis of the live reef fish food trade in Asia-Pacific</td>
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<td>Australian Volunteers International Bureau of Rural Sciences</td>
<td>Economic performance and management of the Gulf of Papua prawn fishery High performance eucalypts and interspecific hybrids for marginal lands in south and eastern South Africa and southeastern Australia Review of portable sawmills in the Pacific: Identifying the factors for success PNG agroforestry systems - scoping study Equitable groundwater management for the development of atolls and small islands Seeds of Life - East Timor Planning methods for sustainable management of timber stocks in Papua New Guinea’s forests Biological threats to Saccharum germplasm and sugar production in Papua New Guinea, Indonesia and Australia Improving and maintaining productivity of bamboo for quality timber and shoots in Australia and the Philippines</td>
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<td>Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations</td>
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<td>Central Queensland University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Centre for Agriculture and Biosciences International</td>
<td>Development of the Aquaculture Compendium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Centre for International Economics</td>
<td>Improving delivery of extension services in the Philippines</td>
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<tr>
<td>Centre for Legumes in Mediterranean Agriculture</td>
<td>Traits for yield improvement of chickpea in drought-prone environments of India and Australia</td>
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<td>Lentil and Lathyrus in the cropping systems of Nepal: improving crop establishment and yield of relay and post-rice-sown pulses in the terai and mid-hills</td>
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<td>Integrated management of Botrytis Grey Mould of chickpea in Bangladesh and Australia</td>
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<td>Charles Darwin University</td>
<td>Integrated control of mango insect pests using green ants as a key element</td>
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<td>Biological control of two major weeds affecting crop and livestock production in East Timor</td>
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<td>Impacts of fire and its use for sustainable land and forest management in Indonesia and northern Australia</td>
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<td>Charles Sturt University</td>
<td>Sustainable development of grasslands in western China</td>
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<td>Accelerating the impacts of participatory research and extension on shifting cultivation farming systems in Laos</td>
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<td>Community partnerships for plantation forestry: enhancing rural incomes from forestry in eastern Indonesia and Australia</td>
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<td>Consultant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cooperative Research Centre for the Cattle and Beef Industry</td>
<td>Developing profitable beef business systems for previously disadvantaged farmers in South Africa</td>
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<td>CRC for Tropical Plant Protection</td>
<td>Diagnosis and management of wilt diseases of banana in Indonesia</td>
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<td>CSIRO Australian Animal Health Laboratory</td>
<td>Development of a vaccine for the control of Gumboro in village and small poultry holdings in Indonesia</td>
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<td>CSIRO Entomology</td>
<td>Control of bees and bee mites in Indonesia and the Philippines</td>
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<td>Building integrated pest management capacity in Iraq initially concentrating on control of jasmine whitefly in the citrus/date system of central Iraq</td>
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<td>CSIRO Forestry and Forest Products</td>
<td>Improving and maintaining productivity of eucalypt plantations in India and Australia</td>
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<td>Development of a sustainable, community-based essential oil industry in the Western Province of Papua New Guinea using the region’s woody-plant species</td>
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<td>Facilitating the availability and use of improved germplasm for forestry and agroforestry in Papua New Guinea</td>
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<td>Domestication of Papua New Guinea’s indigenous forest species</td>
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<td>CSIRO Land and Water</td>
<td>Impact of heavy metals on sustainability of fertilisation and waste recycling in peri-urban and intensive agriculture in south-east Asia</td>
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<td>Development of technologies to alleviate soil acidification in legume-based production systems in the tropics of Asia and Australia</td>
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**QUESTIONS IN WRITING**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contractor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contractor</td>
<td>Water resources and salinity management in agricultural areas of inland Northern China and Northern Australia</td>
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<td>Minimising the off-site impact of pesticides from agricultural systems - a risk based approach</td>
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<td>Regional impacts of re-vegetation on water resources of the Loess Plateau, China, and the Middle and Upper Murray-bidgee Catchment, Australia</td>
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<td>Application of innovative irrigated cropping and soil filtration technology for wastewater reuse and treatment in China</td>
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<td>Enhancing agricultural production in the Philippines by sustainable use of shallow groundwater</td>
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<td>Overcoming magnesium deficiency in oil palm crops on volcanic ash soils of Papua New Guinea</td>
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<td>Permanent beds for irrigated rice-wheat and alternative cropping systems in north-west India and south-east Australia</td>
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<td>Increasing the productivity of cattle in India and Australia with rumen fungal treatments</td>
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<td>Increasing efficiency and productivity of ruminants in India and Australia by the use of protected nutrient technology</td>
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<td>Management of CSF and FMD at the village level in Lao PDR</td>
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<td>Application of PCR for improved shrimp health management in the Asian region</td>
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<td>Ruminant production in the red soils region of southern China and in northern Australia</td>
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<td>CSIRO Marine Research</td>
<td>Sustainable tropical spiny lobster aquaculture in Vietnam and Australia</td>
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<td>Biology and status of the prawn stocks and trawl fishery in the Gulf of Papua</td>
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<td>Capacity development to monitor, analyse and report on Indonesian tuna fisheries</td>
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<td>Artisanal shark and ray fisheries in Eastern Indonesia and their relationships with Australian resources</td>
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<td>CSIRO Plant Industry</td>
<td>Soybean variety adaptation and improvement in Vietnam and Australia</td>
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<td>Use and improvement of sugarcane germplasm</td>
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<td>Control of gemini virus diseases of cotton and tomato in Pakistan and Australia</td>
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<td>CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems</td>
<td>Ecologically-based management of rodents in rainfed cropping systems in Myanmar</td>
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<td>Improved management of small mammals in Tibetan grasslands</td>
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<td>Development of a knowledge system for the selection of forages for farming systems in the tropics</td>
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<td>Improving smallholder crop-livestock systems in eastern Indonesia</td>
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<td>Salinity reduction in tannery effluents in India and Australia</td>
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<td>Curtin University of Technology</td>
<td>Improving productivity and the participation of youth and women in the Papua New Guinea cocoa, coconut and oil palm industries Assessing and extending schemes to enhance the profitability of the PNG coffee industry via price premiums for quality Rehabilitation of the Agriculture Faculty of the National University of East Timor</td>
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<td>Deakin University</td>
<td>Culture-based and capture fisheries development and management in reservoirs in Vietnam Management strategies for enhanced fisheries production in Sri Lankan and Australian lakes and reservoirs - Extension Project Culture, capture conflicts: sustaining fish production and livelihoods in Indonesian reservoirs</td>
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<td>Department of Agriculture, Western Australia</td>
<td>Physiological and genetic approaches for the development of waterlogging tolerance in wheat on sodic/alkaline and neutral soils in India and Australia. Refinement and adoption of permanent raised bed technology for the irrigated maize-wheat cropping system in Pakistan</td>
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<td>Department of Fisheries, Western Australia</td>
<td>Improving feeds and feeding for small scale aquaculture in Vietnam and Cambodia</td>
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<td>Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Queensland</td>
<td>Utilising basic soil data for the sustainable management of upland soils in Vietnam and Australia</td>
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<td>Department of Primary Industries, Victoria</td>
<td>Improved beef production in central Vietnam Enhancing project impact and science capability through ongoing evaluation Increased productivity of cool season pulses in rain-fed agricultural systems of China and Australia Management of potato late blight in Papua New Guinea Improved beef production in central Vietnam Reducing spoilage and contamination risks of fresh vegetables in China and Australia Sustainable agriculture in saline environments through serial biological concentration</td>
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<td>Griffith University</td>
<td>Development of PRSV-P resistant papaya genotypes by introgression of genes from wild Carica species Managing pest fruit flies to increase production of fruit and vegetable crops in Vietnam Managing pest fruit flies to enhance quarantine services and upgrade fruit and vegetable production in Indonesia</td>
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<td>International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas</td>
<td>Plant health management for faba bean, chickpea and lentils Plant genetic resource conservation, documentation and utilisation in central Asia and the Caucasus Better crop germplasm and management for improved production of wheat, barley and pulse and forage legumes in Iraq</td>
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<td>International Centre for Tropical Agriculture</td>
<td>Enhancing the adoption of improved cassava production and utilisation systems in Indonesia and East Timor</td>
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<td>Integrated nutrient management in tropical cropping systems: Improved capabilities in modelling and recommendations</td>
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<td>Improving the quality of pearl millet residues for livestock</td>
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<td>International Crops Research Institute for the Semi Arid Tropics</td>
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<td>Improved fertiliser recommendations and policy for dry regions of southern Africa</td>
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<td>International Food Policy Research Institute</td>
<td>Rural poor and smallholders in western China under WTO: A regional and community level analysis</td>
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<td>International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre</td>
<td>Increasing yield potential in wheat: complementing conventional breeding by application of novel physiological and germplasm strategies</td>
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<td>Ensuring productivity and food security through sustainable control of yellow rust of wheat in Asia</td>
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<td>Wheat and maize productivity improvement in Afghanistan</td>
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<td>International Plant Genetic Resources Institute</td>
<td>Development of advanced technologies for germplasm conservation of tropical fruit species</td>
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<td>Technical support for regional plant genetic resources development in the Pacific</td>
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<td>International Potato Centre</td>
<td>Poverty alleviation and food security through improving the sweet potato-pig systems in Indonesia and Vietnam</td>
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<td>International Rice Research Institute</td>
<td>Impact of migration and/or off-farm employment on roles of women and appropriate technologies in Asian and Australian mixed farming systems</td>
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<td>Fertilisation-independent formation of embryo, endosperm and pericarp for apomictic hybrid rice</td>
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<td>International Water Management Institute</td>
<td>Growing more rice with less water: Increasing water productivity in rice-based cropping systems</td>
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<td>Water allocation in the Krishna River Basin to improve water productivity in agriculture</td>
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<td>James Cook University</td>
<td>Development of a model for the control of fasciolosis in cattle and buffaloes in the Kingdom of Cambodia</td>
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<td>Pearl oyster resource development in the Western Pacific</td>
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<td>Domestication and commercialisation of multi-purpose indigenous trees and shrubs for food and other products in Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Queensland: a feasibility study with identification of optimum genetic resources for establishment of local species of sandalwood for plantations and agroforests in Vanuatu and Cape York Peninsula</td>
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<td>Microbial contaminants associated with sago processing and storage in Papua New Guinea</td>
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<td>Kimberley Aquaculture Aboriginal Corporation</td>
<td>Integration of broodstock replenishment with community-based management to restore trochus fisheries</td>
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<td>La Trobe University</td>
<td>Improving water resource management in India’s agriculture: Search for effective institutional arrangements and policy frameworks</td>
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<td>Project Title</td>
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| Murdoch University                      | Maximising the economic benefits to Pacific Island Nations from management of migratory tuna stocks  
Selection for improved quality and resistance to Phytophthora pod rot, cocoa pod borer and vascular-streak dieback in cocoa in Indonesia  
Development of diagnostic and control methodologies for animal trypanosomiasis (Surra) in Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, the Philippines and Australia  
Production of a vaccine for the control of Jembrana disease in Indonesia  
Assessing land suitability for crop diversification in Cambodia and Australia  
Increasing milk production from cattle in Tibet  
Farming systems research for crop diversification in Cambodia and Australia  
Development and delivery of practical disease control programs for small-scale shrimp farmers in Indonesia, Thailand and Australia  
Developing aquaculture in degraded inland areas in India and Australia  
Improving postharvest quality of temperate fruits in Vietnam and Australia  
Legumes and reduced tillage for rice and maize based cropping in the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea (DPRK)  
Biological control of Chromolaena odorata in Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and the Philippines  
Improve yield and economic viability of peanut production in Papua New Guinea and Australia using integrated management and modelling approaches  
Sustaining and growing landcare systems in the Philippines and Australia  
Adaptation of low-chill temperate fruits to Australia, Thailand, Laos and Vietnam  
Improving sub tropical citrus production in Sikkim and Australia  
Biology, damage levels and control of red-banded mango caterpillar in Papua New Guinea and Australia  
Improving the implementation of integrated crop management in brassica vegetables through a decision support toolkit based on enduser needs in China and Australia  
Sustainable aquaculture development in Pacific Islands region and northern Australia  
Improved hatchery and growout technology for marine finfish aquaculture in the Asia-Pacific region  
Utilisation of local ingredients in commercial feeds for pigs                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
<p>| NSW Department of Primary Industries    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Queensland Department of Natural       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Resources and Mines                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Queensland Department of Primary       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Industries and Fisheries               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
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<td>Queensland University of Technology</td>
<td>Reducing aflatoxin in peanuts using agronomic management and bio-control strategies in Indonesia and Australia Management of postharvest diseases of sub-tropical and tropical fruit using their natural resistance mechanisms Integrating effective phosphine fumigation practices into grain storage systems in China, Vietnam and Australia Horticulture industry development for market-remote communities Integrated pest management and supply chain improvement for mangoes in the Philippines and Australia Seasonal climate forecasting for better irrigation system management in Lombok Virus indexing and DNA fingerprinting for the international movement and conservation of taro germplasm Impact and management of Oribius weevils in Papua New Guinea TaroPest: A computer based information and diagnostics package for taro pests of the South Pacific Assessing the potential for low cost formulated diets for mud crab aquaculture in Australia, Indonesia and Vietnam Stock structure of two important Mekong River carp species (Henicorynchus spp.)</td>
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<td>Secretariat of the Pacific Community</td>
<td>Improved plant protection in the Solomon Islands Lucerne adapted to adverse environments in China and Australia Poultry feeding systems in PNG Feeding village poultry in the Solomon Islands Bridging the gap between seasonal climate forecasts and decision makers in agriculture</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Australian Research and Development Institute</td>
<td>Stock structure of two important Mekong River carp species (Henicorynchus spp.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southern Cross University State Forests of New South Wales</td>
<td>Genetic diversity and propagation of mangroves Assessment of the potential of Pinus radiata for ecological restoration of the Yangtze River catchment in Aba Prefecture, Sichuan, China</td>
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<td>University of Adelaide</td>
<td>Genetic diversity and propagation of mangroves</td>
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<td>University of Canberra</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of New England</td>
<td>Improving the management of water and nitrogen fertiliser for agricultural profitability, water quality and reduced nitrous oxide emissions in China and Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of New South Wales</td>
<td>Improved productivity, profitability and sustainability of sheep production in Maharashtra, India through genetically enhanced prolificacy, growth and parasite resistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Queensland</td>
<td>Performance evaluation and genetic improvement of ruminant animals in the Philippines</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of New South Wales</td>
<td>Future prospects for smallholder poultry producers in the Philippines: ducks and native chickens</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Queensland</td>
<td>Economic potential of land-use change and forestry for carbon sequestration and poverty reduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of New South Wales</td>
<td>Drying systems to improve grain quality in North East India</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Queensland</td>
<td>Trade liberalisation, agriculture and land degradation in Fiji: implications for sustainable development policies</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of New South Wales</td>
<td>Control of Newcastle disease and identification of major constraints in village chicken production systems in Myanmar</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Queensland</td>
<td>Farmer-based adaptive rodent management, extension and research system in Cambodia</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of New South Wales</td>
<td>Improving financial returns to smallholder tree farmers in the Philippines</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Queensland</td>
<td>Evaluating domestic tuna fisheries projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of New South Wales</td>
<td>Coconut tissue culture for clonal propagation and safe germplasm exchange</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Queensland</td>
<td>Increased productivity of rice-based cropping systems in Lao PDR, Cambodia and Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of New South Wales</td>
<td>The development of integrated pest management for Brassica crops in DPRK and its improvement in Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Queensland</td>
<td>Diagnosis and management of wilt diseases of banana in Indonesia</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of New South Wales</td>
<td>Scientific communication in Papua New Guinea</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Queensland</td>
<td>Mixed species plantations of high-value trees for timber production and enhanced community services in Vietnam and Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of New South Wales</td>
<td>Control of ripening in papaya and mango by genetic engineering</td>
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<td>University of Queensland</td>
<td>Integrated manure nutrient management in soybean/wheat cropping systems on vertisols in Madhya Pradesh and Queensland</td>
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<td>University of South Australia</td>
<td>Arsenic transfer in water-soil-crop environments of Bangladesh and Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Southern Queensland</td>
<td>Wheat improvement in Sichuan Province: application of modern breeding technologies</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Sydney</td>
<td>Impacts of alternative policy options on the agricultural sector in Vietnam</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Sydney</td>
<td>Improving resource use efficiency in the coconut industry of North Sulawesi and its national implications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Sydney</td>
<td>Diseases of crops in the central provinces of Vietnam: diagnosis, extension and control</td>
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QUESTIONS IN WRITING
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contractor</th>
<th>Project Title</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| University of Tasmania             | Contractor Project Title: Postharvest handling and disease control in melons in China and Australia  
Enhancing PNG smallholder cocoa production through greater adoption of disease control practices  
Integrated control of powdery mildew and other disease, weed and insect problems in squash in Tonga and Australia  
Efficient nutrient use in rice production in Vietnam achieved using inoculant biofertilisers  
Heart rots in plantation hardwoods in Indonesia and southeast Australia  
Development and evaluation of sterile triploids and polyploid breeding methodologies for commercial species of Acacia in Vietnam, South Africa and Australia  
The economics of developing reservoir aquaculture in Vietnam  
Herbicide use strategies and weed management options in Filipino and Australian cropping |
| University of Western Australia    | The University of Western Sydney Project Title: Inland aquaculture in PNG: improving fingerling supply and fish nutrition for smallholder farms  
Integrated watershed management for sustainable soil and water resources management of the Inabanga watershed, Bohol Island, Philippines  
Huanglongbing management for Indonesia, Vietnam and Australia  
The impact of changing agroforestry mosaics on catchment water yield and quality in Southeast Asia  
Farmer evaluation and multiplication of sweet potato varieties on the North Coast of PNG  
Optimal release strategies for restocking and stock enhancement of the tropical sea cucumber, sandfish (Holothuria scabra)  
Management of animal waste to improve the productivity of Pacific farming systems  
Management and policy frameworks for illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) Fishing in Indonesian and Philippine waters  
Facilitating farmer uptake of ACIAR project results: World Vision collaborative program |
| University of Western Sydney       | Management and policy frameworks for illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) Fishing in Indonesian and Philippine waters  
Facilitating farmer uptake of ACIAR project results: World Vision collaborative program  
Optimal release strategies for restocking and stock enhancement of the tropical sea cucumber, sandfish (Holothuria scabra)  
Improving sustainability and profitability of village sea cucumber fisheries in Solomon Islands |
| University of Wollongong           | Management and policy frameworks for illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) Fishing in Indonesian and Philippine waters  
Facilitating farmer uptake of ACIAR project results: World Vision collaborative program  
Optimal release strategies for restocking and stock enhancement of the tropical sea cucumber, sandfish (Holothuria scabra)  
Improving sustainability and profitability of village sea cucumber fisheries in Solomon Islands |
| World Agroforestry Centre          | Management and policy frameworks for illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) Fishing in Indonesian and Philippine waters  
Facilitating farmer uptake of ACIAR project results: World Vision collaborative program  
Optimal release strategies for restocking and stock enhancement of the tropical sea cucumber, sandfish (Holothuria scabra)  
Improving sustainability and profitability of village sea cucumber fisheries in Solomon Islands |
| World Vision Australia             | Management and policy frameworks for illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) Fishing in Indonesian and Philippine waters  
Facilitating farmer uptake of ACIAR project results: World Vision collaborative program  
Optimal release strategies for restocking and stock enhancement of the tropical sea cucumber, sandfish (Holothuria scabra)  
Improving sustainability and profitability of village sea cucumber fisheries in Solomon Islands |
| WorldFish Center                   | Management and policy frameworks for illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) Fishing in Indonesian and Philippine waters  
Facilitating farmer uptake of ACIAR project results: World Vision collaborative program  
Optimal release strategies for restocking and stock enhancement of the tropical sea cucumber, sandfish (Holothuria scabra)  
Improving sustainability and profitability of village sea cucumber fisheries in Solomon Islands |

2. OTHER CONTRACTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contractor</th>
<th>Services</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australian National University</td>
<td>PNG agroforestry systems - scoping study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia</td>
<td>Lease of office premises in overseas missions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coretext Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Production of ACIAR Partners Magazine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**ADI Ltd Bendigo**  
(Question No. 1440)

Mr Gibbons asked the Minister representing the Minister for Defence, in writing, on 24 May 2005:

1. Is the Minister aware that ADI Limited Bendigo has, for over a decade, been the supplier of refurbished Mk 76 Oto Melara gun mounts for the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) and that it assembled and tested all six new gun mounts when they originally came into Australia.

2. Is the Minister also aware that the RAN has eight guns in its fleet, six on board the FFG class Frigates, one at the West Head Gun School in Flinders and a rotatable spare under refurbishment at Bendigo.

3. Can the Minister confirm that ADI Limited Bendigo holds the manufacture licence from Oto Melara to maintain and service these gun mounts in Australia, that a program to refurbish a gun each year was established and that it would continue for the life of the FFG Frigate (approximately 16 years).

4. Can the Minister explain why ADI Limited Bendigo has not received an order for the next refurbished gun.

5. Is the Minister aware that if an order is not placed immediately the electronic testing and measuring equipment will not be maintained and will fall into disrepair, and that specialist tooling and equipment will be lost or sold off as scrap.

6. Is the Minister also aware that if an order is not placed immediately the livelihoods of six technicians at ADI Limited Bendigo will be jeopardised.

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

(1) Yes.

(2) Yes.

(3) The existence of the licence from Oto Melera, now Oto Breda, is used as the basis for sole sourcing repair orders of the gun to ADI Limited Bendigo. A refurbishment program was established in 1992, based on an overhaul periodicity of approximately seven years per gun. The future MK 75, 76mm gun overhaul program is impacted by the withdrawal from service of HMA Ships Canberra and Adelaide. The periodicity of gun overhaul is, therefore, being reviewed.

(4) Pending the outcome of the Commonwealth’s review of gun overhaul periodicity, ADI will be asked to provide a quotation to overhaul a mount as a rotatable pool item or insurance spare to support a move to a reliability centred maintenance philosophy.

(5) ADI has indicated that if sufficient work is forthcoming it would reconsider the commercial viability of support of this system.

(6) ADI has indicated that reduction in support requirements for this gun will impact on staffing levels at ADI Bendigo.

Attorney-General’s: Grants

(Question No. 1475)

Mr Bowen asked the Attorney-General, in writing, on 25 May 2005:

(1) Has the Minister’s department or any agency in the Minister’s portfolio made any grants for any purpose to the national or state or territory branches of (a) the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, (b) the Australian Industry Group, (c) the National Farmers Federation, (d) the Business Council of Australia, (e) the Motor Traders Association of Australia, (f) Employers First, (g) Australian Business Limited, (h) the National Retailers Association, (i) the Australian Liquor Association, (j) the National Electrical Contractors Association, (k) the State Chamber of Commerce (NSW), and (l) the Housing Industry Association in (i) 2003-2004, (ii) 2004-2005, and (iii) 2005-2006.

(2) What the purpose and amount of each grant and on what date was each grant awarded.

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

Subject to the next paragraph, neither my Department nor any agency in my portfolio has made any grants to the specified organisations in any of the specified financial years.

There is a long-standing practice, by successive Attorneys-General, to treat in confidence applications for financial assistance for legal and related costs. Accordingly, my answer does not cover any such grants that may have been made to any of those organisations.

Veterans’ Affairs: Grants

(Question No. 1485)

Mr Bowen asked the Minister for Veterans’ Affairs, in writing, on 25 May 2005:

(1) Has the Minister’s department or any agency in the Minister’s portfolio made any grants for any purpose to the national or state or territory branches of (a) the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, (b) the Australian Industry Group, (c) the National Farmers Federation, (d) the Business Council of Australia, (e) the Motor Traders Association of Australia, (f) Employers First, (g) Australian Business Limited, (h) the National Retailers Association, (i) the Australian Liquor Association, (j) the National Electrical Contractors Association, (k) the State Chamber of Commerce
(NSW), and (l) the Housing Industry Association in (i) 2003-2004, (ii) 2004-2005, and (iii) 2005-2006.

(2) What the purpose and amount of each grant and on what date was each grant awarded.

Mrs De-Anne Kelly—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) (a) to (l) No.

(2) N/A.

National Archives
(Question No. 1512)

Mr Melham asked the Minister representing the Minister for the Arts and Sport, in writing, on 26 May 2005:

(1) In January 2004 did the National Archives of Australia receive an application by a Canberra-based historian for access to certain personal records created in 1973-1974 by Sir Paul Hasluck during his service as Governor-General (National Archives series M1767).

(2) Did the National Archives handle the request for access to personal papers in a manner similar to requests for access to Commonwealth records.

(3) Is it the case that subsection 90(3) of the Archives Act provides that the National Archives shall take all reasonable steps to enable a person applying for access to records to be notified of a decision on an application as soon as possible but in any case not later than 90 days after the day on which the application was received.

(4) Did the National Archives consult with the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet in relation to this access application; if so, who was consulted and when and in what form did any exchanges between the department and the National Archives take place.

(5) Did the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet at any time recommend or suggest to the National Archives that access to Sir Paul Hasluck’s personal papers not be granted or otherwise be limited or deferred; if so, why.

(6) Did the National Archives consult with the Governor-General or his Office in relation to this access application; if so, who was consulted and when and in what form did any exchanges between the Governor-General or his Office and the National Archives take place.

(7) Did the Governor-General or his Office at any time recommend or suggest that access to Sir Paul Hasluck’s personal papers not be granted or otherwise be limited or deferred; if so why.

(8) When did the National Archives advise the applicant of a decision in relation to his application made in January 2005.

Mr McGauran—The Minister for the Arts and Sport has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

(1) The National Archives of Australia has advised that in January 2004 it received an application from a researcher for access to records in series M1767 created in 1973 by Sir Paul Hasluck during his term as Governor-General. A further application for 1974 records in series M1767 was received from the same applicant in January 2005.

(2) The National Archives of Australia has advised that it responded to the request in accordance with the access instructions provided by Sir Paul Hasluck which are similar to the provisions relating to the release of Commonwealth records.

(3) The National Archives of Australia has advised, section 40(3) of the Archives Act 1983 provides that the Archives shall take all reasonable steps to enable the applicant to be notified of a decision
on the application as soon as practicable but in any case not later than 90 days after the day on which the application is received by the Archives.

The National Archives of Australia has advised that section 40 applies to applications under the Archives Act 1983 for access to open period Commonwealth records. Section 40 does not apply to personal records.

(4) The National Archives of Australia has advised that in June 2004 they referred item 4 of series M1767, which was subject to the January 2004 application, to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet for advice on whether its release may constitute an unreasonable disclosure of personal information.

Consultation occurred between officers of the relevant areas in National Archives of Australia and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. In November 2004, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet provided advice by letter to the Director-General of the National Archives.

(5) I am advised that the Prime Minister will be providing the information requested in his response to Question number 1511.

(6) The National Archives of Australia consulted the Office of the Official Secretary to the Governor-General about item 4 of series M1767.

Communication between the National Archives of Australia and the Office of the Official Secretary between December 2004 and May 2005 was by letter and telephone between the Director-General of the National Archives and the Official Secretary.

(7) I am advised that the Official Secretary to the Governor-General recommended that any records of discussion between Sir Paul Hasluck as Head of State and Mr Whitlam, as Head of Government, not be disclosed on the basis of a long standing convention which respects and protects the privacy of exchanges between a Head of State and the Head of Government because of the unique relationship between them which in itself is important for the stability and proper functioning of our system of government.

(8) On 5 May 2005, the National Archives of Australia advised the applicant by telephone of the result of his January 2004 and January 2005 applications, for 1973 and 1974 material in item 4 series M1767. The National Archives of Australia supplied statements outlining the reasons for withholding material from public access to the applicant on 12 May 2005.

**United States Missile Defence Program**

(Question No. 1695)

Mr Melham asked the Minister representing the Minister for Defence, in writing, on 15 June 2005:

(1) What opportunities have been identified for Australian industry arising from Australian participation in the United States Missile Defence Program.

(2) Can the Government identify any specific United States contracts won by Australian companies in the field of missile defence since December 2003.

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

(1) No specific opportunities have been identified.

(2) No. The Government has not been party to any contractual relationships between United States and Australian companies in this field. It is understood that BAE Systems is undertaking some work in this area but we have not been informed of the nature of that work, and it would not be appropriate to comment on any contractual relationships.
Personalised Stationery
(Question No. 1912)

Mr Martin Ferguson asked the Minister representing the Special Minister of State, in writing, on 9 August 2005:

(1) What was the average sum spent by Members of the House of Representatives on personalized stationery and newsletters during the (a) 2004-2005 financial year and (b) 2004 calendar year.

(2) What was the average sum spent by (a) government, (b) opposition, and (c) independent and minority party Members of the House of Representatives for the (i) 2004-2005 financial year and (ii) 2004 calendar year.

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

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<th>2004-2005*</th>
<th>2004 Calendar Year</th>
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<td>Members</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government</td>
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<td>Independent</td>
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<td>$75,084.83</td>
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* Relates to accounts received and processed by the Department of Finance and Administration as at 18 August 2005.

Nursing Home Payments for Former Prisoners of War
(Question No. 1919)

Mr Albanese asked the Minister for Veterans’ Affairs, in writing, on 9 August 2005:

In respect of the Government payment to nursing homes for former Japanese prisoners of war (POWs), (a) what sum was paid for each day for a POW in August 1995 and (b) what sum is currently paid for each day for a POW.

Mrs De-Anne Kelly—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(a) Based on the payment method that then existed, the Government paid a daily rate of $19.75 (all residents of nursing homes paid 85% of the daily maximum pension rate) for former prisoners of war (POWs), including former Japanese POWs, in nursing homes (now called “high” level residential care) in August 1995.

In addition, the Government also paid a subsidy through the Department of Veterans’ Affairs for the cost of care for veteran community residents in nursing homes, including former POW residents. On average the Australian Government contributed, in 1995-96 an average of $26,793 for a nursing home resident. This amounted to $73.41 per day.

(b) The Government currently pays the basic daily care fee for former POWs in residential aged care, both high (nursing home) care and, since January 2005, in low (hostel) care. The fee is set by the Australian Government and administered by the Department of Health and Ageing. The basic daily care fee which means-tested pensioners pay for their care can be no more than 85% of the basic pension. Currently (as at 8 September 2005) this is up to $27.86 per day. Non pensioners can be asked to pay a basic daily care fee of up to $34.76 a day. The Government can only advise the maximum fee because providers may choose to charge less, although this rarely happens.

In addition, the Government also pays a subsidy through the Department of Veterans’ Affairs for the cost of care for veteran community residents, including former POW residents. On average the
Australian Government currently contributes around $41,500 a year for a high care need (nursing home type) resident. This amount equates to an additional $113.70 per day.

Taiwan
(Question No. 2044)

Mr Danby asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs, in writing, on 11 August 2005:

(1) Is he aware of reported comments by a senior member of the Chinese People’s Liberation Army, Major-General Zhu Chenghu, that if the United States intervened to prevent a Chinese military attack on Taiwan, China “will have to respond with nuclear weapons”.

(2) What is the Government’s response to these remarks and what steps has he taken to convey its views to the Chinese authorities.

(3) What was the response of the Chinese Government to the Government’s views.

(4) What is the Government’s assessment of the likelihood that China will resort to force to resolve the China-Taiwan issue.

(5) Will he explain the Government policy on the right of the people of Taiwan to determine their future by democratic means without the threat of force by China.

(6) Has he communicated the Government’s views on Taiwan to the Chinese Government; if so, (a) when, (b) by what means did he most recently do so, and (c) 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) Yes.

(2) The Government considers Major General Zhu’s remarks to be unhelpful and irresponsible, and has said so publicly.

(3) The Chinese Government issued a statement saying that the General was expressing a personal opinion and that his comments did not represent the Chinese Government’s position.

(4) The Government assesses that the use of force to resolve the Taiwan issue is currently unlikely. However, the possibility of conflict cannot be ruled out, including through miscalculation on either side. We therefore encourage both sides to engage in constructive dialogue, to minimise the chances of such a miscalculation and to establish the basis for a peaceful, negotiated settlement of their differences.

(5) The Government has consistently urged both China and Taiwan to avoid acts or statements that might unilaterally alter the cross-Strait status quo and put regional stability at risk. The Government has also made clear that it opposes any resort to the threat or use of force to resolve cross-Strait differences.

(6) (a) I have conveyed the Government’s views to the Chinese Government regularly in meetings with Chinese Ministers and in public statements.

(b) I most recently conveyed Australia’s views publicly in August 2004 in major speeches I gave in Beijing and Sydney. I have also conveyed these views directly to Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing.

(c) Chinese Ministers have acknowledged that Australia’s Taiwan policy and approach to cross-Strait relations have been clear and consistent.
Government and Non-Government Schools
(Question No. 2049)

Mr Jenkins asked the Minister for Education, Science and Training, in writing, on 16 August 2005:

(1) What sum was provided to (a) government and (b) non-government schools 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 for 2005.

(2) What was the (a) expenditure on, (b) location of, and (c) purpose of each grant in 2005.

(3) What sum will be provided to (a) government and (b) non-government schools 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 for 2006.

(4) What will (a) the expenditure be for, (b) be the location of each grant, and (c) be the purpose of each grant, in 2006.

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

(1) (a) Total Australian Government funding for government schools is not reported at the level of detail requested. Australian Government General Recurrent Grants for government schools are provided to the government education authority in each State or Territory, on the basis of total enrolments. The State or Territory determines where the grants are used. Payments to individual schools are not recorded.

Supplementary Recurrent Assistance (SRA) Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Programme (IESIP) funding for government schools is not reported at the level of detail requested. This funding is provided to the government education authority on the basis of total Indigenous enrolments. The State determines where the grants are used. Payments to individual schools are not recorded or reported.

Supplementary Recurrent Assistance (SRA) Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Programme (IESIP) funding for systemic non-government schools is not reported at the level of detail requested. This funding is provided to the non-government education authority, such as the Catholic Education Office, on the basis of total Indigenous enrolments. The authority determines where the grants are used. Payments to individual schools are not recorded or reported.

The Department of Education, Science and Training only provides postcode detail for General Recurrent Grants and Establishment Grants to non-government schools, and Capital Grants, Flagpole funding and funding for the Boys’ Education Lighthouse Schools (BELS) project, National Schooling Awards, Australian School Innovation in Science, Technology and Mathematics Project and Values Education Study to both government and non-government schools.

Estimated funding from Australian Government Programmes that can be reported at this level of detail for non-government schools in the identified postcodes amounted to $530,000. Capital Grants funding provided to government schools in the identified postcode areas for 2005, as at 31 August 2005, totalled $400,000. Information regarding further Capital Grants funding for 2005 is not yet available. Government schools in the identified postcode areas will receive 2004 National Award for Quality Schooling, paid in 2005, totalling $20,000 and Australian School Innovation in Science and Technology and Mathematics Project funding totalling $110,000. No Flagpole funding, funding for the BELS project or the Values Education Study were provided to government schools in the identified postcodes in 2005.
(b) Total Australian Government funding for non-government schools cannot be reported at the level of detail requested. Estimated funding from Australian Government Programmes that can be reported at this level of detail for non-government schools in the identified postcode areas will receive Capital Grants funding totalling $1,090,000, General recurrent Grants funding totalling $44,318,938 and $722 for Flagpole funding in 2005. No funding for the BELS project or the Values Education Study was provided to non-government schools in the identified postcodes in 2005. No Supplementary Recurrent Assistance (SRA) Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Programme (IESIP) funding was provided to non-government, non-systemic schools in the identified postcode area for 2005.

(2) (a) and (b) Details on the expenditure and location for the identified postcodes for 2005 are as follows at Attachment A: Funding to government schools for 2005 for Capital Grants funding is in Table 1, 2004 National Awards for Quality Schooling, paid in 2005 is at Table 2, Australian School Innovation in Science, Technology and Mathematics Project is at Table 3. General Recurrent funding to non-government schools is in Table 4, Capital Grants funding for non-government schools is in Table 5 and Flagpole funding is at Table 6.

(c) The purpose of Capital grants is to provide supplementary funding to improve educational outcomes by assisting in the provision of school facilities. The Australian Government Capital Grants are supplementary to funds provided by State and Territory school authorities and are used to provide and improve capital infrastructure, ensure attention to refurbishing and upgrading capital infrastructure for existing students while making provision for needs arising from new demographic and enrolment trends.

The purpose of Australian Government General Recurrent Grants is to help schools with the recurrent cost of school education so that they can offer students education directed towards the achievement of the Australian Government’s priorities for schooling.

The purpose of Flagpole funding is to assist schools with their civics and citizenship education activities, and promoting values education in Australian schools.

The purpose of the National Awards for Quality Schooling is to recognise and reward teachers, principals, and support staff who, in their different ways, make an exceptional contribution to their school community and outcomes for students. They help to build a better understanding and greater appreciation in the wider community of the work done in Australian schools, and are a way of sharing good ideas and practice among school communities across the country.

The National Institute for Quality Teaching and School Leadership (NIQTSL) is now responsible for the National Awards for Quality Schooling. The 2005 awards are open to people working in pre-primary, primary and secondary schools in government and non-government schools and there are 4 categories of award: Excellence by a Teacher; Excellence by a Principal; Excellence by School Support Staff; and Excellence by a School(s) in School Improvement. The Australian Government is providing over $1 million in prize money for the 2005 awards.

Initiatives funded under the ASISTM Project will bring schools together with industry, science organisations, universities and others to explore ways to encourage a culture of innovation in schools, attract greater numbers of quality students into teaching, better coordinate primary and high school curricula and provide positive role models for science, mathematics and technology students.

(3) (a) Estimates of total Australian Government funding for 2006 for government schools are not maintained at the level of detail requested (see response to 1a). Information about 2006 Capital Grants and Flagpole funding for government schools is not yet available. The Boys’ Education Lighthouse Schools (BELS) Programme has been implemented over 2003 – 2005. The
programme will conclude in December 2005 and no further funding will be available from this programme.

Supplementary Recurrent Assistance (SRA) Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Programme (IESIP) funding for government schools is not reported at the level of detail requested. This funding is provided to the government education authority on the basis of total Indigenous enrolments. The State determines where the grants are used. Payments to individual schools are not recorded or reported.

Supplementary Recurrent Assistance (SRA) Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Programme (IESIP) funding for systemic non-government schools is not reported at the level of detail requested. This funding is provided to the non-government education authority, such as the Catholic Education Office, on the basis of total Indigenous enrolments. The authority determines where the grants are used. Payments to individual schools are not recorded or reported.

(b) Estimates of total Australian Government funding for 2006 for non-government schools are not maintained at the level of detail requested. Estimated funding from Australian Government Programmes that can be reported at this level of detail for non-government schools in the identified postcodes amounted to $47,397,364 for 2006 for General Recurrent Grants funding. Information about 2006 Capital Grants and Flagpole funding for non-government schools is not yet available. Information on Supplementary Recurrent Assistance (SRA) Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Programme (IESIP) funding provided to non-government, non-systemic schools in the identified postcode area for 2006 is not yet available.

(4) (a) and (b) Details on the estimated expenditure and location for the identified postcodes for 2006 are as follows: Estimated General Recurrent Grants funding to non-government schools is at Table 7, Attachment A.

(c) The purpose of Australian Government General Recurrent Grants is to help schools with the recurrent cost of school education so that they can offer students education directed towards the achievement of the Australian Government’s priorities for schooling.

| Table 1 |
|---|---|---|---|
| School | Location | Postcode | Purpose of Grant/Project Description | Grant Amount |
| Thomastown Meadows Primary School | Thomastown | 3074 | Construction of general purpose classrooms and staff work space. Stage 2. Total | $400,000 |

| Table 2 |
|---|---|---|---|
| School | Location | Postcode | Purpose of Grant/Project Description | Grant Amount |
| Lalor West Primary School | Lalor West | 3074 | 2004 National Awards for Quality Schooling - for Outstanding National Achievement in School Improvement following the success of their project | $20,000 |
School Location Post-code Purpose of Grant/Project Description Grant Amount $

"Thinking for the Future". To cater for the needs of all students in a school population of over 320 students from 23 broad multicultural groupings, teachers undertook a comprehensive professional development program. As a result, teaching and learning opportunities for students now focus on developing the skills to enable them to take responsibility for their own learning. They now show much greater connection to school, have motivation to learn and lead conferences with their parents and teachers.
Total $20,000

Table 3
Expenditure and location of payments for Australian School Innovation in Science, Technology and Mathematics Project to government schools in the identified postcodes for 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Post-code</th>
<th>Purpose of Grant/Project Description</th>
<th>Grant Amount $</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bundoora Secondary College</td>
<td>Bundoora</td>
<td>3083</td>
<td>More Bytes aims to use information and communication technology (ICT) and multimedia to produce an interactive narrative of girl's culture across place, space and time. It will involve student chat sessions, hands on experiences for teachers and networking for students across schools. The project recognises that many girls are disengaged from ICT and aims to show its capability as a collaborative learning tool. Using multimedia ICT, the students will develop new ways of thinking, producing and communicating e.g. digital storytelling, digital diaries, movie making, game design, animation and web streaming media. The students will also learn to use a broad</td>
<td>$110,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4
Estimated expenditure and location of General Recurrent Grants to non-government schools in identified postcodes in 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>System Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Post-code</th>
<th>Estimated 2005 Entitlement $</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ironbark Christian School*</td>
<td>SDA System Victoria</td>
<td>Yarrambat</td>
<td>3091</td>
<td>176,278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyola College*</td>
<td>Catholic System Victoria</td>
<td>Watsonia</td>
<td>3087</td>
<td>5,183,690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moonee Vale Christian School</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Loral</td>
<td>3075</td>
<td>168,040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northside Christian College</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Bundoora</td>
<td>3083</td>
<td>921,394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open House Christian School</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Loral</td>
<td>3075</td>
<td>118,152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Lady of the Way School*</td>
<td>Catholic System Victoria</td>
<td>Kingsbury</td>
<td>3083</td>
<td>625,610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parade College*</td>
<td>Catholic System Victoria</td>
<td>Bundoora</td>
<td>3083</td>
<td>8,078,538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plenty Valley Montessori School</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Diamond Creek</td>
<td>3089</td>
<td>330,620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacred Heart School*</td>
<td>Catholic System Victoria</td>
<td>Diamond Creek</td>
<td>3089</td>
<td>1,034,512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Catherine’s Primary School*</td>
<td>Catholic System Victoria</td>
<td>Loral West</td>
<td>3075</td>
<td>699,885</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Clare’s School*</td>
<td>Catholic System Victoria</td>
<td>Thomastown West</td>
<td>3074</td>
<td>1,778,573</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Damian’s Schoool*</td>
<td>Catholic System Victoria</td>
<td>Bundoora</td>
<td>3083</td>
<td>1,711,332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Francis of Assisi Primary School*</td>
<td>Catholic System Victoria</td>
<td>Mill Park</td>
<td>3082</td>
<td>3,804,358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St John’s Primary School*</td>
<td>Catholic System Victoria</td>
<td>Thomastown East</td>
<td>3074</td>
<td>1,303,610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Luke’s Primary School*</td>
<td>Catholic System Victoria</td>
<td>Loral</td>
<td>3075</td>
<td>1,896,544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Mary’s School*</td>
<td>Catholic System Victoria</td>
<td>Greensborough</td>
<td>3088</td>
<td>2,274,037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Monica’s College*</td>
<td>Catholic System Victoria</td>
<td>Epping</td>
<td>3076</td>
<td>9,968,817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Peter’s Parish Primary School*</td>
<td>Catholic System Victoria</td>
<td>Epping</td>
<td>3076</td>
<td>2,284,924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Thomas’ Primary School*</td>
<td>Catholic System Victoria</td>
<td>Greensborough</td>
<td>3088</td>
<td>1,960,024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total 44,318,938</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Denotes systemic schools

The entitlement amount for systemic schools is the amount that the school attracts to the system and may be different from the final amount allocated to the school by the system office.
Table 5
Expenditure and location of Capital Grants to non-government schools in the identified postcodes for 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Post-code</th>
<th>Purpose of Grant/Project Description</th>
<th>Grant Amount $</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St John’s Primary School</td>
<td>Thomastown East</td>
<td>3074</td>
<td>Construction of a learning resource area. Conversion to provide: special learning areas and walkways.</td>
<td>$490,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Peter’s Parish Primary School</td>
<td>Epping</td>
<td>3076</td>
<td>Construction of a multi-purpose area. Site works. Total</td>
<td>$600,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total $1,090,000

Table 6
Expenditure and location of payments under the Flagpole Funding Initiative to non-government schools in the identified postcodes for 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>School type</th>
<th>Post-code</th>
<th>Purpose of Grant/Project Description</th>
<th>Grant Amount $</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moonee Vale Christian School</td>
<td>Non-government</td>
<td>3075</td>
<td>Purchase and installation of a flagpole.</td>
<td>$722</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total $722

Table 7
Estimated expenditure and location of General Recurrent Grants to non-government schools in identified postcodes in 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>System Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Post-code</th>
<th>Estimated 2006 Entitlement $</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ironbark Christian School*</td>
<td>SDA System Victoria</td>
<td>Yarrambat</td>
<td>3091</td>
<td>187,567</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyola College*</td>
<td>Catholic System Victoria</td>
<td>Watsonia</td>
<td>3087</td>
<td>5,572,364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moonee Vale Christian School</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Lalor</td>
<td>3075</td>
<td>178,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northside Christian College</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Bundoora</td>
<td>3083</td>
<td>984,959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open House Christian School</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Lalor</td>
<td>3075</td>
<td>125,712</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Lady of the Way School*</td>
<td>Catholic System Victoria</td>
<td>Kingsbury</td>
<td>3083</td>
<td>665,158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parade College*</td>
<td>Catholic System Victoria</td>
<td>Bundoora</td>
<td>3083</td>
<td>8,684,225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plenty Valley Montessori School</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Diamond Creek</td>
<td>3089</td>
<td>351,438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacred Heart School*</td>
<td>Catholic System Victoria</td>
<td>Diamond Creek</td>
<td>3089</td>
<td>1,099,925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Catherine’s Primary School*</td>
<td>Catholic System Victoria</td>
<td>Lalor West</td>
<td>3075</td>
<td>744,239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Clare’s School*</td>
<td>Catholic System Victoria</td>
<td>Thomastown West</td>
<td>3074</td>
<td>1,890,959</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QUESTIONS IN WRITING
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>System Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Postcode</th>
<th>Estimated 2006 Entitlement $</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St Damian’s School*</td>
<td>Catholic System Victoria</td>
<td>Bundoora</td>
<td>3083</td>
<td>1,819,252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Francis of Assisi Primary School*</td>
<td>Catholic System Victoria</td>
<td>Mill Park</td>
<td>3082</td>
<td>4,044,642</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St John’s Primary School*</td>
<td>Catholic System Victoria</td>
<td>Thomastown East</td>
<td>3074</td>
<td>1,385,626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Luke’s Primary School*</td>
<td>Catholic System Victoria</td>
<td>Lalor</td>
<td>3075</td>
<td>2,016,629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Mary’s School*</td>
<td>Catholic System Victoria</td>
<td>Greensborough</td>
<td>3088</td>
<td>2,417,574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Monica’s College*</td>
<td>Catholic System Victoria</td>
<td>Epping</td>
<td>3076</td>
<td>10,715,427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Peter’s Parish Primary School*</td>
<td>Catholic System Victoria</td>
<td>Epping</td>
<td>3076</td>
<td>2,428,998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Thomas’ Primary School*</td>
<td>Catholic System Victoria</td>
<td>Greensborough</td>
<td>3088</td>
<td>2,083,870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total 47,397,364</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Denotes systemic schools

The entitlement amount for systemic schools is the amount that the school attracts to the system and may be different from the final amount allocated to the school by the system office.

**Crime**

*(Question No. 2062)*

Mr Jenkins asked the Attorney-General, in writing, on 16 August 2005:

What is the incidence of reported crime by type in (a) Victoria and the postcode area (b) 3074, (c) 3075, (d) 3076, (e) 3082, (f) 3083, (g) 3087, (h) 3088, (i) 3089, (j) 3090, (k) 3091, and (l) 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 2004 was as follows:

Homicide and related offences - 156 Victims. These can be broken down as follows:

i. Murder - 51
ii. Attempted murder - 44
iii. Manslaughter - 3
iv. Driving causing death - 58

Kidnapping/abduction - 110

Robbery - 2,289 victims. These can be broken down as follows:

i. Armed Robbery - 1,108
ii. Unarmed Robbery - 1,181

Blackmail/extortion - 92

Unlawful entry with intent - 56,047

i. Involving the taking of property - 41,968
ii. Other - 14,079

Motor vehicle theft - 20,070

Other theft - 120,179

(b) I am advised that as Recorded Crime Victim data for assault and sexual assault are not currently comparable across all states and territories the Australian Bureau of Statistics has not included this information in the 2004 Recorded Crime - Victims, Australia publication.

(c) 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 Victoria Police.

**Child Care**

(Question No. 2068)

Mr Byrne asked the Minister representing the Minister for Family and Community Services, in writing, on 16 August 2005:

1. How many Federal Government funded child care centres are located in the electoral division of Holt.

2. In respect of each government-funded childcare centre in the electoral division of Holt, (a) what is its name and address, (b) how many children are on its waiting list, (c) what sum did it receive from the Commonwealth in (i) 2003-2003, (ii) 2003-2004, and (iii) 2004-2005, (d) what is its service type, (e) what is its sector classification, and (f) who is responsible for the management of the facility.

3. How many families residing in the postcode area (a) 3156, (b) 3177, (c) 3802, (d) 3803, (e) 3804, (f) 3805, (g) 3806, (h) 3975, (i) 3976, (j) 3977, and (k) 3978 are receiving a Childcare Benefit.

Mr Hockey—The Minister for Family and Community Services has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

1. There were 83 Australian Government approved child care services located in the electoral division of Holt at 12 August 2005.

2. (a) The name and address of each child care service is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABC - KILBERRY CARE COMBINED OSHC</td>
<td>KILBERRY VALLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL, KILBERRY BVD, HAMPTON PARK, 3976, VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABC - KILBERRY CARE VACATION CARE</td>
<td>KILBERRY VALLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL, KILBERRY BVD, HAMPTON PARK, 3976, VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABC DEVELOPMENTAL LEARNING CENTRE - AMBERLEY PARK DRIVE</td>
<td>2-4 AMBERLEY PARK DR, NARRE WARREN, 3805, VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABC DEVELOPMENTAL LEARNING CENTRE - BERWICK</td>
<td>1-3 MICHELLE DR, BERWICK, 3806, VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABC DEVELOPMENTAL LEARNING CENTRE - CRANBOURNE</td>
<td>16-18 STATION ST, CRANBOURNE, 3977, VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABC DEVELOPMENTAL LEARNING CENTRE - CRANBOURNE NORTH</td>
<td>78-80 HOYSTED AVE, CRANBOURNE, 3977, VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABC DEVELOPMENTAL LEARNING CENTRE - ENDEAVOUR HILLS</td>
<td>46-48 BARNSLEY DR, ENDEAVOUR HILLS, 3802, VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABC DEVELOPMENTAL LEARNING CENTRE - GALLOWAY DRIVE</td>
<td>3 GALLOWAY DR, NARRE WARREN, 3805, VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>Address</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABC DEVELOPMENTAL LEARNING CENTRE - HAMPTON PARK</td>
<td>160 SOMERVILLE RD, HAMPTON PARK, 3976, VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABC DEVELOPMENTAL LEARNING CENTRE - HAMPTON PARK SOUTH</td>
<td>2 CORAL DR, HAMPTON PARK, 3976, VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABC DEVELOPMENTAL LEARNING CENTRE - HEATHERTON HILLS</td>
<td>1-3 HANNA DR, ENDEAVOUR HILLS, 3802, VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABC DEVELOPMENTAL LEARNING CENTRE - NARRE WARREN</td>
<td>159-167 FLEETWOOD DR, NARRE WARREN, 3805, VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABC DEVELOPMENTAL LEARNING CENTRE - NARRE WARREN SOUTH</td>
<td>41-43 STRATHAIRD DR, NARRE WARREN, 3805, VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABC DEVELOPMENTAL LEARNING CENTRE - POWER ROAD</td>
<td>21-25 LIQUIDAMBER ST, DOVETON, 3177, VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANACONDA CHILD CARE CENTRE</td>
<td>102 ANACONDA RD, NARRE WARREN, 3805, VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUSY BEES CHILD CARE CENTRE 1</td>
<td>18 CRISTATA AVE, ENDEAVOUR HILLS, 3802, VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUSY BEES CHILD CARE CENTRE 2</td>
<td>136 GLENEAGLES DR, ENDEAVOUR HILLS, 3802, VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASEY FAMILY DAY CARE SCHEME</td>
<td>CIVIC CENTRE, MAGID DR, NARRE WARREN, 3805, VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHALCOT LODGE PRIMARY SCHOOL AFTER SCHOOL CARE PROGRAM</td>
<td>PRIMROSE HILL CL, ENDEAVOUR HILLS, 3802, VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHALCOT LODGE PRIMARY SCHOOL BEFORE SCHOOL CARE PROGRAM</td>
<td>PRIMROSE HILL CL, ENDEAVOUR HILLS, 3802, VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CITY OF CASEY CHILD CARE COMPLEX (MULLAUNA)</td>
<td>52 WEBB ST, NARRE WARREN, 3805, VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CITY OF CASEY CHILD CARE COMPLEX (NARRE WARREN OCC CC)</td>
<td>52 WEBB ST, NARRE WARREN, 3805, VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLARENDON STREET CHILD CARE CENTRE</td>
<td>43A CLARENDON ST, CRANBOURNE, 3977, VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CORAL PARK COMBINED OSHC - CAMP AUSTRALIA</td>
<td>CORAL PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL, 145 CORAL DR, HAMPTON PARK, 3976, VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CORAL PARK VACATION CARE - CAMP AUSTRALIA</td>
<td>CORAL PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL, 145 CORAL DR, HAMPTON PARK, 3976, VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRANBOURNE DAY CARE AND KINDERGARTEN CENTRE 1</td>
<td>30 CRANBOURNE DR, CRANBOURNE, 3977, VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRANBOURNE DAY CARE AND KINDERGARTEN CENTRE 2</td>
<td>3 DUFF ST, CRANBOURNE, 3977, VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRANBOURNE DAY CARE AND KINDERGARTEN CENTRE 3</td>
<td>LOT 1 THE BARN, COOPER CRT, CRANBOURNE, 3977, VIC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QUESTIONS IN WRITING
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CRANBOURNE DAY CARE AND KINDERGARTEN CENTRE 4</td>
<td>CRANBOURNE, 3977, VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRANBOURNE DAY CARE AND KINDERGARTEN CENTRE 5</td>
<td>18-22 MUNDARING DR, CRANBOURNE, 3977, VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRANBOURNE DAY CARE AND KINDERGARTEN CENTRE 6</td>
<td>18-22 MUNDARING DR, CRANBOURNE, 3977, VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRANBOURNE WEST PRIMARY AFTER CARE</td>
<td>CRANBOURNE WEST PRIMARY SCHOOL, CRN DUFF RD &amp; MONAHAN RD, CRANBOURNE, 3977, VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRANBOURNE WEST PRIMARY BEFORE CARE</td>
<td>CRANBOURNE WEST PRIMARY SCHOOL, CRN DUFF RD &amp; MONAHAN RD, CRANBOURNE, 3977, VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRANBOURNE WEST PRIMARY VACATION CARE</td>
<td>CRANBOURNE WEST PRIMARY SCHOOL, CRN DUFF RD &amp; MONAHAN RD, CRANBOURNE, 3977, VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOVETON UNITING CHILDCARE AND KINDERGARTEN</td>
<td>10 TI-TREE DR, DOVETON, 3177, VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENDEAVOUR CHILD MINDING CENTRE</td>
<td>4 MERRYN CL, ENDEAVOUR HILLS, 3802, VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENDEAVOUR HILLS UNITING CARE CHILDREN'S SERVICES CENTRE</td>
<td>CRN RAYMOND MCMAHON BVD &amp; HELLYER WAY, ENDEAVOUR HILLS, 3802, VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUMEMMERRING PRIMARY COMBINED OSHC</td>
<td>DOVETON AVE, EUMEMMERRING, 3177, VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOUNTAIN GATE PRIMARY AFTER CARE</td>
<td>FOUNTAIN GATE PRIMARY SCHOOL, PROSPECT HILL RD, NARRE WARREN, 3805, VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOUNTAIN GATE PRIMARY BEFORE CARE</td>
<td>FOUNTAIN GATE PRIMARY SCHOOL, PROSPECT HILL RD, NARRE WARREN, 3805, VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOUNTAIN GATE PRIMARY VACATION CARE</td>
<td>FOUNTAIN GATE PRIMARY SCHOOL, PROSPECT HILL RD, NARRE WARREN, 3805, VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HALLAM VALLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL AFTERCARE</td>
<td>FLEETWOOD DR, NARRE WARREN SOUTH, 3805, VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HALLAM VALLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL BEFORECARE</td>
<td>FLEETWOOD DR, NARRE WARREN SOUTH, 3805, VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HALLAM VALLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL VACATIONCARE</td>
<td>FLEETWOOD DR, NARRE WARREN SOUTH, 3805, VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAMPTON PARK COMMUNITY HOUSE COMBINED OSHC PROGRAM</td>
<td>HAMPTON PARK COMMUNITY HOUSE, LOT 16-20 STUART AVE, HAMPTON PARK, 3976, VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAMPTON PARK COMMUNITY HOUSE HOLIDAY PROGRAM</td>
<td>HAMPTON PARK COMMUNITY HOUSE, LOT 9 STUART AVE, HAMPTON PARK, 3976, VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAMPTON PARK PRIMARY COMBINED OSHC</td>
<td>HAMPTON PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL, SOMERVILLE RD, HAMPTON PARK, 3976, VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>Address</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAMPTON PARK PRIMARY VACATION CARE</td>
<td>HAMPTON PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL, SOMERVILLE RD, HAMPTON PARK, 3976, VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HILLSMEADE AFTER SCHOOL CARE</td>
<td>HILLSMEADE PRIMARY SCHOOL, THE PROMENADE, NARRE WARREN SOUTH, 3805, VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HILLSMEADE BEFORE SCHOOL CARE</td>
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<td>2 HAYES RD, HAMPTON PARK, 3976, VIC</td>
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Note:
1. A child care service, as defined in the table, refers to a unique service reference number with a status of ‘Active’ on Centrelink’s Childcare Operator System at 12 August 2005.

Source: Centrelink Administrative Data.

(b) The Australian Government does not keep child care waiting lists.

(c) (i) (ii) (iii) In respect of each child care service, the Australian Government provided the following amounts of funding during the financial years 2002-03 to 2004-05:
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<th>Service</th>
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<th>2004-05</th>
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Notes:
1. Excludes Child Care Benefit funding paid to services by the Australian Government.
2. Excludes funding, provided during the period 2002-03 to 2004-05, for services that ceased operations prior to 12 August 2005. However, for cases where a child care service commenced operations as a result of a transfer of ownership, funding data attributable to the previous (transferred) service is included within the amount provided for the new service, if the new service operated from the same location as the transferred service.
Source: Victorian FaCS State Office and Centrelink Administrative Data.
(d) (e) and (f) The service type, sector classification and operator responsible for the management of the child care services located in the electoral division of Holt at 12 August 2005 is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Type</th>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Operator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABC - KILBERRY CARE COMBINED OSHC</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>A.B.C. LEARNING CENTRES LIMITED (ABS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABC - KILBERRY CARE VACATION CARE</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>A.B.C. LEARNING CENTRES LIMITED (ABS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABC DEVELOPMENTAL LEARNING CENTRE - AMBERLEY PARK DRIVE</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>A.B.C. LEARNING CENTRES LIMITED (ABS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABC DEVELOPMENTAL LEARNING CENTRE - BERWICK</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>A.B.C. LEARNING CENTRES LIMITED (ABS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABC DEVELOPMENTAL LEARNING CENTRE - CRANBOURNE</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>A.B.C. LEARNING CENTRES LIMITED (ABS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABC DEVELOPMENTAL LEARNING CENTRE - CRANBOURNE NORTH</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>A.B.C. LEARNING CENTRES LIMITED (ABS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABC DEVELOPMENTAL LEARNING CENTRE - ENDEAVOUR HILLS</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>A.B.C. LEARNING CENTRES LIMITED (ABS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABC DEVELOPMENTAL LEARNING CENTRE - GALLOWAY DRIVE</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>A.B.C. LEARNING CENTRES LIMITED (ABS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABC DEVELOPMENTAL LEARNING CENTRE - HAMPTON PARK</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>A.B.C. LEARNING CENTRES LIMITED (ABS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABC DEVELOPMENTAL LEARNING CENTRE - HAMPTON PARK SOUTH</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>A.B.C. LEARNING CENTRES LIMITED (ABS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABC DEVELOPMENTAL LEARNING CENTRE - HEATHERTON HILLS</td>
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<td>A.B.C. LEARNING CENTRES LIMITED (ABS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABC DEVELOPMENTAL LEARNING CENTRE - NARRE WARREN</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>A.B.C. LEARNING CENTRES LIMITED (ABS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABC DEVELOPMENTAL LEARNING CENTRE - NARRE WARREN SOUTH</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>A.B.C. LEARNING CENTRES LIMITED (ABS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABC DEVELOPMENTAL LEARNING CENTRE - POWER ROAD</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>A.B.C. LEARNING CENTRES LIMITED (ABS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>Service Type</td>
<td>Sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>ANACONDA CHILD CARE CENTRE</td>
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<tr>
<td>BUSY BEES CHILD CARE CENTRE 1</td>
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<td>Private Sector</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHALCOT LODGE PRIMARY SCHOOL AFTER SCHOOL CARE PROGRAM</td>
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<td>CITY OF CASEY CHILD CARE COMPLEX (MULLAUNA)</td>
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<td>CORAL PARK COMBINED OSHC - CAMP AUSTRALIA</td>
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<td>CORAL PARK VACATION CARE - CAMP AUSTRALIA</td>
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<td>Private Sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRANBOURNE DAY CARE AND KINDERGARTEN CENTRE 1</td>
<td>LDC</td>
<td>Private Sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRANBOURNE DAY CARE AND KINDERGARTEN CENTRE 2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRANBOURNE DAY CARE AND KINDERGARTEN CENTRE 3</td>
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<td>CRANBOURNE DAY CARE AND KINDERGARTEN CENTRE 4</td>
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<td>CRANBOURNE DAY CARE AND KINDERGARTEN CENTRE 5</td>
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<td>CRANBOURNE DAY CARE AND KINDERGARTEN CENTRE 6</td>
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<td>CRANBOURNE WEST PRIMARY VACATION CARE</td>
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<tr>
<td>DOVETON UNITING CHILDCARE AND KINDERGARTEN</td>
<td>LDC</td>
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<td>ENDEAVOUR CHILD MINDING CENTRE</td>
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<tr>
<td>FOUNTAIN GATE PRIMARY BEFORE CARE</td>
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<td>FOUNTAIN GATE PRIMARY VACATION CARE</td>
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<td>HALLAM VALLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL AFTER SCHOOL CARE PROGRAM</td>
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<td>HAMPTON PARK COMMUNITY HOUSE HOLIDAY PROGRAM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Service</td>
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<td>Sector</td>
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<td>OSHC</td>
<td>Non Profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KIDS CAMPUS - NARRE WARREN</td>
<td>LDC</td>
<td>Private Sector</td>
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<td>KIDS CAMPUS - NARRE WARREN SOUTH</td>
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<td>Private Sector</td>
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<tr>
<td>KIDS PATCH CHILDCARE &amp; EARLY LEARNING CENTRE</td>
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<td>Private Sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KINGS CHILD CARE CENTRE</td>
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<td>Private Sector</td>
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<tr>
<td>LA KOSTA CHILDCARE CENTRE &amp; KINDERGARTEN</td>
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<td>Private Sector</td>
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<td>MARAMBA PRIMARY COMBINED OSHC</td>
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<tr>
<td>MARY MACKILLOP PRIMARY SCHOOL AFTER SCHOOL CARE</td>
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<td>Non Profit</td>
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<tr>
<td>MARY MACKILLOP PRIMARY SCHOOL BEFORE SCHOOL CARE</td>
<td>OSHC</td>
<td>Non Profit</td>
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<tr>
<td>MARY MACKILLOP PRIMARY SCHOOL VACATION CARE</td>
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<td>Non Profit</td>
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<td>MERINDA PARK LEARNING &amp; COMMUNITY CENTRE COMBINED OSHC</td>
<td>OSHC</td>
<td>Non Profit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>Service Type</td>
<td>Sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>MERINDA PARK LEARNING &amp; COMMUNITY CENTRE</td>
<td>VAC</td>
<td>Non Profit</td>
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<tr>
<td>VACATION CARE PROGRAM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>NARRE KIDS CHILD CARE &amp; KINDERGARTEN</td>
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<td>Private Sector</td>
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<tr>
<td>NARRE WARREN SOUTH AFTER CARE</td>
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<td>Non Profit</td>
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<tr>
<td>NARRE WARREN SOUTH BEFORE CARE</td>
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<td>Non Profit</td>
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<td>RIVERGUM AFTER SCHOOL CARE</td>
<td>OSHC</td>
<td>Non Profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RIVERGUM PRIMARY SCHOOL BEFORE SCHOOL CARE PROGRAM</td>
<td>OSHC</td>
<td>Non Profit</td>
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<td>SOUTHERN CROSS PRIMARY SCHOOL COMBINED OSHC</td>
<td>OSHC</td>
<td>Non Profit</td>
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<td>SOUTHERN CROSS PRIMARY SCHOOL VACATION CARE PROGRAM</td>
<td>VAC</td>
<td>Non Profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST PAUL APOSTLE NORTH PRIMARY COMBINED OSHC</td>
<td>OSHC</td>
<td>Non Profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST PAUL APOSTLE SOUTH PRIMARY COMBINED OSHC</td>
<td>OSHC</td>
<td>Non Profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAR-KIDS CHILD CARE CENTRE - CRANBOURNE</td>
<td>LDC</td>
<td>Private Sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAR-KIDS CHILD CARE CENTRE - HAMPTON PARK</td>
<td>LDC</td>
<td>Private Sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STIRLING AVE CARE CENTRE FOR CHILDREN</td>
<td>LDC</td>
<td>Private Sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TENDER LOVING CHILD CARE CENTRE</td>
<td>LDC</td>
<td>Private Sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THOMAS MITCHELL PRIMARY SCHOOL COMBINED OSHC</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>THOMAS MITCHELL PRIMARY SCHOOL VACATION CARE</td>
<td>VAC</td>
<td>Non Profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRINITY AFTER SCHOOL CARE</td>
<td>OSHC</td>
<td>Non Profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRINITY BEFORE SCHOOL CARE</td>
<td>OSHC</td>
<td>Non Profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Type</td>
<td>Sector</td>
<td>Operator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LDC</td>
<td>Non Profit</td>
<td>UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA PROPERTY TRUST (VICTORIA)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Service type: FDC: Family day care, LDC: Long day care, OCC: Occasional care, OSHC: Outside school hours care (after and before school hours), VAC: Vacation care.

Note:
1. A child care service, as defined in the table, refers to a unique service reference number with a status of ‘Active’ on Centrelink’s Childcare Operator System at 12 August 2005.

Source: Centrelink Administrative Data.

(a) (b) (c) (d) (e) (f) (g) (h) (i) (j) (k) The number of customers residing in the postcodes 3156, 3177, 3802, 3803, 3804, 3805, 3806, 3975, 3976, 3977, and 3978 and receiving Child Care Benefit as fee relief, during the December 2004 quarter, is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Postcode</th>
<th>Customers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3156</td>
<td>1,009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3177</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3802</td>
<td>560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3803</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3804</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3805</td>
<td>1,548</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3806</td>
<td>1,065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3975</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3976</td>
<td>593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3977</td>
<td>1,547</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3978</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:
1. Unweighted data.
2. Includes customers claiming CCB as fee relief on at least one occasion during the December 2004 quarter.
3. Excludes customers who used approved child care services during the quarter but who did not receive Child Care Benefit (CCB) as fee relief but who may claim CCB as a lump sum payment after the end of the 2004-2005 financial year.
4. Excludes customers who only used registered care during the quarter.

Source: Centrelink Administrative Data.

National Security
(Question No. 2078)

Mr Melham asked the Attorney-General, in writing, on 17 August 2005:


(2) Can he confirm that Australian personnel have participated in the work of the Franco-American joint counter-terrorism operation identified in the article under the reported code-name “Alliance Base”.

QUESTIONS IN WRITING
(3) Did the commencement of Australian participation in this joint operation precede or follow the identification in September 2003 of Mr Willy Brigitte as a person suspected of having terrorist connections.

Mr Ruddock—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:
(1) Yes, I am aware of the report.
(2) and (3) Australia cooperates on intelligence matters with a wide range of countries. For reasons of national security I do not comment on those arrangements.

National Security
(Question No. 2082)

Mr Melham asked the Attorney-General, in writing, on 17 August 2005:
(1) Is he aware of the article by Mr Martin Chulov entitled “Aussie wanted to be bomber” in The Australian on 20 July 2005.
(2) In respect of the reference in the article to the interception of a telephone call by the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, was the disclosure of telephone interception information made under lawful authority; if so, who (a) authorised and (b) disclosed this information to Mr Chulov or to any other person and when did they do so; if not, what investigations have been undertaken to determine the source of the unauthorised disclosure of national security information and has the source of the disclosure been identified.

Mr Ruddock—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:
(1) Yes, I have seen the article.
(2) In cases where it is assessed that there has been an unauthorised disclosure of national security classified information the matter would be investigated by the relevant agencies. Consistent with long standing practice, I would not be making any comments on matters of national security.

National Security
(Question No. 2083)

Mr Melham asked the Attorney-General, in writing, on 17 August 2005:
(1) Is he aware of the article by Mr Martin Chulov entitled “Butcher charged with lying to ASIO” in The Weekend Australian on 30-31 July 2005.
(2) In respect of the reference in the article to the questioning of six persons by the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation in relation to an alleged plot to attack landmarks in Melbourne and Sydney, was the disclosure of information concerning the questioning of persons by ASIO made under lawful authority; if so, who (a) authorised and (b) disclosed this information to Mr Chulov or to any other person and when did they do so; if not, what investigations have been undertaken to determine the source of the unauthorised disclosure of national security information and has the source of the disclosure been identified.

Mr Ruddock—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:
(1) Yes, I have seen the article.
(2) In cases where it is assessed that there has been an unauthorised disclosure of national security classified information the matter would be investigated by the relevant agencies. Consistent with long standing practice, I would not be making any comments on matters of national security.
**Defence: Visiting Warships**

*(Question No. 2087)*

Mr Melham asked the Minister representing the Minister for Defence, in writing, on 17 August 2005:

In respect of each visit to an Australian port by a United States Navy or Royal Navy vessel during the period 8 December 2004 to 30 June 2005, (a) what was the name of the visiting vessel, (b) what was the type or class of the vessel, (c) was the vessel nuclear powered, (d) which Australian port did the vessel visit, and (e) what were the dates of arrival and departure from the port.

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

United States Navy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ship Name</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Nuclear Powered</th>
<th>Port Visited</th>
<th>Arrival Date</th>
<th>Departure Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USAV <em>Joint Venture</em></td>
<td>High speed vessel</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Hobart</td>
<td>29 Sep 04</td>
<td>1 Apr 05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USNS <em>Yukon</em></td>
<td>Ammunition ship</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>6 Dec 04</td>
<td>9 Dec 04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USNS <em>Watson</em></td>
<td>Cargo ship</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Fremantle</td>
<td>6 Dec 04</td>
<td>5 Jan 05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USCGC <em>Polar Star</em></td>
<td>Ice breaker</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Hobart</td>
<td>7 Dec 04</td>
<td>11 Dec 04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAV <em>Spearhead</em></td>
<td>Theatre support vessel</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Fremantle</td>
<td>10 Dec 04</td>
<td>12 Dec 04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAV <em>Spearhead</em></td>
<td>Theatre support vessel</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Hobart</td>
<td>15 Dec 04</td>
<td>21 Feb 05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USNS <em>Paul Buck</em></td>
<td>Oiler</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Brisbane</td>
<td>30 Dec 04</td>
<td>5 Jan 05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USS <em>Thach</em></td>
<td>Guided missile frigate</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Darwin</td>
<td>31 Dec 04</td>
<td>4 Jan 05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USS <em>Milius</em></td>
<td>Guided missile destroyer</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Darwin</td>
<td>31 Dec 04</td>
<td>4 Jan 05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USNS <em>Paul Buck</em></td>
<td>Oiler</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Brisbane</td>
<td>14 Feb 05</td>
<td>19 Feb 05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAV <em>Spearhead</em></td>
<td>Theatre support vessel</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>20 Feb 05</td>
<td>20 Feb 05</td>
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<tr>
<td>USCGC <em>Polar Star</em></td>
<td>Ice breaker</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Adelaide</td>
<td>5 Mar 05</td>
<td>9 Mar 05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USCGC <em>Polar Star</em></td>
<td>Ice breaker</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>11 Mar 05</td>
<td>15 Mar 05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USNS <em>Tippecanoe</em></td>
<td>Ammunition ship</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Darwin</td>
<td>4 May 05</td>
<td>8 May 05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USNS <em>Niagara Falls</em></td>
<td>Combat stores ship</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Darwin</td>
<td>5 May 05</td>
<td>10 May 05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USS <em>Duluth</em></td>
<td>Amphibious transport ship</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Cairns</td>
<td>9 May 05</td>
<td>14 May 05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USS <em>Bunker Hill</em></td>
<td>Guided missile cruiser</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>9 May 05</td>
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<tr>
<td>USS <em>Thach</em></td>
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<td>9 May 05</td>
<td>14 May 05</td>
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<tr>
<td>USS <em>Rushmore</em></td>
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<td>15 May 05</td>
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<tr>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>10 May 05</td>
<td>15 May 05</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Richard</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>USS <em>Blue Ridge</em></td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>Cairns</td>
<td>26 May 05</td>
<td>30 May 05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ship Name</td>
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<td>Port Visited</td>
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<td>Departure Date</td>
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<td>3 Jun 05</td>
<td>10 Jun 05</td>
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<td>USS Louisville</td>
<td>Submarine</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>7 Jun 05</td>
<td>13 Jun 05</td>
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<td>USAV Joint Venture</td>
<td>High speed vessel</td>
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<td>01 Jul 05</td>
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<td>USNS Guadalupe</td>
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<td>21 Jun 05</td>
<td>23 Jun 05</td>
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<td>USNS Navajo</td>
<td>Fleet ocean tug</td>
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<td>28 Jun 05</td>
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<tr>
<td>USNS Sioux</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>Brisbane</td>
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<td>28 Jun 05</td>
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<tr>
<td>USS Boxer</td>
<td>Amphibious assault ship</td>
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<td>27 Jun 05</td>
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<tr>
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<td>29 Jun 05</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Command ship</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Brisbane</td>
<td>30 Jun 05</td>
<td>5 Jul 05</td>
</tr>
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</table>

There were no Royal Navy visits during this period.

Pine Gap Defence Facility

(Question No. 2088)

Mr Melham asked the Minister representing the Minister for Defence, in writing, on 17 August 2005:

(1) What is the role or function of the four geostationary satellites registered by the Department of Defence with the Australian Communications and Media Authority as an Australian Satellite Network under the designations: DEF-R-SAT-1A, DEF-R-SAT-2A, DEF-R-SAT-3A, and DEF-R-SAT-4B.

(2) In respect of each of these satellites, (a) on what date and (b) from where was it launched.
Mrs De-Anne Kelly—The Minister for Defence has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

(1) DEF-R-SAT networks communicate with earth stations located at the Joint Defence Facility Pine Gap in Alice Springs.

(2) (a) Launch dates cannot be released for security reasons.
    (b) The satellites were launched from Cape Canaveral.

Pine Gap Defence Facility  
(Question No. 2090)

Mr Melham asked the Minister representing the Minister for Defence, in writing, on 17 August 2005:

(1) At which facilities in Australian territory does (a) the Australian Government and (b) the United States (US) Government operate fixed ground terminals which communicate with (i) the US Defence Satellite Communications System (DSCS) satellites and (ii) US Milstar satellites.

(2) Apart from visiting naval vessels, aircraft and military units, does the US Government operate in Australian territory any mobile terminals that communicate with (a) DSCS satellites and (b) Milstar satellites.

(3) Does the Australian Government operate in Australian territory any mobile ground terminals that communicate with (a) DSCS satellites, or (b) Milstar satellites; if so, what are the details.

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

(1) (2) and (3) The Australian Government operates a fixed ground terminal at the Russell complex that communicates with the US Defence Satellite Communications System (DSCS). The Australian and US Governments operate a fixed ground terminal that communicates with DSCS at the Joint Defence Facility Pine Gap.

Further details of Defence communications networks, including links to satellites, are an essential element of our national security architecture and, therefore, cannot be released.

Pine Gap Defence Facility  
(Question No. 2091)

Mr Melham asked the Minister representing the Minister for Defence, in writing, on 17 August 2005:

Since May 2002, have any members of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly (a) visited the Joint Defence Facility Pine Gap and (b) received classified briefings on the functions of the facility; if so, which Members and when did the visits and/or briefings take place.

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

(a) On 29 September 2003, Mrs Jodeen Camey attended a social function for local dignitaries at the Joint Defence Facility Pine Gap.

(b) No.

Pine Gap Defence Facility  
(Question No. 2092)

Mr Melham asked the Minister representing the Minister for Defence, in writing, on 17 August 2005:

QUESTIONS IN WRITING
(1) Is the Minister aware of the provisions of Article 9 of the Agreement between the Australian and United States Governments relating to the Joint Defence Facility Pine Gap (JDFPG) that deals with the application of Australian taxation law to non-Australian contractors, sub-contractors, personnel of contractors and sub-contractors and associated dependants, working in Australia in connection with the JDFPG.

(2) Can the minister explain the contemporary policy justification for Article 9 of the Agreement which was negotiated in 1966 and remains unchanged since that time.

(3) Will the Government undertake a review of the operation and appropriateness of Article 9 prior to consideration of the next ten-year extension of the Agreement; if not, why not.

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

(1) Yes.

(2) The provisions of Article 9 of the JDFPG Agreement are consistent with similar arrangements under the 1963 Status of Forces Agreement with the United States, which remains in force.

(3) The Government reviews all articles of all arrangements before extending them. The JDFPG Agreement was last extended on 16 November 1998.

Naval Communications Station

(Question No. 2095)

Mr Melham asked the Minister representing the Minister for Defence, in writing, on 17 August 2005:

(1) Further to the answer to question No. 524 (Hansard, 10 May 2005, page 232), which section or part of the Department of Defence employs the fourteen Defence civilian personnel working at North West Cape Naval Communication Station (NCS) and what are the duties of those personnel.

(2) What section or part of the Department of Defence is responsible for overseeing the operation of the NCS.

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

(1) Eleven of the Department of Defence staff working at Naval Communication Station Harold E Holt are Defence Materiel Organisation employees. All of these staff are engaged in either contractor management and/or base administration duties.

The remaining three staff are from the Corporate Services and Infrastructure Group. Their duties include environmental, occupational health and safety, security and facilities management.

(2) The operation of the Station is overseen by the Defence Materiel Organisation, on behalf of the Royal Australian Navy and United States Navy. Strategic management is provided by both nations via equal representation on an Executive Steering Committee.

National Security

(Question No. 2107)

Mr Danby asked the Attorney-General, in writing, on 17 August 2005:

(1) Has he seen reports that Mr Abdul Rahim Ayub, the alleged head of Jemaah Islamiya’s “Mantiki 4” terrorist cell, and co-author of the plan to assassinate Rabbi Joseph Gutnick and bomb the Israeli Embassy in Canberra, is currently at large in West Java, Indonesia.

(2) What is his response to the comment by Mr Neil Fergus, a former head of ASIO’s Middle East Department, saying that he was at a loss to know why Mr Abdul Rahim Ayub has not been charged.
(3) What is his response to the comment by Mr Rohan Gunaratna of the Singapore Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, blaming Mr Abdul Rahim Ayub’s escape to Indonesia on the Australian Government’s slowness to use the powers given to it by Parliament to combat terrorism.

(4) Were Mr Abdul Rahim Ayub and his brother Mr Abdur Rahman Ayub persons of interest to the Australian authorities at the time of their departure from Australia; if so, why were they allowed to leave Australia; if not, when did each of them become a person of interest.

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

(1) Yes, I have seen the reports.

(2) Mr Roche was arrested by the Australian Federal Police on 18 November 2002 and convicted on charges of conspiracy to commit offences under the Crimes (Internationally Protected Persons) Act 1976. Matters relating to the raising of criminal charges against Mr Ayub are the responsibility of the Australian Federal Police.

(3) I have seen Mr Gunaratna’s comments. I am unable to provide comment on specific investigations. I reject the notion that Australian Government agencies have been slow in reacting to terrorist threats and in combating terrorism. Further, I am confident that the relevant agencies have used, and continue to use appropriate powers when applicable.

(4) In February 2002, Mr Abdul Rahman Ayub’s protection visa was declined and he was deported from Australia.

Mr Abdul Rahim Ayub departed Australia for Indonesia in October 2002. There was no legal reason preventing Mr Rahim Ayub from departing Australia.

The Ayub brothers were known to Australian Government agencies prior to their respective departures. The Ayub brothers departed Australia before Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) became a proscribed organisation under legislation, precluding the establishment of any criminal offences.

Pensions and Benefits

Ms Hoare asked the Minister representing the Minister for Family and Community Services, in writing, on 18 August 2005:

(1) What is the maximum (a) fortnightly and (b) annual allowable level of income for recipients of (i) Age Pension, (ii) Disability Support Pension, (iii) Newstart, (iv) Youth Allowance, and (v) Austudy Payment to maintain the maximum rate of payment.

(2) Is it the case that when a recipient’s fortnightly income exceeds the allowable level the recipient’s payment will be reduced even where that income on an annualised basis falls short of the allowable annual income.

(3) Is he aware that income for the purposes of payments such as Family Tax Benefit is considered on an annualised basis.

(4) Will he consider allowing income earned by recipients of the above payments to be annualised to the maximum annual amount; if not, why not.

Mr Hockey—The Minister representing the Minister for Family and Community Services has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

(1) (i): Age Pension

(a)

• $124 a fortnight for singles
• $220 a fortnight for couples (combined)
(b) see question 2
(ii): Disability Support Pension:
(a)
• $124 a fortnight for singles
• $220 a fortnight for couples (combined)
(b) There is no annual allowable level of income for recipients of Disability Support Pension.
(iii) Newstart
(a) The maximum allowable level of income to maintain the full rate of Newstart Allowance is $62 per fortnight.
(b) There is no annual allowable level of income for recipients of Newstart Allowance.
(iv) and (v): Youth Allowance and Austudy payment
For each of these payments, for full-time student recipients (single or partnered), the maximum fortnightly amount of allowable income is $236. However, a recipient may have a credit balance in their Student Income Bank which may be drawn upon without affecting their entitlement even if they earn more than $236 a fortnight. A student may accumulate the unused amount of their income free area each fortnight, thus building up a credit in their Income Bank.
For each of these payments, using the fortnightly income free area amount of $236, full-time student recipients are entitled to a maximum $6,136 annually. This is the cumulative total of 26 fortnights, at $236 per fortnight, over the period of a year.
(iv) Youth Allowance (other)
(a) The maximum allowable level of income to maintain the full rate of Youth Allowance (other)* is $62 per fortnight.
* young people under 21 years of age who are not full-time students or apprentices.
(b) There is no annual allowable level of income for recipients of Youth Allowance (other).
(2) Is it the case that when a recipient’s fortnightly income exceeds the allowable level the recipient’s payment will be reduced even where that income on an annualised basis falls short of the allowable annual income.
Age Pension
No. Under the Social Security Act 1991 the pension is an annual amount based on current income. The way that an Age Pension customer’s earnings impact upon the rate of pension will vary depending upon the frequency and nature of the person’s employment.
• Where a person has regular earnings of, say, $200 per fortnight, the income is assessed as being $5,200 per annum during the entire period the person is earning the amount. Should the person cease working, the income is coded to nil.
• When a person has variable or fluctuating wages, the amount he or she earns is averaged over a reasonable period, usually 3 months, and then annualised. For example, a person earns $2,600 wages over a 3 month period, which is annualised to $10,400 per annum. This amount of income is used when working out the person’s rate of pension for the next 3 months. If the pensioner ceases working, their income assessment is reduced to nil.
• Where a pensioner does seasonal work, such as exam marking or works as a Santa Claus, the amount he or she earns is held as income for the full year. For example, an Age Pension customer who earns $200 per week over an 8-week period is assessed as having annual income of
$1,600. This amount affects his or her rate of pension for the whole of the next 12 months and so is not reduced to nil on Centrelink’s records during that time.

Centrelink staff are instructed to apply the assessment method which most accurately reflects the person’s current income. Where more than one method may be appropriate, the most beneficial treatment is applied.

Disability Support Pension, Newstart Allowance and Youth Allowance (other)

No. There is no allowable annual income level for Disability Support Pension, Newstart Allowance and Youth Allowance (other). Also, working credits may reduce the amount of employment income that is counted under the income test for recipients of Disability Support Pension, Newstart Allowance and Youth Allowance (other) in a fortnight. As a result, recipients may have fortnightly income in excess of the maximum allowable level but still receive the full rate of income support payment. Disability Support Pension, Newstart Allowance and Youth Allowance (other) recipients accrue working credits in fortnights when their income is below $48, to a maximum of 1000. One working credit offsets $1 of income from employment.

Youth Allowance and Austudy Payment

No, Youth Allowance and Austudy are payments that assess a person’s entitlement on a fortnightly basis. If a full-time student recipient has a Student Income Bank balance of nil and income over $236, their fortnightly entitlement will be affected.

(3) Is he aware that income for the purposes of payments such as Family Tax Benefit is considered on an annualised basis?

Yes, Family Tax Benefit (FTB) Part A and Part B provide payment on the basis of annual taxable income.

The provision of FTB Part A and Part B on the basis of annual taxable income recognises the different purposes of FTB (help with the costs of children) compared to payments that are intended to provide income support.

(4) Will he consider allowing income earned by recipients of the above payments to be annualised to the maximum annual amount; if not, why not.

Age Pension

Under the Social Security Act 1991 the pension is already an annual amount based on current income.

Disability Support Pension, Newstart Allowance and Youth Allowance (other)

The Australian Government has no plans to subject working age payments to an annualised income test. An annual income test is appropriate only where a person is likely to be in receipt of the relevant payment for the entire year in question, and works best when people’s incomes are relatively stable. A fortnightly income test allows more precise targeting to current need and this is more appropriate for payments that many people receive for only short periods at a time and where fluctuations in income are likely to be common.

Youth Allowance and Austudy Payment

In terms of full-time students on Youth Allowance or Austudy, the Government considers current personal means testing arrangements to be appropriate and in line with community views and expectations. The availability of the Student Income Bank provides considerable flexibility for students undertaking part-time work and the income-free area is generous.
Singapore-Australia Free Trade Agreement
(Question No. 2157)
Mr Rudd asked the Minister for Trade, in writing, on 18 August 2005:
(1) What has been the impact on Australia’s two way trade with Singapore since the implementation of the Singapore Australia Free Trade Agreement (FTA) compared to the previous period.
(2) What has been the impact on the growth of Australian (a) exports to and (b) imports from Singapore following the introduction of the FTA compared to the previous period.
(3) What has been the impact on Australia’s trade balance with Singapore following the introduction of the FTA compared to the previous period.
Mr Vaile—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:
(1) It is too early to assess the medium term impact of the Singapore–Australia Free Trade Agreement. We expect most benefits to accrue in the area of services and investment given that, prior to implementation of SAFTA, Singapore duties on goods (with the exception of beer and stout) were zero.
(2) As above.
(3) As above.

Australia-United States Free Trade Agreement
(Question No. 2158)
Mr Rudd asked the Minister for Trade, in writing, on 18 August 2005:
(1) What has been the impact on Australia’s two way trade with the USA since the implementation of the Australia-USA Free Trade Agreement (FTA) compared to the previous period.
(2) What has been the impact on the growth of Australian (a) exports to and (b) imports from the USA following the introduction of the FTA compared to the previous period.
(3) What has been the impact on Australia’s trade balance with the USA following the introduction of the FTA compared to the previous period.
Mr Vaile—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:
(1) It is too early to assess the impact of the Australia-United States Free Trade Agreement (AUSFTA). The success of the FTA will be judged beyond trade in goods - services trade, government procurement and investment are also important elements of the Agreement. Many of the opportunities created by the AUSFTA will have significant lead times. The Government is working to assist business to take advantage of the AUSFTA including through the appointment of 30 new export facilitators (23 of whom are located in the United States).
(2) As above.
(3) As above.

Stronger Families and Communities Strategy
(Question No. 2192)
Ms Burke asked the Minister representing the Minister for Family and Community Services, in writing, on 5 September 2005:
(1) How many organisations applied for funding under (a) round one and (b) round two of the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy (SFCS) 2004-2008 program and in which electoral division and State or Territory are they located.
How many organisations which applied for funding under (a) round one and (b) round two of the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy (SFCS) 2004-2008 program were unsuccessful and in which electoral division and State or Territory are they located.

Mr Hockey—The Minister for Family and Community Services has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

(1) There were 994 applications in Round One, and 812 applications in Round Two.

In Question on Notice 1723 you were provided with the detail of electorates for successful projects in Rounds One and Two. I consider that the preparation of information regarding the electorates of applicants for Local Answers would involve a significant diversion of resources and in the circumstances, I do not consider that the additional work can be justified. The electorate is not recorded as part of the assessment process for applications.

The numbers of applications received for funding in Local Answers Rounds One and Two are noted in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Numbers of applications for Local Answers Rounds One and Two, by state and territory.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State/Territory</th>
<th>Local Answers Round One</th>
<th>Local Answers Round Two</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>18</td>
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<td>NSW</td>
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<td>244</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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(2) There were 886 unsuccessful applications in Round One and 656 unsuccessful applications in Round Two. I consider that the preparation of information regarding the electorates of applicants for Local Answers would involve a significant diversion of resources and in the circumstances I do not consider that the additional work can be justified. The electorate is not recorded as part of the assessment process for applications.

The numbers of applications received for funding under Local Answers Rounds One and Two are noted in Table 2 below, recorded by each state and territory.

Table 2. Numbers of unsuccessful applications for Local Answers Rounds One and Two, by state and territory.

<table>
<thead>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>VIC</td>
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<tr>
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<td>64</td>
<td>88</td>
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<tr>
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Consultancy Services
(Question No. 2217)

Mr Bowen asked the Treasurer, in writing, on 5 September 2005:
Did The Treasury enter into a contract with Richard Vann at a cost of $16,500 for management consulting services; if so, what services are being provided under the terms of this contract.

Mr Costello—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:
On 6 April 2005, the Treasury entered into a contract with Professor Richard Vann at a cost of up to $16,500. The contract calls for Professor Vann, as a member of a six person Reference Group established by the Board of Taxation, to provide high level advice to a Board Working Group on a list of probable inoperative provisions of the 1936 and 1997 Income Tax Assessment Acts.

Consultancy Services
(Question No. 2352)

Mr Bowen asked the Attorney-General, in writing, on 14 September 2005:
Did his department engage Rawlinsons Group Pty Ltd to provide consultancy services at a cost of $10,945; if so, what services are being provided under the terms of this contract.

Mr Ruddock—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:
The Attorney-General’s Department engaged Rawlinsons Group Pty Ltd (now Turner & Townsend Rawlinsons), following an open Request For Tender, to provide Project Management Services in respect of the delivery of the Department’s new accommodation at 3-5 National Circuit, Barton. The financial extent of the consultancy is one per cent of the total fitout cost currently approved at $23 million. The amount of $10,945 represents a progress payment against the project management services.

Consultancy Services
(Question No. 2355)

Mr Bowen asked the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, in writing, on 14 September 2005:
Did his department engage Bank of I.D.E.A.S to provide management consulting services at a cost of $20,000; if so, what services are being provided under the terms of this contract.

Mr Andrews—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:
The Bank of I.D.E.A.S was contracted in June 2005 by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations to:
- undertake an extensive scoping exercise to identify successful Indigenous entrepreneurs and businesses;
- develop 15 case-studies from identified successful Indigenous entrepreneurs and businesses, looking at the progress to date, economic and employment impact, success factors and possible advice to others contemplating the enterprise option; and
- plan, develop and facilitate two workshops for emerging Indigenous entrepreneurs.
The contract stipulated that the total amount of fees for services as outlined above would not exceed $75,000 (inclusive of GST). As at 30 June 2005, $20,000 had been paid to the Consultant for work completed by that date.