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SITTING DAYS—2006

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RADIO BROADCASTS
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FORTY-FIRST PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION—SEVENTH 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 Phillip Anthony Barresi, the Hon. Bronwyn Kathleen Bishop, Mr Barry Wayne Haase, Mr Michael John Hatton, the Hon. Duncan James Colquhoun Kerr SC, 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
Chief Whip—Mrs Kay Elizabeth Hull MP
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

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

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<td>Turnbull, Hon. Malcolm Bligh</td>
<td>Wentworth, NSW</td>
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<td>Vaile, Hon. Mark Anthony James</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 Transport and Regional Services and
Deputy Prime Minister  The Hon. Mark Anthony James Vaile MP
Treasurer  The Hon. Peter Howard Costello MP
Minister for Trade  The Hon. Warren Errol Truss MP
Minister for Defence  The Hon. Dr Brendan John Nelson MP
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,
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 Affairs
Senator the Hon. Amanda Eloise Vanstone
Minister for Education, Science and Training and
Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for
Women’s Issues  The Hon. Julie Isabel Bishop MP
Minister for Families, Community Services and
Indigenous Affairs and Minister Assisting the
Prime Minister for Indigenous Affairs  The Hon. Malcolm Thomas Brough MP
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 and Deputy Leader of
the Government in the Senate  Senator the Hon. Helen Lloyd Coonan
Minister for the Environment and Heritage  Senator the Hon. Ian Gordon Campbell

(The above ministers constitute the cabinet)
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<td>Senator the Hon. Christopher Martin Ellison</td>
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<td>Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation</td>
<td>Senator the Hon. Eric Abetz</td>
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<td>Minister for the Arts and Sport</td>
<td>Senator the Hon. Charles Roderick Kemp</td>
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<td>Minister for Human Services and Minister Assisting the Minister for Workplace Relations</td>
<td>The Hon. Joseph Benedict Hockey MP</td>
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<td>Minister for Community Services</td>
<td>The Hon. John Kenneth Cobb MP</td>
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<td>Minister for Revenue and Assistant Treasurer</td>
<td>The Hon. Peter Craig Dutton MP</td>
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<td>Special Minister of State</td>
<td>The Hon. Gary Roy Nair MP</td>
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<td>Minister for Vocational and Technical Education and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister</td>
<td>The Hon. Gary Douglas Hardgrave MP</td>
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<td>Minister for Ageing</td>
<td>Senator the Hon. Santo Santoro</td>
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<td>Minister for Small Business and Tourism</td>
<td>The Hon. Frances Esther Bailey MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Local Government, Territories and Roads</td>
<td>The Hon. James Eric Lloyd MP</td>
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<td>Minister for Veterans’ Affairs and Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence</td>
<td>The Hon. Bruce Frederick Billson MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance and Administration</td>
<td>The Hon. Dr Sharman Nancy Stone MP</td>
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<td>Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Industry, Tourism and Resources</td>
<td>Senator the Hon. Richard Mansell Colbeck</td>
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<td>Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Ageing</td>
<td>The Hon. Robert Charles Baldwin MP</td>
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<td>Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence</td>
<td>The Hon. Christopher Maurice Pyne MP</td>
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<td>Senator the Hon. John Alexander Lindsay (Sandy) Macdonald</td>
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<td>Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Transport and Regional Services</td>
<td>The Hon. De-Anne Margaret Kelly MP</td>
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<td>Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs</td>
<td>The Hon. Andrew John Robb MP</td>
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<td>Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister</td>
<td>The Hon. Malcolm Bligh Turnbull MP</td>
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<td>Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer</td>
<td>The Hon. Christopher John Pearce MP</td>
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<td>Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage</td>
<td>The Hon. Gregory Andrew Hunt MP</td>
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<td>Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry</td>
<td>The Hon. Sussan Penelope Ley MP</td>
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<td>The Hon. Patrick Francis Farmer MP</td>
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<td>Parliamentary Secretary (Foreign Affairs)</td>
<td>The Hon. Teresa Gambaro MP</td>
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S H A D O W  M I N I S T R Y

Leader of the Opposition                      The Hon. Kim Christian Beazley MP
Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Shadow  Jennifer Louise Macklin MP
  Minister for Education, Training, Science and Research
Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, Shadow  Senator Christopher Vaughan Evans
  Minister for Indigenous Affairs and Shadow
  Minister for Family and Community Services
Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate  Senator Stephen Michael Conroy
  and Shadow Minister for Communications and
  Information Technology
Shadow Minister for Health and Manager of    Julia Eileen Gillard MP
  Opposition Business in the House
Shadow Treasurer                              Wayne Maxwell Swan MP
Shadow Attorney-General                        Nicola Louise Roxon MP
Shadow Minister for Industry, Infrastructure  Stephen Francis Smith MP
  and Industrial Relations
Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade  Kevin Michael Rudd MP
  and Shadow Minister for International Security
Shadow Minister for Defence                    Robert Bruce McClelland MP
Shadow Minister for Regional Development      The Hon. Simon Findlay Crean MP
Shadow Minister for Primary Industries,       Martin John Ferguson MP
  Resources, Forestry and Tourism
Shadow Minister for Environment and Heritage,  Anthony Norman Albanese MP
  Shadow Minister for Water and Deputy Manager
  of Opposition Business in the House
Shadow Minister for Housing, Shadow Minister   Senator Kim John Carr
  for Urban Development and Shadow Minister
  for Local Government and Territories
Shadow Minister for Public Accountability and  Kelvin John Thomson MP
  Shadow Minister for Human Services
Shadow Minister for Finance                    Lindsay James Tanner MP
Shadow Minister for Superannuation and        Senator the Hon. Nicholas John Sherry
  Intergenerational Finance and Shadow Minister
  for Banking and Financial Services
Shadow Minister for Child Care, Shadow Minister  Tanya Joan Plibersek MP
  for Youth and Shadow Minister for Women
Shadow Minister for Employment and Workforce   Senator Penelope Ying Yen Wong
  Participation and Shadow Minister for Corporate
  Governance and Responsibility

(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 | Gavan Michael O’Connor MP |
| Shadow Assistant Treasurer, Shadow Minister for Revenue and Shadow Minister for Small Business and Competition | Joel Andrew Fitzgibbon MP |
| Shadow Minister for Transport | Senator Kerry Williams Kelso O’Brien |
| Shadow Minister for Sport and Recreation | 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 Ageing, 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 Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs | Senator Annette Hurley |
| 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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Thursday, 19 October 2006

The SPEAKER (Hon. David Hawker) took the chair at 9.00 am and read prayers.

COPYRIGHT AMENDMENT BILL 2006

First Reading

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Ruddock.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr RUDDOCK (Berowra—Attorney-General) (9.01 am)—I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Copyright Amendment Bill 2006 introduces significant reforms to the Copyright Act 1968 demonstrating the Howard government’s ongoing commitment to having an effective, world-class and up-to-date copyright regime.

Australians are great adopters of technology. We have world-class musicians, film makers and other creative industries. The bill ensures we have a copyright regime that keeps pace with the needs of Australian copyright creators and copyright consumers.

Keeping pace with changing technology is not easy. When this government passed the Copyright Amendment (Digital Agenda) Act in 2000, the legislation was groundbreaking—putting Australia at the forefront as one of the first countries in the world to update its copyright laws to deal with the digital revolution.

But since then the internet and digital technologies have created new challenges and opportunities affecting copyright. For consumers, more copyright material is available online and can be easily transferred into different formats. Copyright owners have new distribution channels. But the owners also face challenges such as widespread unauthorised file sharing of music and films.

The government is committed to dealing with these challenges to copyright head-on, while seeking to acknowledge the opportunities technology presents. We want laws in place which mean copyright pirates are penalised for flouting the law. And we want to make sure that ordinary consumers are not infringing the law through everyday use of copyright products they have legitimately purchased.

These important reforms include new exceptions to make our copyright laws more sensible and defensible. The bill also introduces new offences and enforcement measures to ensure that those who seek to undermine the legitimate rights of copyright owners can be brought to account. These balanced and practical reforms will ensure the effectiveness of our copyright laws in the dynamic environment that we face.

New exceptions

The bill introduces several new exceptions to copyright in response to the government’s ‘fair use’ review.

First, the reforms recognise that the common consumer practices of ‘time shifting’ broadcasts and ‘format shifting’ some copyright material should be permissible.

This bill will amend the Copyright Act to make it legal for people to tape TV or radio programs in order to play them at a more convenient time.

It will also be legal to reproduce material such as music, newspapers and books into different formats for private use—this means that people can transfer music from CDs they already own onto their iPods or other music players. Millions of consumers will no longer be breaching the law when they record their favourite TV program or copy CDs they own into a different format.

These reforms are innovative and technology is rapidly changing. I note there has been
some commentary on the technical aspects of the exposure draft of the bill in relation to format shifting to iPods. That is why the drafts of this bill were made publicly available for comment. The government will listen to and consider comments and make any necessary technical changes to ensure the bill achieves the government’s objectives.

There are also new exceptions to provide flexibility to allow copyright material to be used for certain socially useful purposes, where this does not significantly harm the interests of copyright owners. The bill also provides for an exception to allow cultural and educational institutions and certain individuals to make use of copyright where that use does not undermine the copyright owner’s normal market. This will provide some of the benefits that the fair use doctrine provides in the United States under their law.

Another exception allows people with disabilities that may affect their capacity to access copyright material to be able to make use of that material to better access it.

A further exception promotes free speech and Australia’s fine tradition of satire by allowing our comedians and cartoonists to use copyright material for the purposes of parody or satire.

The needs of our educational and cultural institutions are also addressed in the bill. By giving schools, universities, libraries and archives the chance to use copyright material for non-commercial purposes, they will be able to better assist their users in the online environment.

**Technological protection measures**

In our online world, copyright owners are facing an increasing battle to protect their copyright material and develop business models.

Technological protection measures, or TPMs as they are referred to, such as technical locks, passwords or encryption, are an essential tool for the protection of copyright material, especially in the online environment. They provide an effective means for copyright owners to protect their material against the threat of piracy.

The bill provides for more effective TPM protection to encourage distribution of copyright material online and increase the availability of music, film and games in digital form.

This, in turn, will foster the development of new business models and provide enhanced choice for consumers.

The liability scheme established by the bill will target people who circumvent TPMs, in addition to those who manufacture or supply devices or services used for circumvention.

However, the liability scheme also provides for specific exceptions in the bill and copyright regulations in accordance with recommendations of the report of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs. In addition, the bill will create an exception for ‘region coding’ devices and allow Australian consumers to use multizone DVD players.

I now table the government’s response to the Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs’ Review of Technological Protection Measures Exceptions. I want to thank the committee for its work in this difficult and technical, but very important, area.

**Enforcement measures**

In the digital environment it is not enough that our law supports copyright owners in their efforts to technologically protect their material.

The reality is that it has become increasingly easier to infringe copyright. The bill therefore introduces reforms aimed at tack-
ling copyright piracy online and at our markets and borders.

The bill will create indictable, summary and strict liability offences with a range of penalty options. The strict liability offences will be underpinned by an infringement notice scheme in the Copyright Regulations. This will give law enforcement officers a wider range of options depending on the seriousness of the relevant conduct, ranging from infringement notices for more minor offences, to initiating criminal proceedings to strip copyright pirates of their profits in more serious cases. These offences are aimed at copyright pirates who profit at the expense of our creators.

While technological advancements have made it easier for people to infringe copyright on a large scale, this has also made it more difficult to prove specific acts of infringement.

The bill also contains amendments to evidential presumption provisions in civil and criminal proceedings to assist copyright owners in the litigation process.

The bill contains amendments to give a court enhanced power to grant relief to copyright owners in civil actions which involve commercial-scale electronic infringement. In such cases, a court will be able to take into account likely infringements as well as a proved infringement in deciding what relief to grant.

Amendments to the Customs ‘notice of objection’ provisions will reduce the administrative and cost burden on rights holders in lodging notices and providing security for notices. The bill ensures that the notice of objection provisions in the act remain consistent with changes made by the Trade Marks Amendment Act 2006.

**Unauthorised access to pay TV**

Other key enforcement measures are new offences to tackle unauthorised access and use of pay TV services.

**Copyright Tribunal**

There are also amendments to enhance the jurisdiction and procedures of the Copyright Tribunal. These implement the government’s response to the Copyright Law Review Committee’s Report on the jurisdiction and procedures of the Copyright Tribunal.

**Reference of the bill to Senate LACA Committee for report**

As foreshadowed, this bill will be referred to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee for inquiry and report.

Exposure drafts of most of the amendments were made available to the public from my department’s website prior to introduction of the bill to give interested parties the opportunity to consider them and prepare any comments for submission to the Senate committee. I look forward to the committee’s report.

This bill is wide ranging but it is also targeted. It targets piracy, not the legitimate everyday behaviour of Australian consumers and institutions.

I commend the bill to the House.

Debate (on motion by Mr Snowdon) adjourned.

**CRIMES ACT AMENDMENT (FORENSIC PROCEDURES) BILL (No. 1) 2006**

Mr RUDDOCK (Berowra—Attorney-General) (9.10 am)—In the Main Committee yesterday, in a debate on the Crimes Act Amendment (Forensic Procedures) Bill (No. 1) 2006, an explanatory memorandum was tabled that had some errors in it. Those matters have been addressed. I wish to now table a revised explanatory memorandum.
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AMENDMENT (INTEGRATED PUBLIC NUMBER DATABASE) BILL 2006

First Reading

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr McGauran.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr McGauran (Gippsland—Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) (9.11 am)—I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Telecommunications Amendment (Integrated Public Number Database) Bill 2006 amends the Telecommunications Act 1997 to provide for information contained in the integrated public number database (IPND) to be used to assist in conducting research that is considered to be in the public interest, while at the same time providing additional safeguards to ensure that IPND information is only disclosed and used for purposes specified in part 13 of the Telecommunications Act.

The IPND is an industry-wide database of all residential and business phone numbers, both listed and unlisted and associated customer information, including name and address information. It was established, and is maintained, by Telstra as a condition of its carrier licence. Carriage service providers are required to provide Telstra with customer information for inclusion in the IPND and do so on a daily basis.

In recent years the government has become aware of reports of customer information contained in the IPND being used for inappropriate purposes such as the compilation of marketing databases and debt collection. Concerns about the inappropriate use of the IPND were first raised in the former Australian Communications Authority discussion paper Who’s got your number: regulating the use of telecommunications customer information. This paper received over 50 submissions on issues relating to access to the IPND.

Use of IPND information for these purposes is currently not authorised by the Telecommunications Act and raises privacy concerns, as consumers of telecommunications services are unlikely to be aware of, or to have consented to, the use of their personal information for purposes beyond the existing public interest uses currently permitted by the Telecommunications Act such as emergency services and law enforcement.

At the same time, a number of research organisations have also expressed an interest in accessing information contained in the IPND to conduct research.

The bill before the House is intended to strengthen the privacy protections for telephone subscribers in relation to use of their personal information in connection with the publication and maintenance of public number directories while permitting disclosure and use of IPND information for some limited public interest research purposes that have been specified by the minister.

Outline of the bill

The bill defines the term ‘public number directory’. The definition exhaustively specifies what information a public number directory can contain and gives the minister the ability, through a legislative instrument, to specify additional requirements to be met in order for a record to be a public number directory. For example, the minister might specify additional requirements relating to the format in which public number directories are prepared.

Introducing a definition of public number directory into the Telecommunications Act is intended to prevent IPND information from being directly used for inappropriate purposes such as marketing, data cleansing and
appending, debt collection and credit checking. The intention is to limit the use of IPND information to the production of genuine telephone directories similar to the white and yellow pages, whether these are in electronic or hardcopy form.

The definition would allow use of IPND information to produce residential and business directories while protecting the privacy of individuals by permitting only their name, public number and, optionally, address to be included in a directory.

Such additional contact information as specified by the minister in a legislative instrument could be included in a public number directory if it is in relation to persons or bodies carrying on a business, government organisations, charities, religious or educational institutions and any other category of persons or bodies specified by the minister. Such additional information could include website addresses, email addresses, maps and advertisements.

The bill also permits access to IPND information for the first time to assist with the conduct of some specified research purposes that the minister considers to be in the public interest. These research purposes will be specified by the minister in a legislative instrument.

The legislative instrument will list specific types of research that the minister considers to be in the public interest, for example, health and medical research.

By permitting access to IPND information for some limited research purposes, the bill recognises the value of the IPND as an accurate and up-to-date source of information that may assist researchers in producing quality research that will be of benefit to the public.

As is currently the case, public number directory producers and the new research users will not be permitted to use unlisted customer information, including silent number information, to produce their public number directories or conduct their research.

Also, use of IPND information for commercial purposes will continue to be limited. At present, only carriage service providers and public number directory producers have access to the IPND to provide commercial products and services, and then only in limited circumstances. This will continue to be the case.

The bill gives ACMA a gatekeeper role in deciding applications for access to IPND information by public number directory producers and researchers. Under the existing arrangements Telstra, as the IPND manager, is responsible for deciding applications for access to the IPND for all users. Giving the key authorisation role to ACMA will enable greater scrutiny of persons seeking access to the IPND for these purposes and the way in which IPND information is used. Scrutiny by ACMA is intended as an additional safeguard for preventing misuse of IPND information by both public number directory producers and the new research users.

Giving ACMA the key role in authorising access to the IPND is also intended to remove the existing potential conflict of interest whereby Telstra is responsible for authorising access to the IPND for persons seeking to produce public number directories that compete with Telstra’s white pages and yellow pages directories.

The bill will require ACMA, by legislative instrument, to establish a scheme for the granting of authorisations permitting persons to use and disclose IPND information. The bill requires that ACMA consult with the Privacy Commissioner and the Secretary of the Attorney-General’s Department on development of the scheme. ACMA will be limited in its discretion by the framework for the scheme as set out in the bill. ACMA will
also be required to have regard to criteria specified by the minister when considering an application for access.

Persons seeking access to IPND information to produce public number directories or to conduct specified research will be required to apply to ACMA for an authorisation. Telstra will not be able to disclose IPND information for such purposes unless the user holds the appropriate authorisation from ACMA.

ACMA will be able to grant authorisations subject to conditions. The minister will also be able, by legislative instrument, to specify conditions of authorisation. The minister intends to specify a condition restricting the transfer of IPND information outside of Australia and a condition requiring the destruction or secure disposal of IPND information once an authorisation ceases. The Privacy Commissioner and the Attorney-General will be consulted during the development of the legislative instrument regarding other privacy related conditions that may be appropriate.

When considering authorisation decisions, ACMA may consult with persons it considers appropriate, including relevant experts in the area of the research for which an authorisation is being sought and the Office of the Privacy Commissioner.

Key ACMA decisions will be reviewable by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. These decisions include decisions to refuse or grant an authorisation, impose conditions on the grant of an authorisation and vary or revoke an authorisation. The minister will be able to specify in a legislative instrument additional reviewable decisions.

ACMA will be required to report annually to the minister on compliance with authorisations and on any other matter related to the operation of the scheme that ACMA considers appropriate. This report will be tabled in parliament.

The bill empowers ACMA to undertake administrative decision making in relation to the scheme and enables it to vary or revoke authorisations in the event of a user breaching an authorisation requirement. The bill also provides ACMA with a range of options to enforce compliance with conditions applying to authorisations, including the ability to issue remedial directions or formal warnings where ACMA is satisfied that a person has contravened or is contravening a condition of an authorisation.

The bill also includes new criminal offences and penalties where a person breaches a condition of an authorisation or discloses or uses IPND information other than for the authorised purpose, whether that be for the production of a public number directory or the conduct of specified research, and for disclosing and using data if an authorisation is no longer in force.

Persons who currently have access to IPND information to produce public number directories will need to apply to ACMA for an authorisation to receive IPND information. The authorisation could only be granted where the use for which IPND information is proposed would meet the new definition of public number directory. To the extent that existing users’ products meet the new definition, they will be permitted to continue using the IPND to produce these products. Assessment of products against the definition will be on a case-by-case basis.

The bill contains transitional arrangements to assist current users to manage the process of achieving compliance with the new definition and applying to ACMA for an authorisation to access the IPND. The transitional arrangements require persons currently using IPND information to make arrangements to apply for an authorisation within 28 days of
the commencement of the transitional provision. Existing users will be deemed to hold an authorisation during the 28-day period and, provided that an application is made to ACMA within that period, until such time as ACMA decides their application for authorisation.

The bill sets out a comprehensive approach to balancing the privacy needs of Australian telecommunications subscribers, in relation to the use of their personal information to produce commercial directory products, with the needs of the research community to conduct social research of benefit to the public.

I commend the bill to the House.

Debate (on motion by Mr Garrett) adjourned.

COMMITTEES

Public Works Committee

Approval of Work

Mr McGauran (Gippsland—Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) (9.23 am)—I move:

That, in accordance with the provisions of the Public Works Committee Act 1969, it is expedient to carry out the following proposed work which was referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works and on which the committee has duly reported to Parliament: Proposed fit-out of new leased premises for the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations at Brindabella Park, ACT.

Question agreed to.

Public Works Committee

Approval of Work

Mr McGauran (Gippsland—Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) (9.24 am)—I move:

That, in accordance with the provisions of the Public Works Committee Act 1969, it is expedient to carry out the following proposed work which was referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works and on which the committee has duly reported to Parliament: Development of canine kennelling and training facilities for the Australian Federal Police at Majura, ACT.

Question agreed to.

Public Works Committee

Approval of Work

Mr McGauran (Gippsland—Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) (9.24 am)—I move:

That, in accordance with the provisions of the Public Works Committee Act 1969, it is expedient to carry out the following proposed work which was referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works and on which the committee has duly reported to Parliament: Provision of facilities for Project Single Living Environment and Accommodation Precinct—Phase One.

Question agreed to.

PARLIAMENTARY ZONE

Approval of Proposal

Mr McGauran (Gippsland—Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) (9.25 am)—I move:

That, in accordance with section 5 of the Parliament Act 1974, the House approves the following proposal for work in the Parliamentary Zone which was presented to the House on 18 October 2006, namely: Refurbishment works to the podium that surrounds the National Library of Australia.

Question agreed to.

Approval of Proposal

Mr McGauran (Gippsland—Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) (9.26 am)—I move:

That, in accordance with section 5 of the Parliament Act 1974, the House approves the following proposal for work in the Parliamentary Zone which was presented to the House on 18 October 2006, namely: Temporary car park replacement, section 55 Parkes.

Question agreed to.

(Quorum formed)
Dr SOUTHCOTT—by leave—I move:

That the House take note of the reports.

Reports 79 and 80 contain the findings and binding treaty action recommendations of the committee’s review of 12 treaty actions tabled in parliament on 28 March, 10 May and 5 and 6 September 2006. The committee found all the treaties reviewed to be in Australia’s national interest. I will comment on all the treaties reviewed.

The mutual assistance treaties with China and Malaysia provide a formal process enabling Australia and Malaysia and Australia and China to assist each other in investigations, prosecutions and proceedings related to criminal matters. As both Malaysia and China retain the death penalty for a range of offences, the obligation to provide mutual assistance is limited by a number of internationally accepted grounds for refusal. These grounds are well recognised and are already reflected in Australia’s domestic laws. The extradition treaty with Malaysia provides for the surrender of an accused or convicted person between Australia and Malaysia to face criminal charges or to serve a sentence and will provide a modern and effective extradition relationship between Australia and Malaysia.

The conventions with France and Norway for the avoidance of double taxation are expected to meet Australia’s most favoured nation obligations with both countries, reduce barriers to trade and investment caused by overlapping taxing jurisdictions and help to prevent tax evasion.

Amendments to the agreements with China and Japan for the protection of migratory birds and birds in danger of extinction and their environment update the scientific nomenclature and add the Roseate Tern to both agreements. Australia supported the addition of the Roseate Tern following a bird-banding and colour-flagging study which demonstrated that the Roseate Tern regularly and predictably migrates between the Swain Reef, Queensland, and Chinese Taipei and between the Swain Reef and Okinawa, Japan.

The air service agreements with India and China provide a framework for the operation of scheduled air services by designated airlines between Australia and India and between Australia and China. The agreements improve access for Australian airlines to the international Chinese aviation market and the international Indian aviation market and include reciprocal provisions on safety, security, customs regulations and commercial matters.

Protocol V, on explosive remnants of war, to the 1980 Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons reduces the humanitarian risk posed by explosive remnants of war by obliging contracting states to mark and clear, remove or destroy explosive remnants of war.

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The amendments to the Australia-United States Free Trade Agreement annexes incorporate further changes to ensure compliance, with changes to the harmonised commodity
description and coding system that will come into effect on 1 January 2007.

Amendments to the Australia-New Zealand Closer Economic Relations Trade Agreement change the method that both countries use to determine whether goods imported from the other country meet rules of origin requirements to be free of import duty. Late in the inquiry, the committee received evidence that an Australian based detergent manufacturer, Albright and Wilson Australia, may be negatively affected by the agreement, which could lead to the possible loss of 65 jobs at its Yarraville factory. The Minister for Trade responded to concerns raised by Albright and Wilson and by the committee but was unable to accommodate Albright and Wilson’s request, to retain the current method for determining rules of origin, due to the conclusion of negotiations with New Zealand.

The committee believes it would have been preferable for these issues to have been raised during negotiations so that they could have been part of Australia’s negotiation position. The committee is also concerned that a business with significant trans-Tasman trade was unaware of these changes until negotiations were concluded and has recommended that Austrade make greater use of their database of businesses to consult at a business level. Overall, the agreement is expected to reduce barriers to trade, leading to better economic conditions for the majority of Australian companies, and the committee has recommended it enters into force.

Report 80 does incorporate a dissenting report. I would say that the difference between the main report and the dissenting report is not great. I thank the members of the committee secretariat for their assistance in conducting the public hearings, with the submissions and in preparing the report. I commend the reports to the House.

Mr WILKIE (Swan) (9.35 am)—by leave—Although reports 79 and 80 of the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties actually refer to 12 particular treaty actions, I intend to keep my remarks to the dissenting report that we have put into report 80. Hopefully, I will obtain permission from the House at some stage to refer both reports 79 and 80 to the Main Committee, where other members of the House will be able to speak on these matters. As has already been said by the chair of the committee, the member for Boothby, there are some very significant treaties that form part of these reports.

In the dissenting report we noted our concern about the impact of the rules of origin changes on a company in Victoria. Let me tell you a bit of the background of this company. The company is named Albright and Wilson, and it was established in 1939. It employs 130 employees and has a current turnover of $100 million. It has manufacturing plants in New South Wales and also in Victoria, where industrial phosphates used in food, detergent, water treatment, mining and mineral industries are manufactured. It currently exports sodium tripolyphosphates—a detergent ingredient—to New Zealand and it ends up being remanufactured there and returned to Australia by way of the end product.

The change to these rules will mean that, although they are no longer buying or using an Australian product, Unilever in New Zealand will continue to get favourable tariff treatment. This proposed change has already led to the cancellation of Albright and Wilson’s contract and will have, as has been said already, a significant impact on the company—the loss of some 65 jobs and the loss of some $7 million per year in turnover. As the chair has already stated, the committee is very concerned at the lack of consultation that has taken place in regard to this particular matter. Even though Albright and Wilson
is significantly involved in supplying manufacturers in New Zealand and there is going to be a dramatic impact on their business, they were not consulted by Austrade in regard to these changes or arrangements. It was only when Unilever, the company in New Zealand, cancelled their contract—because they had to give six months notice—that they realised they were in trouble and there was a serious problem here.

In my view, Austrade, given that they know who is trading with New Zealand—they have an extensive database in regard to this—should have been out there actively seeking advice from companies such as Albright and Wilson to find out what the impact on them would be. It is not as if this has not happened in the past; they have negotiated with other companies—for example, some in the area of men’s apparel and suits and some auto parts manufacturers—which have also been affected by this change and they have introduced exemptions so that these companies can continue to operate without penalty. Once Albright and Wilson realised that there was a problem they gave advice to the committee. They gave us evidence and said, ‘Look, how about introducing a change in the treaty which would allow us to get an exemption in the same way that the government has already negotiated an exemption for men’s apparel and some automotive products?’ That is entirely fair and reasonable, I would have thought.

But, unfortunately, because the government want to ram this treaty through and have it come into effect on 1 January, the government have turned their back on Albright and Wilson and said, ‘Sorry, we’ve already done the negotiations. We don’t intend to go back and revisit this particular treaty.’ I think that is appalling. Obviously, there is a problem. The government knew there was a problem; in fact Albright and Wilson wrote to them. What Albright and Wilson found was that, because the treaty had been negotiated, they were told, ‘Sorry, tough luck. We don’t actually intend to do anything about this.’ I think that is appalling. This shows a complete disregard for Australian jobs and a complete disregard for an Australian company.

It was put to us that Unilever, who is the manufacturer in New Zealand, is an Asian company so therefore some of that profit will also be coming back to Australia. I looked into this matter, and that claim is absolutely false. Unilever in Australia is a separately incorporated company and will have nothing to do with what is going on in the New Zealand arm of Unilever, which is incorporated in New Zealand. So Unilever in New Zealand will increase their profits by about $1 million to $2 million, because they are going to be able to buy source product dumped on the New Zealand market from China, and we will end up losing 65 jobs as a result of that. I thought the government was here to stick up for Australian workers, Australian jobs and Australian profits, but, no, in this case it is quite happy to see that money go offshore to New Zealand and have a severe negative impact on our people.

To her credit, the member for Gellibrand, Nicola Roxon, has been fighting this fight quite extensively. Nicola has been on the phone constantly trying to argue the cause of Albright and Wilson. I think she is to be congratulated for that. She has put in an enormous amount of effort to try to get some result here which would benefit them, but unfortunately this does not appear to be the case with the government. This has led us to put in a dissenting report. The dissenting report primarily says that the opposition members of the committee support comments included in paragraph 2.69 of recommendation 1 of the report. Paragraph 2.69 says:
2.69 The Committee believes there should be ongoing negotiation between Australia and New Zealand in order for tariff line 3402.20 to be exempted from the new ROO as was done, for example, for men’s suits.

We also say:

1.2 On balance, Opposition Members of the Committee recognise that the Agreement will increase trade between Australia and New Zealand in a mutually beneficial way and serve to strengthen existing economic ties between the countries. However, the Opposition Members of the Committee remain extremely concerned about the impact on jobs as a result of the change to the rules of origin in respect of the category of goods manufactured by Albright and Wilson (Australia). Therefore we have put in a change to recommendation 2. Recommendation 2 in the dissenting report states:

The Committee supports the Exchange of Letters constituting an Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of New Zealand to amend Article 3 of the Australia New Zealand Closer Economic Relations Trade Agreement (ANZCERTA) of 28 March 1983 and recommends that:

(a) binding treaty action be taken; and

(b) negotiations between Australia and New Zealand commence immediately to secure agreement on retention of the RVC method of calculating ROO under the current ANZCERTA for tariff line 3402.20 before the Amending Agreement comes into force.

In other words, we are saying to the government: get out there; it is not too late. Start negotiations with New Zealand before this treaty comes into effect on 1 January. Save 65 Australian jobs in Victoria and keep that profit here where it belongs.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Jenkins)—In accordance with standing order 39(c), the debate is adjourned. The resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

Publications Committee
Report

Mrs DRAPER (Makin) (9.43 am)—I present the report from the Publications Committee sitting in conference with the Publications Committee of the Senate. Copies of the report are being placed on the table.


ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (No. 1) 2006

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 18 October, on motion by Mr Hunt:

That this bill be now read a second time.

upon which Mr Albanese moved by way of amendment:

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

“the House declines to give the bill a second reading, and expresses strong concern that:

(1) the bill is being rushed through the Parliament without proper consideration or consultation;

(2) the Howard Government has failed to halt the decline in Australia’s natural environment and best agricultural land;

(3) the bill contains no measures to cut Australia’s spiralling greenhouse pollution or protect Australia from dangerous climate change;

(4) the bill will increase the Howard Government’s politicisation of environment and heritage protection; and

(5) many of the proposed changes in the bill will reduce Ministerial accountability and opportunities for genuine public consultation;

and therefore calls on the Howard Government to:

(6) ensure climate change is properly factored into environmental decision making under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (the Act);
(7) establish a climate change trigger in the Act to ensure large scale greenhouse polluting projects are assessed by the Federal Government; and

(8) allow greater time for public consultation and debate on the bill—

Mr GARRETT (Kingsford Smith) (9.44 am)—The deficiencies in the Environment and Heritage Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2006 that the government has brought into the House are extreme. The amendments that the member for Grayndler has moved are of real importance and need to be taken into account by the government.

I do note that in the original development of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, when Senator Hill was the environment minister, there was an extensive period of both consultation with and interaction between community groups, conservation organisations and other persons who had an interest in that legislation, as well as expertise and skill in that area. I would strongly urge the Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Senator Campbell, to take heed of the history of one of his predecessors in the way in which they actually took on board a number of the issues that were raised that were considered important. It is the case that there were some issues there that I did not think were satisfactorily resolved and there were deficiencies within the original bill—some of which have been addressed in this legislation, but very few. Notwithstanding that, the fact is that this legislation is complex in nature, it is a very large and bulky piece of legislation and it has come through in an extremely hasty fashion. There is an extremely important requirement that the community of interest—non-government organisations and others—have an opportunity, as the House also needs an opportunity, to properly consider the bill and to adequately deal with the amendments on the table, which will most likely go to the Senate as well.

The deficiencies in the bill before us have been identified in the member for Grayndler’s amendments. The Howard government has rushed the bill, without proper consultation. Importantly, it has failed to halt the decline in Australia’s natural environment. Here, critically, it is the Howard government’s current approach to conservation and environment protection that needs to be considered as we debate the bill.

There have been a number of concerns raised about the bill’s deficiencies. In particular, there are concerns about the reduction in ministerial accountability and opportunities for genuine public consultation. It is a fact that third-party access to the courts will be restricted. The proposed repealing of section 478 of the EPBC Act is a matter of some concern and it has been identified by legal experts and others as a significant loss. Abolishing the rights of third parties to seek a merits review by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal for ministerial decisions regarding permits for trade in wildlife is simply not acceptable, and I am sure there will be representations made and amendments put forward to deal with those particular deficiencies.

It is of great concern to us that this bill will potentially wipe a number of threatened ecological communities from the current waiting list for protection under the existing EPBC Act—some 500 threatened communities, amounting to millions of hectares, if not more, of endangered habitat across the country. In the context of Australia’s record of loss through extinction, the number of threatened and endangered species that are currently vulnerable in the landscape is of great concern. All of these issues are important, but what is critical is the fact that it is climate change that is bearing down upon the
habitats of the species of Australia. It is climate change that has the capacity to affect our environment, our ecological resilience, and it is climate change that this bill does not address at all.

Additionally, the capacity for review of the act is reduced, and we would argue very strongly that there needs to be regular reviewing of the act. As important as that is, I think the essential message here is that the minister has to go back and have a look at the deficiencies in this legislation. But it will be hard for the minister to do that, because the government’s existing suite of policies is completely lacking when it comes to seriously addressing climate change.

Recently, we had the spectacle of Minister Campbell opening a wind farm in China, while wind farms actually close here in Australia. I think Australians would be absolutely astonished to know that Australian jobs and the prospects for future Australian jobs in renewable energy—wind energy in particular—cannot happen here because the Howard government does not have the policies in place. Now it wants to bring in 400 pages or so of legislation that streamlines development consent and denies third-party rights to those wishing to challenge the minister’s decisions under the act. Yet there is not even a climate change trigger in this legislation. At the same time, the federal government’s policy deficiencies, evident not only in this legislation but also more broadly, are seeing Australian jobs being lost offshore—in effect, because the Howard government continues to be blind to what it needs to do about climate change.

Our river systems are in crisis. It is an overused word, but it is true. Our endangered species, and the possibility of species extinction, mean that we have a crisis. We have a crisis because we are blowing out our future greenhouse gas emissions. If we discount the deal that we got from the Kyoto protocol, which we did not sign, there is no doubt at all that land based and other emissions are going to increase rapidly in the longer term. And we have a crisis in relation to the way in which the government responds, in that when there are actually positive measures underway, when companies want to invest in renewables, as they have in Tasmania, the opportunities are not there for them. As a consequence, the environment minister goes to China to get involved and be proud of what can be done in the renewables industry there—with some Australian participation, it has to be said, in that wind farm. But here in Australia, where we have plenty of wind, companies that want to make that sort of investment, people we need to employ in that area and the prospect of actually reducing our greenhouse gas emissions and doing something about climate change, we are unable to because the Howard government is completely deficient when it comes to providing a meaningful response to climate change.

This legislation needs to be seriously looked at. The amendments that we have brought into the House need to be supported by the government. In particular, the government needs to consider the primary deficiencies that exist in this legislation and the necessity for a climate change trigger. Most importantly, it needs to listen to community interest, non-government organisations and others who want to see fair dinkum legislation—not this poor excuse for legislation—coming into this House that will protect the environment. We will simply see the business as usual approach to protecting environment in Australia that we have witnessed from the Howard government, which so far is not in any way seriously addressing the most important issue that we face: climate change. This legislation needs full debate. It cannot be rushed through the houses of the
parliament. We need to be able to consider the amendments and put them so as to improve this legislation, which is so poor. *(Time expired)*

**Mr TUCKEY (O’Connor) (9.53 am)—** It was unfortunate that I could only spend about five or six minutes listening to the member for Kingsford Smith’s speech on the Environment and Heritage Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2006. He is speedily leaving the premises so as not to hear some comments on the remarks he made in the last minutes of that speech. It was pretty interesting to hear him say a couple of things which in simplistic terms I agree with. He mentioned huge areas of species extinction. What he did not go on to say was that the most threatened group of indigenous species are grassland species. The Mitchell grasses of the far north and other grassland areas did not have one tree on them when Europeans first set out to settle in this country. Being one of those who is tree-centric, the member for Kingsford Smith has argued over the years that you do not knock down trees to save grass.

The Indigenous people burnt the grass every year and killed off the gidgee, and now we have intrusions of exotic species. I heard the other night that people are looking to satellite imagery to track these species, and there are thousands of acres of them. But you are not allowed to go in and knock them down either, because you might knock down a gidgee. The gidgee has destroyed the grass, and we wonder why we have got a category of endangered species. We now refer to these areas as forest, and they never were.

It is the same when the member for Kingsford Smith says our rivers are in crisis. According to his definition, the Darling was in crisis when it was first discovered by the explorer Sturt. He suddenly discovered a river stream. His cattle were dying of thirst and, when they got into the river bed, what was there? A trickle and it was as salty as the sea. In a later exploration, he got to Lake Alexandrina, the pride of Adelaide, and he could not get his rowboat across because it was so shallow. The further he progressed to the sea, the saltier it got and his plans were shattered when he could not get his rowboat into the ocean to join up with some vessel that was supposed to be there to collect him. He had to row back up the river because the river mouth was closed. That is now held up as national tragedy.

The Murray-Darling system was Australia’s biggest stormwater drain and it reverted to pools and little streams every year. That is a crisis for Australia, but it is not a crisis for the river because that is the natural state of the river as it is in other parts of Australia. Instead of being able to have proper debate on these matters, we have people who have built a sufficient personal reputation to get them into this parliament, like the member for Kingsford Smith, who promote arguments but never state the facts—that might be a problem for the legal profession in the wider experience.

Again, he throws in the one-liner of climate change. What solution is offered to this House to fix climate change for the world? Australia, for all the ridiculous argument that we are a high per capita generator of greenhouse gases, produces about one per cent of the world’s emissions. How do we achieve most of that? Not by the gross overuse of energy by the household sector—that is about 13 per cent of all the energy consumed in Australia. We have got state governments running around—and I think even our own government to a degree—targeting the household sector at a huge cost to homeowners, and it is a flea on the back of an elephant.
The reality is that we produce a lot of greenhouse gas supplying to other countries products like aluminium, otherwise known as congealed electricity. We provide that product so that other countries emit less. We provide liquefied natural gas so they can emit less and, throughout that process, even in the liquefaction of the gas, we create significant emissions. We create them from the natural gas itself. The great challenge to the Gorgon Project is the very high percentage of carbon dioxide that exists in the gas as it resides in the earth. Simply all natural gas has a component of CO₂ and it must be removed. It is exhausted to the atmosphere in the liquefaction process because it liquefies ahead of the methane and other components of natural gas, and it would in fact solidify and clog the system. We do that for the benefit of others.

As I have reminded my party room recently—and unfortunately it fell on too many deaf ears at the top—and the West Australian newspaper by press release, 10 per cent is the amount of gas that has to be consumed to liquefy natural gas. Put in simpler terms, if you produce one million tonnes of natural gas you burn, for the generation of electricity, 100,000 tonnes of natural gas. Yet in the vicinity of our natural gas resources off the north-west coast of Western Australia, we have a tidal resource equal to all of the energy consumed in Australia of every variety. Nobody wants to go and do anything about it—neither the government nor the opposition.

The opposition’s response to greenhouse emissions is to sign a bit of paper. All of those who have signed so far have not complied with its conditions. We, a country that has not ratified the Kyoto protocol, in fact have a better record than many who have committed to it. It excludes the major emitters. It is reported that China is building a powerhouse per week, each of which is larger than those operating in Australia, and they are burning any sort of coal they can get for that purpose.

But there is this tidal resource. We are aware of high-voltage DC transmission technology which will allow this electricity to be delivered over lengthy distances. Here we are with that resource and nobody is suggesting government investment at both the federal and state level along with private sector investment. It is a tragedy that we have masses—close to $1 trillion—of superannuation funds, including the industry funds, and people are running all around the world building tollways in Canada and buying up the water infrastructure of London, yet they will not invest a cent in infrastructure within Australia. That infrastructure would create a viable, reliable energy generation capacity.

In fact, the great asset of tidal power is that its fuel is capital but its running costs are virtually nil. The French have been producing 350 megawatts of tidal power at La Rance for 40 years. I am advised that during that period even the maintenance cost of that generating equipment has been nearly nothing. We have a tidal resource that averages 11 metres twice a day. That is four cycles for a tidal generator: tide in, tide out; tide in, tide out. Everybody knows it is there. The topography lends itself to the construction of tidal power generators. And now we have a base customer—the liquefied natural gas sector. We could reduce its emissions by 10 per cent. We could have 10 per cent more gas to liquefy and sell. There are other opportunities once you create that base load. There is a huge bauxite deposit at Mitchell Plateau—the basis of an integrated aluminium industry. Aluminium, as I have previously said, is known as congealed electricity.

I invite the member for Kingsford Smith to convince his leader to stand up in this place and gazump our government for its...
neglect of that facility. But he might in the process also attack the Western Australian government for its failure to do anything about it. We have Premier Carpenter putting at risk all of the projects there by demanding that 20 per cent—or I think it is now 15 per cent—of the gas produced must be retained for Western Australia, without any understanding of what that means or whether it will frighten off investment due to sovereign risk. In fact, he could be saying: ‘I’m going to ask the federal government, along with the private sector, to help me to put in these tidal generators. I want to swap that for 10 per cent of the gas for electricity which you are burning already.’ The Brouse development is yet to even start and it wants 900 megawatts of electricity—that would be a nuclear power station if you want to go down that the road.

I look at the amendments of the members opposite. There is another pious amendment. They are saying all of these things like, ‘The bill is being rushed through the parliament.’ The debates on these things have taken place for both parties back in the committee rooms. They say, ‘The Howard government has failed to halt the decline in Australia’s natural environment and best agricultural land.’ I have just covered that. The state governments—New South Wales at the forefront and Queensland not far behind—are declaring trees that never existed to be remnant vegetation and refusing farmers the right to reinstate the natural grasslands. We have built weirs and dams along our river system, and I approve of that. They suggest that there is something wrong with the rivers because they are now going dry. But that is their natural state and it is ridiculous to talk about them in this fashion.

The member for Kingsford Smith, in the five or six minutes I was here, started to talk about wind farms and the fact that the minister is over in China doing something that we are not encouraging here. Why should we not encourage wind farms? They are a fraud. The rated capacity of these things is quoted. It is recognised that they never achieve better than 30 per cent of that rated capacity, but, what is more, unless they can be backed up with a highly responsive generator—in the case of small operations, a diesel generator; in the case of Tasmania, hydro; and even, to an extent, gas—you can manage their productivity or lack thereof.

Even the sparkies referred to by the member for Perth the other day will tell you that, in a coal-fired base power station, you have to make a decision at, say, three o’clock in the afternoon about starting to burn coal and generate steam for the five or six o’clock demand, when housewives and others turn on their electric stoves or whatever. You lack responsiveness. So what are the coal generators doing at present when the wind varies over five-minute intervals and the generating capacity of the wind towers is affected? They burn the coal in anticipation. They have to keep the pressure up because they do not know just how much power will come out of those wind generators. So they are burning as much coal as they did before and we have all the expensive infrastructure loading costs onto the basic network.

There is nothing wrong with a wind generator provided you do not connect it to the grid. An example was posted in the *Australian* newspaper recently: 150 megawatts of wind-generated capacity in New Zealand suffers variations in productivity of 100 megawatts—roughly 70 per cent—over five-minute intervals, and the power transmission people have more trouble when it goes up than when it comes down, because it is likely to start frying people’s equipment. What is the good of that? By the way, tidal power is cyclical, but you can predict, as we stand here, peak tide a hundred years from now. Moon power, of course, generates the tides—the circumnavigation of the moon—and, I
might add, other factors within the subsea topography.

Let me just tell you how bad the interference of bureaucracy is. In my electorate, in a town called Hopetoun, which is becoming a dormitory suburb for BHP Billiton’s $1.8 billion laterite nickel development, we assisted the state electricity commission to erect a 600-kilowatt wind generator. It is backed up by a 700-kilowatt diesel generator. That is quite a suitable package. I am advised that, consequently, there has been a reduction in diesel fuel consumption. Diesel motors, of course, are responsive to the variations I have mentioned. There is barely any industry in that township. At around nine o’clock to 11 o’clock they turn out the lights, and that is always the time when the wind blows strongest. So I suggested to the minister that we ought to supply some money to buy an electrolysis unit—you can buy them off the shelf. For the same purpose, the Canadian government has just donated one to a Patagonian town. They have more brains than Australia does. They are doing exactly what I am now going to propose.

I said: while the wind generator is going around at night time and there is virtually no demand, why not make hydrogen by electrolysis—a schoolboy experiment—and use the fuel to power a conversion on your diesel motor that backs up the wind tower at times of high demand? To the minister’s credit—and he was just criticised by the member for Kingsford Smith—he said, ‘What a good idea.’ He invited me to have a discussion with one of his officials, who lied to me for half an hour. The environmental public servant told me, ‘You can’t store hydrogen.’ I do not know how they manage at Cape Canaveral while they are waiting for the weather to be suitable for a launch! Enough hydrogen is made in the world today to provide for 200 million hydrogen fuel cell motor cars, and I have an official telling me, ‘The atoms are too small, Mr Tuckey. It’d all leak out of the tank.’

Well, driving around Perth are three hydrogen fuel cell buses—there is a gaggle of them around the world for a developmental project—and, of course, they have fuel tanks containing hydrogen. Tomorrow BMW will sell you a 7 series limousine containing a fuel tank, like a thermos flask, with liquid hydrogen in it. The limousine’s internal combustion motor runs on either hydrogen or petrol. Why can’t this parliament focus on the practical solutions to an identifiable problem? Let us not have all these fear campaigns and silly arguments that you can create jobs out of the Kyoto protocol by letting people trade in the futures market—a very dangerous area, as AWB Ltd has just discovered. Unfortunately, I have run out of time, Mr Deputy Speaker, but thanks for your cooperation. (Time expired)

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Jenkins)—I regret to admit that I was actually listening intently to the member.

Mr KELVIN THOMSON (Wills) (10.14 am)—It is nice to have an audience! Australia can and should be an environmental showcase. We have wonderful riches in this country—a great diversity of flora and fauna, our landscapes, our mountains, our beaches. They really are second to none around the world. Unfortunately, we have failed to look after this magnificent heritage in the way that we should have done. If we look at all the objective indicators of environmental performance—salinity and the problems of salt, river water quality, decline of the Murray-Darling Basin, land clearing, species extinctions and the number of threatened flora and fauna species—we see that Australia’s environment is deteriorating. In some places, we have managed to completely trash it.

The Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act has real potential to
assist us, to help out, in this important task of protecting our magnificent environment for future generations, and as custodians on behalf of the rest of the world. But it has never been used to try to achieve that important objective—and I want to return to that matter. These hundreds of pages now before us in the shape of this bill, the Environment and Heritage Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2006, will not solve this problem either. So I am not going to support this bill, but I am going to support the amendment moved by the member for Grayndler. I particularly wish to support those parts of his amendment which go to the issue of global warming and the need for a greenhouse trigger in the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act. Global warming or climate change is the elephant in the room in any debate about the environment both in this country and in other countries around the world, and yet there is not one mention of global warming in the hundreds of pages of amendments which we are dealing with here.

The impact of global warming on Australia is very severe. We are experiencing it now in the shape of the drought. Back in 2002 when I was shadow environment minister, I made reference to the drought which we were experiencing then and the link between it and greenhouse gas emissions and to the predictions of the CSIRO, the Bureau of Meteorology and scientific experts right around the world, and yet there is not one mention of global warming in the hundreds of pages of amendments which we are dealing with here.

The drought has of course its greatest impact on farmers and on rural communities. It is causing great hardship in rural communities. It is threatening their future because water is of course their lifeblood. Those farmers and those rural communities have been appallingly let down by their Liberal Party and National Party representatives. They have been sold out by those Liberal Party and National Party representatives who, over the years, have sought to undermine and scuttle every effort at tackling global warming and climate change. I say to those farmers: you have been sold out by your Liberal Party and National Party representatives.

The first thing that we need to do to tackle climate change and global warming is to act at the international level because it is a global problem—CO₂ emissions in the atmosphere is a global matter. I had the good fortune to go to the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg back in 2002 and I can report that the Australian delegation to that World Summit on Sustainable Development did everything it could to scuttle and undermine serious international efforts to tackle climate change. It undermined anything which went to the idea of targets and timetables committing us or other countries to firm and resolute action to contain and rein in our greenhouse gas emissions. Essentially, in this matter the Prime Minister has been sitting on George W
Bush’s lap. We simply will not dare tell the United States or ask the United States to act or do anything in relation to greenhouse emissions. Our farmers should be demanding international action. Kyoto gets scoffed at by members opposite, but if we are on about collective international action—and we need to be on about collective international action—then the Kyoto protocol is terribly important to that process. Of course there is no value in Australia acting unilaterally if nobody else acts. Of course that is right and that is precisely why we need international action, and why we ought to get behind Kyoto and demand that the United States does likewise.

The second thing that farmers ought to be demanding is that we put a price on carbon. That should be in the form of emissions trading so that we enable the market to work. The government talks about technological solutions, but those solutions will not come to pass in the absence of market signals to encourage them and that is why we need to put a price on carbon. The third thing that farmers should be demanding is that we increase the renewable energy target. This government’s renewable energy target is laughable. It is just two per cent, which compares very poorly with that of other countries—and it has been effectively exhausted. Those in the wind energy industry and in other renewable energy industries are now looking offshore to other countries in order to place their projects, because the renewable energy target that we have in place has already been effectively subscribed. We should put a greenhouse trigger in the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act.

Global warming impacts very severely in Australia, not just in the shape of drought—although very severely in the shape of drought—but also in the shape of more frequent and more severe bushfires, in the prospective loss of snow in our alpine areas, in the coral bleaching on the Great Barrier Reef and in the prospect of tropical diseases like dengue fever or even malaria spreading further south. The other area in which it is likely to impact on Australia and on future generations is in climate change refugees. People are probably familiar with the problem of the low-lying islands in the South Pacific—Tuvalu, Kiribati and so on—which are threatened with inundation and effectively extinction by global warming, and the issue of refugees from those countries. New Zealand, for example, has made some offers in that regard. But what about places like Bangladesh? It is not possible to imagine a world in which millions and millions of refugees from climate change seek to enter Australia and other countries. This government has made pitiful and lame excuses for inaction. It has said that Kyoto will not solve the problem; that it is not enough. Well, maybe—but it is a start. Do you ever hear the government calling for more? What it effectively engages in is a counsel of despair. It says, ‘Kyoto won’t solve the problem; therefore, we won’t do anything.’

Then there is renewable energy. You have a Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry who attacks wind farms. What a disgraceful sell-out of Australia’s farmers. You have a Minister for Industry, Tourism and Resources who says he is still not convinced it is happening. He is out there with Andrew Bolt and a handful of other dopes who still think that the world is flat and that smoking does not cause lung cancer. I urge these people to go and see the Al Gore film *An Inconvenient Truth* and then explain to this nation’s farmers and rural communities that they would sooner see the southern part of Australia turned into a dustbowl, sooner see the southern part of Australia become an uninhabitable desert, than have the courage to tell George W Bush that he is wrong about climate change and global warming. I re-
cently heard the Minister for Foreign Affairs saying it was cowardly to get out of Iraq. I will tell members what is cowardly, and that is refusing to admit you got it wrong. It takes courage to admit you have made a mistake, and the government needs to have the courage to admit that it has been wrong in Iraq and it has been wrong about global warming. It needs to have the courage to go to the President of the United States and say, ‘You have been wrong about Iraq, you have been wrong about global warming and you need to change tack.’ That is what real courage is.

Here in Australia it is said we should not subsidise renewable energy, which is now going offshore due to a lack of support. The government say you should not be providing subsidies; that will cost taxpayers. What do they think is happening to us now as a result of global warming? We are paying hundreds of millions of dollars to farmers in drought relief, with no end in sight. The drought relief budget has rocketed up in the past five years. They need to get serious about renewable energy and serious about things like alternative fuels for cars. They say: ‘We don’t believe in Kyoto, we don’t believe in international action, we don’t believe in emissions trading, we don’t believe in setting a target for emissions reduction by 2050, we don’t believe in increasing the renewable energy target—but it is all right, because we are taking practical measures; we believe in practical measures.’

Recently I heard Senator Ian Campbell, the Minister for the Environment and Heritage, again saying that his government was the first to set up a greenhouse office. All right—but what has it done? Our renewable energy performance is abysmal compared to the rest of the world. We used to be leaders in things like solar energy. The Australian Greenhouse Office has systematically underspent its budget every year since its establishment. Back in 2000-01 it was allocated $230 million and it spent $81 million—nearly $150 million underspent. The next year it was allocated $227 million and again it spent $81 million, another massive underspend. Do you know how the government tackled this problem? They slashed its budget. In subsequent years the Australian Greenhouse Office budget has been cut to between $110 million and $125 million—and still it keeps underspending it. In the eight years since it was established, the Australian Greenhouse Office underspend has been $362,475,000. So much for this government’s commitment to seriously tackling global warming; so much for their commitment to practical measures. The government owe Australians, and Australia’s farmers in particular, an apology for this shameful neglect.

I frequently hear people on the other side, like the Treasurer, talking about debt as a terrible legacy for our children and our grandchildren. It is a terrible legacy for our children and our grandchildren that this government has failed to seriously deal with global warming—future generations will be horrified by this period of wilful inaction—coming up with every reason in the book for inaction: it is not proven, there is scientific doubt, other countries ought to do more, technological change is the answer, nuclear power is the answer. The government comes up with any reason, as long as it is excused and as long as it excuses us here in this place from the need to take action—delay, defer, postpone.

I make the observation that I do not think nuclear is the answer. It is too far away. It requires a lot of water. It requires public subsidies. There is talk of public subsidies in relation to renewable energy—but just have a look at the insurance issues surrounding nuclear power and of course the location of reactors in dealing with the waste products.
This act has plenty of potential, but it has been a failure. The Australia Institute in July last year conducted a five-year assessment of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, and its conclusions were:

In almost all areas, the regime has failed to produce any noticeable improvements in environmental outcomes.

Despite overwhelming evidence of widespread non-compliance, the Commonwealth has taken only two enforcement actions in relation to the—
environmental assessment and approval regime—in five years.

On the basis of the available evidence, it is hard to describe the ... regime as anything other than a waste of time and money.

And, finally:

... since the ... regime commenced, the condition of Australia’s natural and cultural heritage has continued to decline and the—
environmental assessment and approval—provisions have not made a noticeable contribution to stopping or reversing this trend.

It is very unfortunate and a damning indictment of the way in which the EPBC Act has been used—or not been used.

Ironically, just about the only time it has been used was not to achieve an environmental objective; it was to block an environmental project. That was the $220 million wind farm proposal in Bald Hills. In the Age, back in April, Sean Dooley, who is a birdwatcher and a writer, wrote concerning the Bald Hills decision:

As a birdwatcher, I must admit it came as something of a pleasant surprise to see a member of this Government professing such deep concern for one of my favourite birds—that is, the orange-bellied parrot. He continued:

In the past, it didn’t seem to bother them that they bypassed all environment considerations when they wanted to build the new detention centre on Christmas Island, despite its being within spitting distance of one of the largest breeding colonies of the critically endangered Abbott’s booby ...

He went on to point out that that was a type of sea bird that only nests on Christmas Island, not one of the Minister for Health’s more outrageous comments. Mr Dooley went on to say that the environment minister was:...

... shutting down a $220 million wind farm proposal at Bald Hills in South Gippsland on the basis that though the orange-bellied parrot has never actually been recorded there, one might turn up and it may get sliced by the spinning blades of the turbines.

He said:

Wow, and this level of concern from a member of the same party as former Victorian premier Jeff Kennett who called the orange-bellied parrot a “trumped-up corella” when he wanted to move the Coode Island chemical facility to the epicentre of one of its most crucial wintering grounds.

The Minister for the Environment and Heritage stated that ‘the failure to identify orange-bellied parrots does not mean they do not use the area’. Mr Dooley went on to say:...

... imagine the truckloads of scorn and derision that would have been dumped on someone such as Bob Brown if he had come out with such a statement.

He went on to say:

If the hypothetical threat of losing one bird to a turbine is too much for the minister to bear, then he must be beside himself to realise that his Government did nothing to stop a wind farm being built at Yambuk in western Victoria right in the vicinity of where real, live, actual—

orange-bellied parrots—have been regularly recorded in the past few years.

It is incredible. You have an environment minister who blocked the wind farm where the orange-bellied parrots are not but al—
allowed a wind farm where the orange-bellied parrots are. As soon as he was taken to court, he was ducking for cover because he had absolutely no evidence on which to base his decision. Australians and the Australian environment deserve better than this. I urge the House to support the second reading amendment moved by the member for Grayndler.

Mr JOHNSON (Ryan) (10.33 am)—I am pleased and delighted to speak in the parliament again on a very significant piece of government legislation, the Environment and Heritage Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2006. In fact it is a world-class piece of legislation that I know many Australians will support. Certainly the overwhelming majority of Ryan constituents will support it. We have just heard, again, another inaccurate and, frankly, pathetic presentation from the member for Wills. As usual, the federal opposition play the man—they do not play the ball—including abuse of the US President and abuse of the Australian Prime Minister, and they have hardly anything to say in the way of substantial policy.

Before I speak on the bill in any depth I want to take this opportunity—as a very strong supporter of the coalition government—on behalf of the people of Ryan to extend their very best wishes to our farmers, our country brethren, who are doing it tough. As we all know, this is a terrible time for them in terms of the environment and the drought in particular. The environmental suffering they are going through with the drought is quite awful. The people of Ryan would want me to extend their very best wishes and their sympathies to their country brethren. They will also, I am sure, support the government’s initiatives to financially support our farmers in this difficult time.

The first thing that can be said about running the Australian economy is that it has to be a strong economy to support all the services that the Australian people expect. In the area of the environment, again, nothing is more significant to good environmental policy, programs and long-term and sustainable environmental policy than a strong economy that will underwrite federal funding.

Of course, we know that at the moment the Australian economy is humming along quite nicely. The challenges and problems we have are ones of labour shortage. Our economic challenges and difficulties are those coming from national prosperity. We all know that the opposite problem is having massive unemployment and massive labour oversupply. When you have that, when it comes to the environment, no government policy will be effective—you cannot have people not in work—and the government’s focus will be on trying to get people into work rather than on good policies that will improve our environment. In terms of the environment generally, a hallmark of the coalition’s approach to the support and protection of our environment is the encouragement of hands-on and grassroots strategies—very successful programs like the Natural Heritage Trust, the Australian government’s Envirofund and, of course, one of my favourites, the Green Corps program.

These programs have helped to protect eight million hectares of wetlands and to treat 400,000 hectares of land for salinity and erosion. They have helped 800,000 volunteers to get involved and to have a stake in their local environment. And with funding of over $1.55 billion in 2006-07, the coalition government is also taking direct action to further tackle salinity, boost water sustainability, improve our air quality, address climate change, control pests and weeds, and invest in environmental research. It will help to protect forest diversity, endangered species, oceans, whales, the Great Barrier Reef in Queensland and natural Indigenous and
built heritage. This commitment has been backed up with resources, with total environment expenditure increasing from $379 million in the Labor year of 1995 to $1.55 billion in 2006-07.

This bill is a strong indication of the government’s meaningful focus on environmental policy. The Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999—the EPBC—is Australia’s strongest ever environmental protection law. It was introduced in 2000; it represents the most fundamental reform of Australian government environment laws since the first environmental statutes were enacted in the early 1970s.

As usual, we hear the federal Labor Party bagging all of the good things the Howard government does. They stand to be condemned because all they do is whinge and carp, rarely coming up with anything of substance as an alternative policy when they seek to run this country—or, I should say, when they seek to be in power with their union masters.

The EPBC Act enables the Australian government to join with the states and territories in providing a truly national scheme of environment protection and biodiversity conservation. The act establishes a comprehensive regulatory scheme for the conservation and management of important protected areas and places, including national heritage sites. The act provides for improved enforcement through the introduction of strong and effective civil and criminal penalties for noncompliance as well as provides for environmental audits.

The protection of matters of national environmental significance—including world and national heritage places, internationally recognised wetlands and nationally listed threatened species across all of Australia and its waters—provides for improved environmental outcomes in a wide range of significant activities such as major mining developments, offshore seismic surveys, urban development, infrastructure projects and energy production. The EPBC Act’s environmental assessment of fisheries ensures that Australia’s fisheries are ecologically sustainable and that the export and import of wildlife is consistent with international wildlife trade conventions. Those are some of the elements that the act provides for.

The act has been in operation for six years, and during this time it has provided protection for more than 1,680 flora and fauna species, 37 threatened ecological communities, hundreds of migratory birds and animal species such as whales, albatrosses and shorebirds. Some 64 Australian wetlands have been listed on the Ramsar convention as well as 16 World Heritage places and 29 national heritage places.

While the EPBC Act was a major reform, the amendments in this legislation will improve it further. They will streamline the operation of the act and, importantly, will reduce red tape, which we on this side of parliament are in the business of doing. The changes mean that matters of national environmental significance will continue to be protected, but that business—large and small—will be able to benefit from a more streamlined approvals process. The amendments will ensure that environmental protection continues while ensuring certainty for business and investors.

The amendments will, as I said, streamline the act and cut red tape. They are going to speed up approval processes, particularly for more straightforward proposals. Importantly, they will reduce duplication by enabling the Minister for the Environment and Heritage to rely on approval conditions set by other governments. They will encourage bilateral agreements by enabling accreditation of state and territory authorisation processes, man-
agement arrangements and legally binding management plans. Importantly, they will make the EPBC process more flexible, which is something quite desirable. They will speed up decisions by reducing the number of mandatory steps in the process and allowing different processes to occur concurrently. The amendments will also allow voluntarily compensatory actions and financial contributions as offsets to unavoidable environmental impacts. The amendments will also encourage major developments to be considered earlier in the development phase by allowing individual projects approved under strategic assessments, regional plans and conservation agreements to be exempt from further assessment under the act.

The amendments will also strengthen compliance and enforcement, which is very significant. They will establish strict liability provisions for a number of offences under the act, and, as those who have a legal background will know, this confirms a well-known legal principle that ignorance of the law is not a defence. They will introduce penalties for minor breaches of approval conditions, provide alternatives to lengthy and expensive court proceedings and allow the minister to require mediation action.

An important provision that should be noted is that employers and principals will be liable for the actions of their employees and contractors, and landholders will be liable for what happens on their land. The bill will introduce measures to deal with the increasing problem of illegal fishing by foreign nationals in Australian jurisdictions, which Australia must be very focused on. This is a very important bill; it is an amendment bill with very significant provisions.

I want to also talk about the Natural Heritage Trust, which those in the Ryan community will all know of. It was the biggest, most successful environmental restoration program in Australia’s history—it provided $3 billion in funding to help local communities in 56 regions across Australia to clean beaches, rehabilitate coastlines, reduce erosion, improve the health of land and waterways, increase the productivity of agricultural land and protect our threatened species.

That is the sort of funding that a federal government can allocate when it is confident the national economy is prosperous and is continuing to grow and to expand. As I said at the beginning of my speech, if the economy is not right, if the economy is not growing, if the economy is not expanding, and if people are not employed and in good jobs, then any Australian government would be in less of a position to allocate resources to the environment, which all of us, as Australians, want to protect, want to conserve and want to leave in a better condition than we find it currently. I reject absolutely those opposite who think they somehow have the moral high ground on the environment, they somehow have the monopoly of knowledge and they have the exclusivity of wisdom on matters environmental. They do not, and those of us on this side of the chamber should reject that absolutely and unequivocally.

Native vegetation work has been conducted on 1.57 million hectares of land; 63 million seedlings have been planted; 113,000 kilometres of fencing have been constructed; 4.2 million hectares of land have been protected from erosion; and 172,000 megalitres of drainage water or treatment effluent were recycled—all this happened under a very significant Natural Heritage Trust agenda.

I also want to take the opportunity in the parliament to remind the Ryan electorate of the Envirofund, which the Australian government promotes very strongly and very proudly, because it is something that we should be very proud of. The Howard government, of course, in 2002 launched the
Australian government’s Envirofund to specifically focus on and facilitate the local action component of the $3 billion Natural Heritage Trust. In fact, only this month, the environment minister announced $20 million worth of community projects, raising the total investment by the Envirofund to more than $110 million.

I also want to speak in the parliament about the Green Corps project because I have had a lot to do with this in the Ryan electorate. I support it very strongly. It gives our young people an opportunity to connect with their local communities and the environment. It is youth orientated. It allows for personal growth as well as doing something very good for the communities’ environmental challenges. It is for people between the ages of 17 and 20. It is one of the very significant initiatives of the Howard government in the area of environmental policy. I have had the opportunity to go to pretty much every Green Corps launch and graduation in the Ryan electorate, and I am a very strong supporter of the projects. I know that many Ryan constituents think that the Howard government should support the Kyoto protocol. I want to say to the parliament that the Howard government will not support the Kyoto protocol for one fundamental reason—that is, it is not in the national interests of this country. Unlike those opposite, we are in the business of running this country for the benefit of this country, not for the benefit of other people.

We are in the business of running this country for the interests of all Australians. To ratify the Kyoto protocol would destroy thousands of jobs held by the workers of Australia, whom I would have thought the Labor Party would stand up for very strongly. Here we have the Labor Party, the so-called workers party—the political party that claims to be the friend of workers—prepared to sign an international agreement that would destroy the jobs of thousands of workers, thousands of Australians. For the life of me I cannot understand how a party that claims to represent the working class would be prepared to sign an agreement that would destroy families by taking away their employment. This is just absurd.

This lies at the heart of why the Howard government will not support the Kyoto protocol. Kyoto does not require the high greenhouse gas emitting countries such as China, Indonesia and Brazil to be under any obligation whatsoever to clean up their own act. While we emit some 1.4 per cent of the
world’s emissions, we would be compromised. I know that the Labor Party keeps banging on this drum, saying that this is the solution, but this is not the solution.

I want to again say to those in the Ryan electorate, in particular, that the Howard government is in the business of protecting the national economy. We are in the business of ensuring that Australians have job security. We are going to focus on things like the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate. This is a substantial agreement that, as those well-educated and very thoughtful Ryan constituents will know, brought together ministers from China, India, Japan, the Republic of Korea and the US in January this year to Sydney for the inaugural ministerial meeting. These six founding partners, including Australia, encompass some 49 per cent of the world’s GDP, 48 per cent of the world’s energy consumption and 48 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions, not to mention 45 per cent of the world’s population.

This approach is going to have more impact than signing an agreement that leaves out the world’s largest greenhouse gas emitter. With Australia contributing only 1.4 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions, we played host to a significant meeting which showed that we in this country are well and truly punching above our weight in the area of climate control. The Howard government has committed some $100 million over five years to contribute to capacity-building activities under this partnership. This is on top of some $1.8 billion that we have already invested in Australia to address climate change, including $500 million for low-emission technologies and over $200 million for renewable energy initiatives.

I want to say to my electorate, to the good people of Ryan, that I know that they are very concerned about the environment. The western suburbs of Brisbane, which many of my colleagues in this parliament and many members of the cabinet and the ministry have been to in support of my representation of that local community, are in a wonderful area. The environment is very much at the top of the agenda. I will continue to focus on the initiatives, policies and ideas of this government that will enhance the environment and not only assist the community of Ryan but leave this country’s environmental landscape a better place. Again, I reject the assertion that the Labor Party bang on about—that is, that they have a total monopoly in this area. I think that the government would be well served to remind the Australian community that we are the party of ideas. We are the party of initiatives. We are the party of substantial policy that makes a difference to this country.

Mr CREAN (Hotham) (10.53 am)—I rise to oppose the Environment and Heritage Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2006 and support the amendment that has been moved by the member for Grayndler. This bill demonstrates, as graphically as it can, the vast gulf of difference between Labor’s approach to protecting our environment and the Howard government’s approach. Before I go to the details, we want to complain and register our concern about the process which has been moved by the member for Grayndler. This bill demonstrates, as graphically as it can, the vast gulf of difference between Labor’s approach to protecting our environment and the Howard government’s approach. Before I go to the details, we want to complain and register our concern about the process which has been associated with this legislation but which is just a pattern now.

This bill was introduced last week—409 pages of it. There has not been any opportunity for the Parliamentary Library to prepare a Bills Digest to assist us in our research, which is the normal practice in this place. I am told by the library that, because of the way in which this government is bringing legislation in and dropping it on the table at the last minute, they will not be able to produce that digest for another two weeks. I make that point because this is not the way to run a democracy, let alone solve our envi-
enronmental problems. This government needs to lift its act considerably in terms of treating the parliament with respect so that important pieces of legislation can be given proper and adequate consideration.

This bill is 409 pages of complex law. The one thing that is noticeable from going through the 409 pages very quickly is that in all of those 409 pages there is not one mention of climate change. How can you really seriously introduce environment and heritage legislation that does not mention climate change? Does the government not think it is a problem? According to this bill it is not, because it has no proposals to address that problem.

We on this side of the House argue that climate change is one of the most important challenges facing not just us as a nation but us as a planet. If there should be any doubt about it, at the same time this week a report on a poll conducted by the Lowy Institute for International Policy was released. It is very interesting. It is very revealing in what it says the Australian public consider to be the most important issue. On the issue of global warming, the report says:

Easily the most popular option, supported by more than two thirds ... of respondents, was that global warming is a serious and pressing problem ...

In other words, they identified global warming as the key issue, the consequences of which are climate change. Sixty-eight per cent of people polled see it as a serious and pressing problem and argue that we should be taking steps now, even if it involves significant costs. Another 24 per cent on top of the 68 per cent say that global warming should be addressed but that its effects will be gradual, so we can deal with the problem gradually. Only seven per cent of the population said that global warming is not really a problem and until we are sure that it is a problem we should not take any steps.

That is a very significant finding because it demonstrates where the Australian public is and where the Howard government is. This bill follows the seven per cent. This is the seven per cent option. This is the minimalist, stick your head in the sand and do nothing approach. Even the member for Ryan, who spoke before me, admits that his constituents are urging him to do something about signing the Kyoto protocol, and he ignores them.

Mr Pyne—We are doing something about it.

Mr CREAN—You are not doing anything about it. I will come to the issues that the bill attempts to deal with. The bill shows, as I said, that it is really only pandering to the seven per cent of the population. It is ignoring the overwhelming call for action in this area. We oppose the bill because of its failure to deal with the key issues.

Some of the amendments it proposes, we do admit, are of benefit. We acknowledge that. For example, the bill aligns the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act and the Fisheries Management Act, which will be a significant factor in assisting in the management of our depleted fisheries. As a previous minister who had responsibility for resources and fisheries, amongst other things, I can say that this is a key area in preserving not just diversity but the source of supply for the future.

The bill will also allow for increased cooperation between the Australian government and state and territory governments. I think that is a good thing. But from all of the contact we have had with state governments we have heard that they too were given very little notice of what was involved in this bill. Just as this side of the parliament has been treated with contempt, so the government treats its state counterparts with contempt,
yet it knows that the solution to these problems intrinsically involves the two levels of government working together. We are failing in this is because the government thinks that what it is doing can do alone, and when it is left to its own devices it exposes the deficiency in its approach.

The bill also streamlines processes and eliminates unnecessary steps. We support those actions, as long as the public interest is protected and proper consultation is allowed. Clearly, we need to continue to strike a balance. The member for Ryan referred to this obliquely, but we genuinely believe that it is possible to strike a balance between sustainability and industry development. Labor has been at the forefront in government as well as in opposition in promoting solutions that achieve that objective. The original intention of the bill was to strike that balance between development and the environment. So we will address those issues. We recognise their importance. We would be prepared to support those particular measures if they were not contained within a bill that is deficient in so many other areas. We want the government to withdraw the bill and come back with a better-crafted solution. The opposition’s second reading amendment highlights those. We also want to amend the bill to address the real and urgent environmental issues that face us: properly assessing greenhouse polluting projects, restoring appeal rights, restoring the independence of decision making, ensuring proper public consultation, reviewing the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act and addressing the issues raised out of the Senate inquiry.

Apart from those amendments, which we are proposing in a positive way, the bill itself should also be opposed because it curtails appeal rights, undermines public consultation and further politicises the decision-making process. I will come to that at the end of my speech. Above all, it should be opposed because it does nothing in itself to address the worsening water crisis or to protect the fragile coastal environment. It has been put forward by the Minister for the Environment and Heritage, who has totally politicised environmental and heritage protection. We remember the farce of the orange-bellied parrot and the minister who rode his horse around Parliament House in support of cattle grazing in the alpine high country.

On the question of water, our water crisis today is directly linked to climate change. When I was the leader of the Labor Party, one of my highest priorities was saving our rivers and restoring our land. More than three years ago I made a commitment to restore environmental flows to the Murray and to restore the health of that mighty river. I proposed the establishment of RiverBank to invest in water infrastructure in joint venture arrangements with state governments, in private sector water efficiency projects and in
water supply improvement projects. We committed to returning 1,500 gigalitres into that once mighty river—the river that I walked across at its mouth and which had the width of a cricket pitch. In those days, that was dramatic enough. The other day, you only had to look at the picture in the press of the young girl walking across the Darling River, which has dried up. These rivers were the lifeblood of the nation. In any other country whose mightiest rivers were in serious decline or under threat from dying, they would have been doing something about it years ago—but not this government.

As I said, we proposed those initiatives back then. It was a billion-dollar program. It was fully costed and it was fully funded. It could have been afforded, and we demonstrated how it could be afforded then. We invited the government to pick it up and work in a bipartisan way to address this problem. Not only did they not pick it up; they used the 2003 budget to cut funding to the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality. This government now wants credit for being seen to do something on water. I welcome the fact that they have finally recognised what we have been saying for so long. I welcome the fact that they have recognised the need to put effort and money into it. But what have they done? They have put forward a proposal for $500 million. Just imagine how much further down the track we would be had this government embraced what Labor put forward in an affordable way more than three years ago—a billion-dollar program over four years on top of their $500 million now.

It would be a real program that could give you leverage with the states, not this bickering that we see going on. We see Malcolm Turnbull, the great champion of water. Every time they ask him for a solution he says, ‘Oh, it is the states’ problem.’ I will tell you this: the Australian public are sick to death of the buck passing between levels of government. They want a cooperative effort. They want solutions—practical solutions—worked out. Of course it is going to involve commitment in terms of resources. But we are a wealthy economy, and these are the sorts of investments an economy that is prosperous should be making. They are about preservation for future generations. They are essential investments that this country needs to make.

As another demonstration of the impact of climate change, our 10 hottest years have occurred in the last 14 years. Just think about that. That is a dramatic demonstration of how serious this problem has become. It is on this government’s watch that this dramatic increase in the problem has occurred. The year 2005 was the hottest year on record, and the Murray River is at its lowest level for over 100 years. That paints a dramatic picture. If anyone wants any further demonstration of it, look at the drought.

The government have finally acknowledged the problem with drought this week. They have produced another drought package. But unless the government are prepared to tackle climate change, this issue is just going to get worse. What is the point in doling out relief packages time after time unless you are dealing with the cause? If they are failing to deal with climate change, they are failing to deal with the issues of our water flows, of drought and of all the consequences that go with it. It is not just the impact on the economy that people should worry about; think about the social infrastructure. There have been many reports of suicides, deaths and families being ripped apart. We have an obligation to save our nation, to look after it and to nurture it. We should not let it languish, blame someone else and refuse to turn up to the negotiating table to try and address the problem. That is the extent of inaction by this government.
Drought relief is essential. I acknowledge that. Indeed, when I was Minister for Primary Industries and Energy, I developed the national drought policy. I heard the Prime Minister the other day claim credit for the Farm Management Deposits scheme. I introduced it. I am delighted that the government have kept it because it is an important part of the way in which we encourage farmers to prepare their land and their natural resource base to prevent the impact and the ravages of drought. The package that I developed provided immediate relief and assistance for farmers and enabled better preparation for drought. That farm deposit scheme that I introduced could even out the incomes between the peaks and the troughs. It is also important to provide sensible and dignified exit strategies for farms that are not viable. Of course we have to provide drought relief, but we also have to assist marginal farmers to leave the industry with dignity. This is an increasing challenge because the failure to act on climate change is making marginal farms even more marginal. Again, it is the cause that this government is failing to address. It is producing bandaids—expensive bandaids, as we are finding out—to address the effect.

So, as important as these challenges are in dealing with drought, we must recognise the challenge of climate change and develop policies to counter it. We cannot develop lasting solutions to the problem of drought unless we develop active policies to combat climate change and address our water flows. Labor will ratify Kyoto—and we are proud of that. I heard the member for Ryan saying that we believe it is the panacea. We do not believe it is the panacea, but it is an important start. I say to the Liberal Party: I cannot understand why a government that prides itself on being the party of free enterprise and support for the market is denying Australia the opportunity to enter one of the new emerging future markets—that is, emissions trading. Where are its free enterprise principles? Where is its opportunity to let the market determine these levels? Its approach is to stay away from the negotiating table and say, ‘We’re not going to sign up until someone else comes in.’ We say: turn up at the negotiating table, use your international pressure to get the others to that negotiating table and deal us in in a way in which our industries’ interests are taken into account for that emissions trading regime.

We produce some of the cleanest burning coal, for example. Certainly our gas supplies in a production sense are far more efficient than that produced anywhere else in the world. Why should we not get credit for it? If we are not participating in the development of this market through the Kyoto protocol, we are going to miss the opportunity completely. Labor understood this. That is why we participated in the international forums and why we hammered home the importance of getting greenhouse sinks—if you like, plantation timber—into the equation for the purposes of addressing greenhouse gas emissions. We succeeded, and we did it in the interests of the nation. You do not represent the interests of the nation by staying away. That is why the member for Ryan is so stupid in ignoring the wishes of his people and not understanding the philosophy of his own party and looking to the opportunities that are presented by being a signatory to the Kyoto protocol. Labor understand the significance of it. We should get on board.

We need also to be encouraging the development of renewables and clean technologies in terms of our existing fossil fuels—sequestration techniques and clean coal technologies. We need to sign up to a stronger commitment to the mandatory renewable energy target, MRET. These are initiatives that Labor have constantly put forward. They are good policies. They address climate
change, and we urge the government to address it.

There is one provision of particular concern: it is what we call the 'parrot provision' in this legislation—clause 324, which gives the minister the ability to regard information or advice from any source. This is the minister who holds up the Bald Hills wind farm but goes to China to open theirs. So he denies Australian industry the opportunity to develop wind farms but goes and opens them in China. All that to save a parrot. In saving a parrot, the minister has made himself look a complete goose, and this particular clause in this piece of legislation is designed to cover that stupidity. This is an ill-conceived bill. It should be withdrawn. The government should sit down with Labor, embrace the initiatives we have talked about and really do something on climate change. (Time expired)

Ms VAMVAKINOU (Calwell) (11.13 am)—I join my colleague the member for Hotham, and indeed other members on this side of the House who have spoken in this debate, in opposing the Environment and Heritage Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2006 that is currently before us in the House. It is a bill that seeks to amend the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. The 1999 act, which came into effect in July 2000, introduced a series of reforms to Australia’s environmental laws, which had otherwise remained relatively unchanged since the first environmental statutes were enacted in this country in the early 1970s.

Since the introduction of the 1999 act, it has been the cornerstone of Australia’s environmental law. Among other things, the act sets out a framework for assessing the impact that proposed actions would have on the health and wellbeing of the Australian environment. That is, it introduced into Australian law the idea that, when it came to assessing the pros and cons of proposed actions, their impact on the environment had to be taken into account. In particular, the 1999 act makes provisions to assess those actions which have the potential to in some way affect World Heritage properties, the Ramsar wetlands, Australia’s nationally threatened species and ecological communities and its migratory species, the Commonwealth marine environment and places on the Natural Heritage List. The framework introduced by the 1999 act also included assessing the environmental impact of uranium mining.

Whilst the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 fell short of establishing all the necessary environmental safeguards required to protect Australia’s unique biodiversity, it was a welcome step in the right direction for those of us in this place who believe that we need to do much more if we are to succeed in protecting Australia’s fragile environment—not just for our sakes or for our own interests but for the sakes of our children and future generations. The amendments proposed in the 2006 bill which is currently before us in the House undo many of those gains achieved under the 1999 act and spell a significant step backwards for environmental protection measures in Australia. There is in fact very little to commend in this bill, and it is for that reason that I and all my colleagues oppose it.

The government claims that the amendments it seeks to introduce through this bill will make the EPBC Act ‘more efficient and effective to allow for the use of more strategic approaches and to provide greater certainty in decision making’. The 2006 bill is supposed to make the 1999 act ‘more efficient and effective’: by reducing the processing time and costs for development interests; by enhancing our ability to deal with large-scale projects and give priority attention to projects of national importance through the use of strategic assessment and approval.
processes; by putting in place measures to enable developers to avoid having an impact on the matters of environmental significance protected by the act; by facilitating a greater focus on protecting threatened species, ecological communities and heritage places that are of real national importance; and by clarifying and strengthening the enforcement provisions of the 1999 act.

However, the simple fact is that no matter what language of process and procedure this government chooses to use to obfuscate the reality of what is contained in this bill and no matter what grandiose claims it tries to make in relation to this bill, nothing can hide the fact that the amendments it seeks to make to the 1999 act are a significant step backwards for environmental protection in this country. And nothing can change the reality that this government has shown virtually no regard for, and absolutely no leadership in, the environment and environmental protection since it first took power in 1996.

Australia’s decision not to sign the Kyoto protocol is but one example of the government’s abysmal record of choosing to look the other way when it comes to the environment and its protection. Despite the fact that there is near universal consensus today that global warming has become one of the greatest challenges that our world faces, this government decided quite stubbornly to turn its back on the Kyoto protocol and continues to refuse to sign it. In doing so, it has opted out of the most significant international effort initiated to date aimed at mitigating the effects of climate change. Under the Kyoto protocol nations are required to reduce worldwide carbon pollution by an average of 5.2 per cent below their 1999 levels by the period 2008-2012. To date, 158 countries have ratified the Kyoto protocol, which came into effect as international law in February 2005.

Whilst the Kyoto protocol may not be the answer to all our problems, it does herald a promising start, setting an important precedent for the development of future international efforts aimed at combating climate change. Kyoto set in train and consolidated in international law the recognition that combating climate change is a global effort, one that it is incumbent upon all of us to get behind and support. It lays the foundations for future initiatives whose strength and success will reside in their ability to both gain international support and further facilitate international cooperation. No matter how much the government tries to portray the Kyoto protocol as somehow deficient or a nonsolution to climate change, we must never forget that one of Kyoto’s greatest achievements has been to consolidate the international community around a joint effort aimed at combating global warming. And despite all the hype, we are yet to be presented with a viable alternative to Kyoto either by this government or by other nations who have refused to sign up to the protocol. Despite being two of the highest per capita emitters of greenhouse gases, Australia and the United States are the only two major developed countries not to have ratified the Kyoto protocol.

Just as this government has gone missing in action at a time when so many others in the international community have joined forces to tackle the problem of climate change, so this government has gone missing in action on the domestic front, whittling away the environmental protections and safeguards contained in the EPBC Act. The Kyoto protocol is important in the context of this bill because this bill once again reveals the entrenched reticence of this government about tackling the challenges of climate change. In the 409 pages of amendments contained in this bill climate change is not mentioned once. If nothing else, it is con-
spicuous by its absence and it remains the elephant in the room when it comes to the environmental policies of this government.

Labor has consistently lobbied to have climate change listed as one of the factors or triggers that must be taken into consideration when assessments are made about the environmental impact of certain actions. Under the 1999 act climate change was not listed as a trigger, to ensure that large-scale greenhouse polluting projects are assessed by the federal government—an omission that Labor wants to see amended.

The government has continued to block any attempt to have climate change included as a key determining factor in assessing the environmental impact of proposed actions, and so is the case with this bill. Consistent with the government’s decision to turn its back on the Kyoto protocol, this bill simply ignores the dangers of climate change as if they bore no relevance at all to assessing the impact of proposed actions on the environment. Just as its refusal to sign the Kyoto protocol highlights the government’s multiple failings in the area of environmental protection, this bill highlights the government’s continued failure to ensure that Australia has adequate and effective environmental protection measures in place.

The fact that this government continues to do nothing about climate change, despite all the evidence that now exists concerning the dangers it poses, shows what little importance it attaches to the environment in its list of priorities. The government’s performance when it comes to reducing Australia’s carbon pollution has been nothing short of appalling. In a report released in December 2004, the government’s Greenhouse Office claimed:

If this were the case, the most obvious question to ask is why the government persists in refusing to ratify the Kyoto protocol if indeed it is on track to meet the targets Kyoto sets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. At the same time, the Australian Greenhouse Office alarmingly predicts that Australia’s carbon pollution will rise rapidly to be 123 per cent of 1990 levels by 2020.

One thing is for certain: this bill does absolutely nothing to tackle the problem of climate change. Instead, it simply chooses to ignore the reality of climate change. Scientists agree that the earth will warm by at least three degrees by 2050 and up to nine degrees Celsius by the year 2100. Most of the warming that has occurred over the last 50 years is the result of carbon pollution from human activity with fossil fuel use being the main source of carbon pollution. Carbon pollution and other greenhouse gases effectively act like a blanket, trapping heat and warming the earth’s surface. The more greenhouse gases we release, the thicker the blanket becomes.

The 10 hottest years on record have all occurred in the last 14 years and, according to the Australian Bureau of Meteorology, 2005 was the hottest year on record—that is, the hottest we have had since records first started to be kept in 1861. It is now common knowledge that if we continue to do nothing, if we continue to wait and fail to develop national policies that in some way mitigate the effects of climate change, the impact of climate change will be devastating.

For farmers in Australia, it means longer droughts, lower soil moisture, lower yields and poorer crop quality. The effects of that are a significant issue for debate and concern at this very minute. Similarly, climate change poses a significant danger to a number of Australia’s protected national heritage sites, such as the Great Barrier Reef which in the next 25 years could be devastated by regular
coral bleaching as a result of the ocean warming. Kakadu also faces an uncertain future. If global temperatures rise by a further two degrees, half of Kakadu’s majestic wetlands will be wiped out.

By 2030, conservative estimates predict that the water supply to both Melbourne and Sydney will drop by 25 per cent as a result of reduced rainfall and higher evaporation from climate change. Added to this is a plethora of other looming disasters attributed to climate change, including the dramatic consequences of rising sea levels and, as such, common sense dictates that each and every one of us in this place is charged with a responsibility to start supporting efforts aimed at reversing the trends of global warming.

There are a number of other concerns that I and my colleagues have regarding this bill. One of the more significant ones is that aspect of the bill which seeks to curtail third-party appeal rights and removes the public consultation processes provided for in the 1999 act. As it stands, under certain circumstances the 1999 act allows for a third party or parties, such as community groups and environmental or business groups, to appeal ministerial decisions especially in relation to the granting of permits. This third-party appeals process covers ministerial decisions regarding permits pertaining to one or more of the following categories: threatened species, marine species, migratory species, wildlife trade permits, whales and dolphins.

Under the 1999 act, third parties have a right to appeal wildlife import and export decisions if made by the minister. This includes the import of species under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, such as Asian elephants and the export of koalas to Thailand. Under the 2006 bill, this right is abolished. By shutting out third parties and abolishing third-party appeal rights, the 2006 bill effectively concentrates all power in the hands of the minister and wipes away all existing avenues for public scrutiny and input into decisions made by the minister. It erodes the system of checks and balances that the 1999 act provides for in relation to ministerial decisions regarding Australia’s threatened species, marine species, migratory species, wildlife trade permits, whales and dolphins. On principle, we cannot support this bill.

The 2006 bill also undermines public consultation processes. Under the bill, the minister will determine key themes for heritage and species protection through a priority assessment list on advice from a scientific committee and the Australian Heritage Council. However, the minister can remove items from the priority assessment list with the only requirement being that he needs to notify the nominee and put the decision on the internet. In addition, the bill removes the five-year review section currently contained in the 1999 act. Under this section, matters of national environmental significance act as triggers in relation to the 1999 act’s framework for assessing the environmental impact of proposed actions. Labor want to see climate change, Australia’s current water crisis, coastal issues and other matters that we on this side of the House consider matters of national environmental significance added as triggers under the 1999 act. In contrast, the government wants to see any possible inclusion of any new triggers stymied by removing the mandatory five-year review process.

The 2006 bill also allows the minister to determine themes for an annual assessment period in relation to heritage and threatened species. This can relate to a specific species, geographical area or heritage theme such as colonial architecture. It opens up the possibility of exploitation and the politicisation of decision-making processes. The Humane Society of Victoria has suggested that the criteria for determining what is a priority
have little relationship to conservation. In addition, nuclear actions, including the expansion of uranium mines and nuclear waste dumps, can be exempted from bioregional plans, endorsed policies and conservation agreements.

This bill is not about improving Australia’s environmental protection measures and safeguarding our unique wildlife and biodiversity, rather this bill is about undermining the very processes and procedures that are fundamental to the protection of Australia’s environment. It is a calculated attempt to impede and undermine environmental protection. It is essentially for this reason that I and my colleagues oppose this bill and call on the government to withdraw it.

Mr ANDREN (Calare) (11.30 am)—The Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act is this country’s main piece of environment and heritage legislation. Any action that is likely to have a significant impact on world heritage, national heritage, Ramsar wetlands, threatened species and ecological communities, listed migratory species and the marine environment must be referred to the minister for approval. Given that these matters have been recognised as holding national significance, this act is supposed to represent an extra level of scrutiny and protection recognised as lacking in the mash of state and territory legislation.

The Environment and Heritage Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2006 before us represents over 400 pages of amendments that the government claims will cut red tape and provide flexibility. Introduced just last Thursday and originally slated for debate just three working days later, on Tuesday, legislators in this House have been given just four days to get their heads around what effect the 400 pages of amendments will have on the protection of our fragile environment and heritage. Not surprisingly, a Bills Digest is a long way from being completed.

Government MPs, I have heard, have not addressed the detail of these changes because they do not know them. Rather, they sing the praises of grossly inadequate environmental policies and defend the absence of any meaningful MRETs in this country. Not only that, the closing date for submissions to the Senate inquiry, again deferring this crucial legislation from the legislative chamber to the Senate for proper scrutiny, is not until the 27th of this month with the committee due to report on 17 November. What are we doing debating this stuff now? Go to your minister and ask him why we are sitting here debating this particular piece of legislation now. Further, this is just absolute contempt for this House and its members yet again. It is bad law-making that will have significant effects on our environment and heritage that cannot be undone.

Who is driving this rush? Does the diversion of the McArthur River in the Northern Territory by mining giant Xstrata have anything to do with this? Does mounting public concern over the expansion of mines around Australia, including longwall mining under bodies of water, have anything to do with this? Does Woodside’s insistence that it must start construction of its Pluto plant by year’s end on the Burrup Peninsula in WA have anything to do with this? The time available to study these changes dictates that only the barest of glances can be given to how this affects the protection of nationally significant environmental and heritage matters.

First up, it must be said that there are a number of positive changes. I will get them out of the way first. The taking of an action after it has been referred but before a decision has been made is now an offence. Public comments must be included in public environmental reports and EISs. Proponents are
responsible for ensuring their contractors abide by approval conditions. Landholders commit offences if they allow breaches to occur on their land. The minister may reject approvals on the basis that impacts are substantially greater than anticipated. Native migratory species are now included. The minister and the Federal Court may issue remediation orders. These are commendable, but they are overshadowed by what this bill does allow. It starts with the very beginning of the development and protection process—the on-ground identification and assessment—which is already highly flawed and largely dependent on advice and information provided by the proponent’s own paid consultants.

Several years ago when debating the EPBC Act, I raised the issue of the varying and uneven patchwork of environment and heritage protection regimes from state to state and the abysmal history of state protection for environmental and heritage items. One need only look at the appalling history of indifference to the ancient rock art precinct in the Dampier Archipelago in Western Australia, the decimation of Tasmanian forests, the clear felling of native bushland in New South Wales or the proposed damming of prehistoric lungfish habitat in Queensland more recently.

At the time, I noted the need for parliamentary scrutiny of environmental management plans and assessments delegated to the states under bilateral agreements. But under these amendments, an accredited management plan for specific matters is no longer required before the Commonwealth delegates environmental and heritage approval powers to the states. No longer must a plan specific to ensuring maximum possible protection to any particular species, ecological community or heritage place with its own needs, threats and issues be referred to. Under the bill, a loose management arrangement or authorisation process put together by the states or territories will be considered as providing sufficient scrutiny and protection. These arrangements need not seek specified approval under the act. Any amendments to those arrangements and processes deemed minor by the minister may be made without tabling those changes.

The bill goes further, allowing the minister to declare a whole class of actions, such as mining, that may destroy any of the items or species listed under the EPBC Act as not needing approval—that is, not needing to even be referred to the EPBC Act—if those actions are in accordance with a bioregional plan. But where are those plans and what will they consist of? How meaningful will they be given the broadbrush approach that it seems they will apply? It suggests that actual on-ground site assessment or surveys before a proposed development may be deemed not necessary. The stated aims of bioregional plans certainly make sense prima facie—the pulling together of information over a whole bioregion with a complete strategic picture, providing advice on the proper environmental management of a whole ecosystem—but these plans are only huge brushstrokes and are dependent on the quality of diligence and expertise applied by the authors of those plans and the information that is publicly tabled and available.

We already know that so many consultants’ reports are not submitted to the relevant authorities, even though scientific licences require this happens. So many artefacts, species and threatened communities are not surveyed or properly assessed or are quietly put aside by compromised consultants and their proponent employers. Even more seriously, large consulting firms to the corporate giants are known to have been instrumental in developing and authoring environmental policy documents, which certainly raises questions about the value and purpose of such advice.
Not only that, bioregional plans are not legislative instruments, thus they lack parliamentary oversight, and there is no public consultation process for those plans covering state areas.

To now determine that the broad, overarching sweep of such a bioregional plan is enough to allow development without even an on-ground site assessment or specific referral to the EPBC Act is not acceptable. To have the passing of finite profits or the passing of tangible profits out of a particular development deemed of greater value than the irreversible destruction of an infinitely valuable ecosystem or ancient heritage is unethical in the extreme, but to deem that such a development has no responsibility to even find out what it might be destroying is obscene. It suggests the corporate sector have every right to make extremely large profits by vandalising our environment and heritage with no commensurate responsibilities specific to their actions.

It is also important to note that while many nuclear actions, such as nuclear power plants or enrichment plants, may not be exempted under bioregional plans or conservation agreements, uranium mining and nuclear waste dumps do not fall under this prohibited exemption list, which raises the question of uranium mining in World Heritage listed Kakadu. Let us not downplay the danger of uranium. It is not a clean energy. Out of sight and out of mind waste does not make it any more clean than floor sweepings under the carpet make a house clean. With a history of leakage into the environment, from mine tailings and intermediate nuclear waste, contamination of groundwater and high-level waste from nuclear power generation having a half-life of about 4.5 billion years, allowing uranium mining and nuclear waste dumps to be exempted from an act that aims to protect the environment—words fail me.

The minister may also exempt actions from requiring approval under the EPBC Act if they are declared under a conservation agreement, but there is absolutely no penalty for noncompliance with such an agreement unless an ordered remediation under a conservation agreement is not followed. Instead of ensuring that cumulative impacts that flow from significant actions are taken into account under the EPBC Act, this bill ensures that only the direct impacts are considered in isolation—surely a contradiction to the whole idea of bioregional plans. This confirms that there is no vehicle to truly consider all the effects of a development, such as greenhouse gas emissions and their effect on our environment, global warming and, dare I say, our farmers. The minister may now make an assessment of proposed action by depending solely on the referral information provided by the proponent. This is certainly putting the fox in charge of the henhouse.

Although this bill allows public requests for reconsideration of controlled action, elsewhere in the bill public input into the processes is diminished. The minister may use commercial-in-confidence excuses to withhold information, public consultation timelines are now limited to 10 business days, and appeals to the AAT for a review of any decision made personally by the minister in relation to certain permits is no longer possible. Under this bill the nomination, assessment and listing of places on the National Heritage List is replaced by a regime that seriously compromises protection of places that hold national and international heritage value, limits outside access to the process and places absolute discretion in the hands of the minister to determine what may or may not be added or even assessed in any given year.

Currently, any person or member of the Australian Heritage Council may nominate a place for the National Heritage List at any
time and the council must assess that nomination. But the proposal is that, just once a year—a window of 40 days—the minister will invite nominations for inclusion. The minister may determine a heritage theme to be given priority. Incredibly, this theme need not be decided with advice from the Heritage Council. The minister may reject any nomination without referring it to the Heritage Council. The council gives the minister a revised priority assessment list, which of course has to take note of the minister’s chosen theme for the year.

Who and what gives any environment minister the vision, the understanding or the background to determine issues of this importance? What, except, I would suggest, the imperative of the commercial considerations that predominate right through this piece of legislation. That is what this is all about. Where is the wisdom that a Senator Campbell, or any minister, has to handle this sort of responsibility? It is absolutely outrageous. Talk about executive dominance of the processes! This is just a dictatorial approach to the most important thing facing this country and this globe, and here we have this power being given to one individual. It is amazing.

Nominations that have been determined as needing the protection and recognition of inclusion on the Heritage List may not make it to the priority list—indeed, they may continue to be rolled over year after year without ever making it. Even inclusion on the priority list does not guarantee assessment. The council does not need to check for extra information before rejecting the idea of even assessing a nomination and the minister may change the list in any way. Even if the Australian Heritage Council—a pre-eminent scientific expert body—does assess a place as deserving or needing inclusion on the Heritage List, the minister may decide not to include the assessed place on the list, informed with advice from ‘any source’. Not only that, but a decision to deal with a request for emergency listing is dependent on the whim of the minister.

It is incredible to think that the industries on the Burrup Peninsula in Western Australia—where a nomination of that incredibly special place for the Heritage List has sent the industries there and the governments, state and federal, into a lather—may have their advice, namely, that no national heritage values exist there, taken into account in this process. The Dampier Archipelago, where the world’s most extraordinary outdoor art gallery of hundreds of thousands—in fact, up to a million—ancient rock art images, tens of thousands of years older than the great pyramids of Egypt, is threatened by industrial development. It is a threat that has been made for well over 40 years.

I went to a briefing the other day with Woodside—a very pleasant engagement and discussion—and the point was made that the North West Shelf development has been there for many years. However, it must be asked why the joint venture partners on the North West Shelf are not prepared, and why the Western Australian government is not prepared, to enact legislation that enables the Pluto project to be moved to that region? It seems as if they are being squeezed out by corporate, competitive jealousies. Obviously those things should not take precedence over the protection of this World Heritage quality site. Despite the Heritage Council’s assessment that the place far exceeds the requirements for national heritage listing—indeed for World Heritage listing—under this bill the minister may choose to accept only the industry’s advice. Perhaps he may direct that such a place where there is ongoing destruction of ancient rock art images does not fit into his chosen theme for the year.

Need I ask whether the nomination of the Dampier Archipelago or the Burrup Penin-
sula to the National Heritage List and the lobbying here in Canberra this week have anything to do with these sorts of amendments? It would have made sense if we had had that lobbying, if we had had the opportunity to sit back and look at a draft of this, if we had had the benefit of the Bills Digest, if we had had all of that expert input and if we had had the inquiry—and pray that we ever have legislative inquiries into legislation in this place; that may happen one day down the track, many moons ahead, when we have a proper process to consider the most crucial of legislation coming into this place. But no, we have the lobbyists, we have the rushed legislation and we have claims of a proper and democratic approach to considering issues of such import in this place. What a load of bunkum! I could think of a stronger word but it would be unparliamentary. What a load of codswallop it is. Need I ask whether the nomination of the Dampier Archipelago or the Burrup Peninsula is part of this matter before us? Of course it is.

Certainly other changes in this bill already prevent newly listed environmental and heritage values and places from holding up any development already approved or in the pipeline. While I recognise the natural justice issues in all of this, I believe that those listed values must still be taken into account. Unbelievably, the minister no longer must keep the list of threatened species and ecological communities up to date. What on earth is the purpose of listing them if not to attempt to conserve species and avert extinction? It is extraordinary to think the effort to protect our environment is dependent on whether the minister of the day thinks it is worth the trouble. The need for the government to carry out biodiversity surveys in Commonwealth areas is even removed. The minister does not feel it is the role of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act to consider ensuring management includes recovery, as this bill removes the compulsory requirements to create recovery plans. Even if the minister decides such a plan is necessary, the department has up to six years to write one, for heaven’s sake. Six years is a long time for an ecological community.

Between one- and two-thirds of all plant and animal species are predicted to become extinct during the next century. Australia is one of only 17 countries in the world that has species found nowhere else on the planet. It is ranked first for mammals and reptiles, second for birds and fifth for higher plants and amphibians. Destruction of habitat and ecological communities kills millions of Australian animals over a short space of time. Australia already has the worst record of recent mammal extinction in the world. Many of our 1,500 currently listed species could well become extinct in 10 to 20 years. Seventy-five per cent of our rainforests and 43 per cent of our forests have been cleared. Our rivers are already dead or dying.

Our planet, our children and our grandchildren face a very bleak environmental future indeed, with global warming the result of global abuse. Yet under this leadership we put our heads in the dry sands of our riverbeds, refuse to set any meaningful renewable energy target, and facilitate rather than reduce our carbon footprint, not only here but right across the globe. When it is said that we contribute only 1.8 per cent of the carbon emissions we are not including the impact that our exports, particularly coal, have on that global output of carbon and greenhouse gases. Of course we have to look at clean coal technology and of course we have to look at the existing processes, but we must take responsibility for our true contribution to the world carbon footprint. Therein lies the duplicity of our global position. In the meantime, while the rest of the world is waking up to the enormity and urgency of ad-
dressing climate change and global warming this government plays the fiddle while the country is burning around it. I strongly support the second reading amendment and I reject this legislation.

Ms GEORGE (Throsby) (11.50 am)—I must commend the member for Calare for his most comprehensive commentary and analysis of the Environment and Heritage Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2006 that has come to this parliament with such unseemly haste. As a member of parliament, I think it is the first time I am making comments on a bill when I do not even have the option of referring to credible independent advice from the Parliamentary Library—no Bills Digest is available; I am told it may be another 10 days before one comes before us. It is totally preposterous that we are being asked to debate a bill, which contains 409 pages of amendments to this government’s major environmental law, in these circumstances. We were told in the second reading speech by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage that:

The aim is to continue to strengthen environment and heritage protection while streamlining some of the provisions of the EPBC Act and providing greater capacity and flexibility for more strategic approaches to be employed.

I must say that, in looking at the rationale for the introduction of this legislation, I agree with the member for Calare. Most of the comments made in that second reading speech leave me with a very uneasy feeling that this legislation is driven by commercial imperatives rather than the professed commitment to strengthening and enhancing environmental and heritage protection.

There is no doubt in my mind that this legislation is being rushed through both houses of parliament, with the legislation, in the government’s agenda, due to be decided and resolved by the end of November. A serious major piece of environmental law that governs the operations of the nation is being rushed through with unseemly haste. The bill has been referred to the Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, which is due to report in mid-November, but we are debating this bill even before we have had the opportunity to look at public submissions and public commentary.

Mr Andren—What’s new?

Ms GEORGE—Yes—what’s new? It is an appalling abuse of process and just shows the arrogance of this government. So I want to begin my analysis by saying that the government has to be condemned for pushing this bill through both houses without a proper time frame for consideration or without proper public consultation processes.

I want to go back to the argument about how these proposals are being driven very largely by commercial imperatives. I will quote the parliamentary secretary in his second reading speech. He said:

… the operation of the EPBC Act can be improved, particularly for those who make applications or nominations under the act. Operational improvements can be achieved by reducing processing time and decision points affecting the environmental assessment and approval of proposed developments, using more strategic approaches, and providing greater incentive for development interests, the states and territories, and local government to engage with the act earlier in their planning cycles.

He goes on:

The proposed changes will include greater capacity to reduce processing time for assessments and approvals of developments referred under the act by reducing the number of mandatory steps taken by applicants and enabling the Australian government to make decisions on different act approval stages simultaneously. A new process will be introduced to enable the government to make quicker decisions on more straightforward proposals.
But when you look at the detail—and the devil is often in the detail of the bills that we debate, and I again commend the member for Calare for taking the time to analyse the 409 pages of very technical amendments—you already hear the alarm bells ringing. Even a cursory first examination of the detail shows this to be the case—that the amendments will curtail third-party appeal rights, the amendments will undermine public consultation processes and the amendments will allow the further politicisation of decision-making processes on very important matters relating to the protection of our heritage and our environment. Not surprisingly, but much to the shame of the government, in a major rewriting of the premier environmental act this government fails to deal with the major environmental issues that are facing our nation: climate change and the water crisis that is facing communities across the length and breadth of our nation.

This morning I also want to draw attention to the scathing comments made by members of the Senate Standing Committee for the Scrutiny of Bills, whose report was tabled yesterday in the Senate. Senator Ray quite rightly draws attention to the expansion of the range of enforcement powers and penalties, which he argues are proposed without justification and appropriate safeguards. Even more significantly, in speaking to Senator Ray’s motion, a Liberal senator and member of this government from Western Australia, Senator Johnston, had this to say about the explanatory memorandum—the one that comes with the bill in the absence of an independent voice from the Parliamentary Library through the Bills Digest:

This explanatory memorandum is probably one of the most appalling I have ever seen in the short time I have been in the Senate. It discloses no motivation, no reasoning and no justification for some of the most draconian powers that this parliament can conceivably and possibly enact: rights of search and seizure without warrant, rights of personal frisking without warrant. This is under the umbrella of a piece of environmental protection legislation … The draftsman discloses an obliviousness to the conventions, formalities, reports and guidelines that have been laid down over a long period of time with respect to the propriety of the administration of powers and penalties … Again, under the umbrella of an environmental protection act, I find that very interesting, particularly in the face of the explanatory memorandum disclosing no real reason or explanation for that.

He concludes his commentary by saying:

... I think this legislation should go back to the drawing board.

Full marks to the senator. Full marks to a member of the Senate, a member of this government, who is so damning and scathing in his criticisms of this legislation as to conclude his remarks by saying ‘I think this legislation should go back to the drawing board’. Unfortunately, the Minister for the Environment and Heritage is in China. It is a shame that he is not here to hear what the Senate Standing Committee for the Scrutiny of Bills unanimously concluded yesterday.

The parliamentary secretary, with a degree of obfuscation about the commercial imperatives that are driving this bill, pretends that the bill before us is also to do with meeting the emerging environmental issues of the 21st century. He says:

One of the major changes proposed by the bill is a practical proposal to put in place a strategic framework that will allow the Australian government greater flexibility and capacity to deal with the emerging environmental issues of the 21st century. He says:

That sounds fine, doesn’t it, but amazingly the most serious global issue, that of global warming and climate change, is not even dealt with in this bill. It is quite pathetic. The government’s major piece of environment legislation and the 409 pages of amendments that we are discussing today do not even deal
with the most serious issue confronting the

globe. The inconvenient truth continues to be
too inconvenient for this government, but the
community at large is understanding the need
for this government to take decisive action to
deal with this most fundamental issue. One
would have thought that in the bill we are
debating today that issue would at least get
some attention. That is sadly missing and
that really important issue has been left to be
picked up in the amendment moved on be-
half of this side of the chamber by our
shadow minister for the environment.

There is no doubt that the Howard gov-
ernment have left us unprepared for the dra-
matic challenges that lie ahead. They have no
national plan to prepare for the impact of
climate change. They have no national plan
to cut Australia’s soaring greenhouse pollu-
tion. The Howard government seem to be
interested in neither prevention nor cure. We
desperately need a national climate change
adaptation strategy and a plan for the future.
The consequences of climate change are very
real—ask anybody in the community: more
severe weather, reduced rainfall, extended
droughts. All this, of course, will have an
impact in terms of employment and eco-
nomic growth if left unaddressed.

Climate change is baking our cities and
reaping despair in the bush. It is there for all
to see. Even the sceptics cannot deny the
hard science behind what is happening on a
worldwide basis. Global warming and cli-
mate change are the greatest challenges of
the 21st century and yet this bill is silent on
these challenges. Where are the govern-
ment’s plans to avoid dangerous climate
change? Where are the government’s plans to
prepare our economy for a carbon con-
strained world? Where are the government’s
plans to get our energy mix right? Where are
the government’s plans to seize the opportu-
nities that would come with the ratification
of Kyoto and increase the MRET so that we
can get really serious about renewable
sources of energy?

Getting Australia’s energy mix right is ab-
solutely central to cutting our soaring green-
house pollution. We need a diverse energy
mix—a portfolio of flexible energy strategies
that include clean coal technology, solar and
wind power and research into hydrogen,
wave power and geothermal technology. We
need a strong national commitment to energy
efficiency. There is not a word on these is-
issues in this bill we are debating. The com-
munity well understands that nuclear power
will not be a part of the energy mix under a
Labor government. Yet, true to form, the
Prime Minister has an ideological obsession
with nuclear power, and he is now masking
that obsession in the pretence of trying to
deal with global warming.

I want to quote some comments made by
the eminent environmentalist David Suzuki
in a television interview yesterday evening.
The interviewer said: ‘John Howard says he
believes strongly that nuclear power now has
to be part of the equation in the search for an
answer to climate change.’ Dr Suzuki said:
Well, I find that statement so lacking in credibil-
ity. This is a man, for years and years, who has
denied the reality of climate change caused by
human beings even though his scientific commu-
nity in Australia has been saying that for more
than 15 years, that this is a serious issue and Aus-
tralia is particularly vulnerable. So for this man,
now having denied all these years, to suddenly
come out and say nuclear is the only option, I
don’t see how he has any credibility on this issue
at all. I have no idea why suddenly nuclear’s on
the agenda but I would think that anyone would
say we have to look at our whole energy policy,
look at how it relates to water, how it looks to
many other issues—of sea level rise and so on—
and then having had a major consideration, come
up with a plan that we can commit to.

I agree with David Suzuki. What is lacking
in this debate we are having about so-called
environmental and heritage protection is the

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fact that there is not one word about any plans to deal with the challenge of global warming and climate change. We know that the Prime Minister and his government support uranium enrichment. We know from comments made in the last few days that they support nuclear power plants in Australia, even though they know there are no answers to the critical questions of cost, safety, nuclear waste and nuclear proliferation.

It is interesting that in the details of this bill it appears that legal obstacles to the expansion of uranium mining and nuclear waste dumps are to be removed. I quote from a release I saw yesterday from the Australia Institute which says:

The Environment and Heritage Legislation Amendment Bill—

the one that we are discussing now—

will enable future uranium mines and nuclear waste dumps to bypass environmental assessment processes and public scrutiny.

“The Government is surreptitiously inserting a loophole in the federal environmental laws so that it can avoid the standard environmental assessment procedures in relation to controversial nuclear proposals”...

“The exemptions would allow new uranium mines and nuclear waste dumps to open without being subject to important assessment and public accountability procedures that are designed to guarantee basic environmental safety standards.

“If the amendments are enacted, the scope for public involvement in nuclear assessment procedures could be significantly reduced”...

So they claim this legislation is about protecting our environment and heritage and looking after community considerations to do with the major issues facing our globe, yet hidden in the detail of this legislation is the possibility that the nuclear agenda could escape the kind of public scrutiny that should be there.

The bill also provides even further opportunity for the politicisation of issues relating to environmental and heritage protection. We know that the current minister is quite adept at this. We have a number of examples already of this kind of politicisation. Remember the decision to block the Bald Hills wind farm project? That was all about marginal seat politics and not about saving the orange-bellied parrot, despite the protestations of the minister.

In the words of the shadow minister for environment and heritage, even Monty Python could not have scripted Senator Ian Campbell’s decision to protect one theoretical parrot every 1,000 years and use that as a rationalisation to block a major infrastructure project—a renewable energy project. And yet the same minister is in China at the moment opening a wind farm project. You drive out the renewable sector from Australia and you go over to China to preside over the opening of a wind farm!

Regrettably this bill hands even more power to the minister—more power to make the kinds of political decisions we saw in the Bald Hills fiasco. I was really pleased that the minister was humiliated by the decision of the Federal Court that required him to reconsider ‘according to law’ his intervention to block the Bald Hills wind farm in Victoria.

Interestingly enough, that Bald Hills project was supported by the minister’s own department, for environmental and scientific reasons, but we know it was blocked by the minister for blatant political reasons. If the minister is using his powers under current Commonwealth law then you can only hazard a guess as to what will happen in future. The member for Rankin last night ably highlighted the dangers in the proposals that will give this minister, if this bill is passed, the final say on the protection of heritage sites across the length and breadth of our country.

The double standard of the current minister is most evident in his trip to China to of-
officially open an Australian company’s wind farm in China. What hypocrisy. He cannot escape the fact that same company had this to say:

...the current project outlook in Australia is not strong and Roaring 40s—

that is the company—

hopes that, having seen what can be done in China, Minister Campbell will be encouraged to consider policies in Australia to increase the utilisation of our country’s great renewable energy capabilities and resources.

Renewable energy companies are investing in China because China has a renewable energy target of 15 per cent compared to our pathetic two per cent MRET. It has been kept at two per cent because some remaining sceptics unfortunately reside on the government benches. In a recent interview with Laurie Oakes, the Minister for Industry, Tourism and Resources, Ian Macfarlane—who is a great proponent of building nuclear capacity here in Australia—had this to say:

LAURIE OAKES: OK. Climate change, you are a climate change sceptic, aren’t you?
IAN MACFARLANE: Well I am a sceptic of the connection between emissions and climate change...

I suggest to the minister that sitting through An Inconvenient Truth will hopefully convert the last remaining sceptics who happen to be sitting over there on the government benches. The Australian community is no longer sceptical. Just have a look at the Sunrise program’s ‘Cool the Globe’ campaign, which is addressing the issues of climate change and global warming. Last time I looked, more than 45,000 Australians had committed to the ‘Cool the Globe’ campaign. People out there know because they see it every day, but we have sceptics in here who are pushing the nuclear barrow and turning their eyes from the possibilities that we have in this country of really giving a push-start to our renewable energy sector.

The amendment moved by the shadow minister, Mr Albanese, gives the Howard government yet another opportunity to join with Labor in a bipartisan approach in instituting a national plan to deal with a major crisis facing this and other nations across the world. Instead, we have had a bill come before us in unseemly haste without any mention of these major challenges. We again call on the government to ensure that climate change is properly factored into environmental decision making under this act. Specifically, we ask that they support a climate change trigger to ensure large-scale greenhouse polluting projects are properly assessed before approval is given. We will oppose the bill unless the government agrees to Labor’s amendments. (Time expired)

Mr HAYES (Werriwa) (12.10 pm)—There are 409 pages of amendments to the Commonwealth’s major environmental laws and, would you believe it, there is not one mention of climate change. Given the attitude of this government to climate change, I know I should not be too surprised about that. But this time the government has really outdone itself with the Environment and Heritage Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2006.

The Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 is Australia’s major environmental law. It establishes the framework for assessing the environmental impacts of proposed actions in relation to world heritage properties, Ramsar’s wetlands of international importance, nationally threatened species, ecological communities, migratory species, nuclear actions, the Commonwealth’s marine environment and those places which are listed on the National Heritage List. So it is quite an important piece of legislation. This government argues now that this bill reduces the process time and cuts the costs of development interests. It also curtails third party appeal rights, un-
dermines the public consultation process and further politicises decision making.

This government has swept the pool on this one. It has managed to introduce legislation that implements the exact opposite of what the Australian community wants. This is quite startling. Not only does it not mention climate change, not only does it not include a single measure aimed at reducing greenhouse pollution, but this bill also goes against the desire of the Australian public. It is staggering. This bill will fundamentally change the way in which the Australian environment is protected, and neither the parliament nor the community will have the opportunity to consider the implications of this bill because, just like everything else this government wants to achieve, or hide from the Australian public, the government is going to ram it through this parliament. It has been rammed through this parliament with very little discussion, little debate and, worse, little concern from this government.

This has been an amazing week. Earlier this week we had a new regime introduced for the regulation of Australia's media. That was certainly rammed through this parliament. Now we have a wholly new regime about protecting Australia's environment. Similarly, it is going to be rammed through this parliament. It is staggering. The government is elected to administer public policy, and this is not good public policy.

Most people with any concern about the future of Australia's environment have long known that the government does not share that concern. Sure it pretends to when it comes to a marginal seat, when one of those creatures is at stake, but generally this government has exhibited an attitude that it could not care less about protecting the Australian environment.

Over the last decade, while this government has been in office, Australia's environment has been under sustained pressure. Water resources are under strain and almost gone, to some extent, in various areas. The amount of land affected by salinity has increased astronomically, and Australia is facing a plant and animal extinction crisis. It is not a record that this government often points to; nevertheless, it is a fact. I doubt that it will make it into the bevy of material that government members distribute in their newsletters but, as I said, it is the case and it is certainly a fact.

Since the government came to office, nearly every single measure of environmental health has gone backwards. As I mentioned, Australia has a plant and animal extinction crisis. Twenty per cent of our species are threatened with extinction by the end of this century, and the number of terrestrial and animal species listed as extinct, endangered or vulnerable rose by 41 per cent between 1995 and 2005. Disturbingly, Australia is the world leader in mammal extinctions. This is a disgraceful record, and the passage of this bill does nothing to try to address that. Therefore, it does not look good for our future in that regard.

As I mentioned at the outset, I am stunned that the government has introduced 409 pages of amendments into this place without a single reference to climate change. The science behind climate change is well established. Apart from a small minority of virtual extremists, it is essentially accepted. Very few governments in the world persist with the attitude that climate change is not a reality. Most are not persisting with that dogmatic attitude to climate change and I would be confident that most governments, where they have introduced changes to major environmental laws, would include aspects to combat the effect of the onslaught of climate change.
Very few people continue to ignore the real and significant impact that climate change not only will have on our economy and society but, quite frankly, is already having within our communities. Many businesses have accepted the need to address the impact on the economy and have accepted the fact that they need to address their levels of carbon emissions. But still the Howard government continues to ignore climate change. Only three weeks ago Richard Branson committed $3 billion to abatement measures, and we have this bill representing 409 pages of the government’s efforts to do the exact opposite—that is, to ignore climate change itself.

I noted earlier that the science around climate change is largely accepted. The impact that climate change is having on our natural environment is, indeed, largely accepted by the community, let alone the scientific community around the world. For those who do not believe that change is taking place, you only need to consider our weather of last week. In addition to the fact that Australia, in some parts of the country, has just finished the driest winter on record, we have just had the hottest and driest August in 106 years and, in Sydney last week, at the start of October, temperatures were well above 30 degrees. We have already seen the demand that is causing with respect to bushfire brigades and the warnings that were put out last week. It is very clear that change is already occurring. As much as this government might want to ignore the fact that this is occurring, as much as this government might want to avoid its international responsibility and, indeed, as much as this government might not want to admit that it has got it wrong, climate change is happening now.

Last week, the Prime Minister marched into this House and, in effect, admitted to getting it wrong on the skills crisis. He admitted that to the parliament and, therefore, to the Australian people. I call upon him to do the same when it comes to admitting that they have got it wrong on climate change. We know he can do it because he did it only last week. He even conceded to the media, when dealing with the skills crisis, that it was better late than never. With respect, I never took him to task on that. I thought that, at least, that was somewhat honest coming from the Prime Minister. He admitted to getting it wrong and, as he put it to the media, ‘The changes we’re going to bring about are better late than never.’

Although I have a certain amount of respect for the comment—and certainly I have some criticism, in that he has taken 10 years to get to that realisation—I hope we do not have the same approach taken when it comes to climate change. When it comes to climate change, it is not an option to be better late than never. It is not an option that we continue to stick our heads in the sand and try to pretend that this is not a real phenomenon. For many people, communities, species, plants and animals, better late than never will mean never. These changes are occurring now and they do require the attention of this government.

A better-late-than-never approach may in fact be too late, as we hear from scientists, for some islands, particularly Pacific islands. Following the Prime Minister’s recent comment about gloomy climate change predictions, on the 7.30 Report former US Vice President Al Gore said:

He’s increasingly alone in that view among people who’ve really looked at the science ... The so-called “gloomy predictions” are predictions of what would happen if we did not act. It’s not a question of mood. It’s a question of reality.

Mr Gore went on to say:

And, you know, there’s no longer debate over whether the earth is round or flat. Though there are some few people who still think it’s flat, we generally ignore that view because the evidence
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has mounted to the point where we understand that it shouldn’t be taken seriously.

The Australian people should take the view that this government’s level of inaction when it comes to climate change should be taken seriously. It is too serious a problem to ignore and it is certainly too serious a problem for the government not to show leadership on.

Labor has called on the government repeatedly to address this issue, to identify and acknowledge that the issue is real but also to show leadership. After all, a government is elected not to govern in the present but to make decisions that influence our future, the future of our kids and the environment that we wish to bequeath to those who follow us. This is just not occurring. Labor has shown leadership on this issue of climate change and will continue to do so. It will be a central plank in our policy. I have to say that I am very proud that we have shown that leadership throughout our communities, because it is a reflection of our ongoing commitment to this country and to the sustained and appropriate development of industry while having regard to the sensitivities imposed by the environment.

Labor members understand the importance of the problem, and that is why Labor has committed itself to ratifying the Kyoto protocol, cutting greenhouse pollution, establishing a greenhouse emissions trading mechanism, substantially increasing the mandatory renewable energy target, the MRET, and establishing a climate change trigger—which has now been formally rejected by this government—with the introduction of the private member’s bill by the member for Grayndler.

This government continues to resist the need to ratify Kyoto, sticking to its alternative, the Asia-Pacific climate pact. If Kyoto is so bad, you have to ask yourself: why is it that every other country that is involved in the Prime Minister’s alternative model—that being the Asia-Pacific climate pact—has already ratified the Kyoto protocol? All countries other than Australia and the United States have done so. Republican Senator John McCain is someone who ordinarily would not be a standout for supporting Labor ideals or anything that Labor has to say. Nevertheless, he said the following about the Howard government’s position on the Asia-Pacific climate pact:

The pact amounts to nothing more than a nice little public-relations ploy. It has almost no meaning. They aren’t even committing money to the effort, much less enacting rules to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions.

That is not a bad commentary from a Republican senator in that regard. But there is more. The Chinese ministry for foreign affairs said:

This pact has no power for legal restrictions. It is a complement to the Kyoto treaty, not a replacement.

These are the views of some of the major players in the world on the government’s poor facsimile of the Kyoto protocol, and, if this is the calibre of people who are criticising the Australian government over its lack of action, one can only conclude that the time for hiding from climate change has well and truly passed.

Comments made yesterday by the Canadian environmentalist Dr David Suzuki have been reported pretty widely in our newspapers. He has commented on the Howard government’s approach to Kyoto. The member for Throsby made some remarks about this, but I would like to pick up on one thing that Dr Suzuki had to say. He said:

I believe that future generations will look back on the inactivity, the unwillingness to do anything, as a crime against future generations.
That is a reasonably strong statement from an environmentalist of his calibre. Future generations probably will damn us for our failure to act and to act now.

To say that I am disappointed by some of the contents of this bill would be an understatement. To say that I am amazed that in 409 pages of amendments to the government’s major environmental law there is not a single mention of climate change would also be an understatement. The Australian people expect more. The Australian public recognises the real and present danger to our economy and our society if climate change is not addressed. The Australian public is doing its bit but it is lacking the leadership that it expects the government to provide.

The Prime Minister and others continue to argue that taking action on climate change will cost jobs. I disagree with that. As anyone who has ever dealt with businesses going through change will know, businesses look for certainty. Certainty encourages investment decisions and innovation, as businesses try to get ahead of their competitors and protect their market share. Give businesses certainty, introduce measures to address climate change over a period of time, but set out the markers now. Allow businesses to understand where the government expects them to be and how they should achieve that within a reasonable time frame. There is no need to surprise them and introduce changes overnight. That has not worked in the past and it will not work here. But to lay down a series of markers that business can work with will establish certainty and will contribute a lot to reforming and changing business practices. Give Australian businesses certainty about what is expected of them and I am pretty confident that they will move in new and innovative ways to meet the goals which are established.

I am opposed to this bill. I believe that all fair-minded members of this place should also oppose it. I am opposed to it because it will decrease accountability, it will increase the strength of development interests and it will all but silence the public in speaking out against development interests that are not in the interests of their communities. If the National Party members who come to this place to represent the agricultural communities really care about those communities, they should be voting with Labor on this bill—and voting it down. I strongly support the second reading amendment moved by the opposition.

Ms KING (Ballarat) (12.30 pm)—I rise to speak against the Environment and Heritage Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2006. This bill contains 409 pages of amendments to the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, our main piece of environmental legislation in this federal parliament. It provides a framework for assessing environmental impacts of proposed actions in relation to World Heritage properties, Ramsar wetlands of international importance, nationally threatened species and ecological communities, migratory species, nuclear actions, the Commonwealth marine environment and places on the National Heritage List.

The government is trying to put forward an argument that this bill reduces processing time and costs for development interests and gives priority to proposals of national importance. The reality is that this bill curtails third party appeal rights, undermines public consultation and further politicises the decision making process in relation to heritage sites. This bill is another attempt by the government to not only avoid its role as the steward of Australia’s environment and history but to actively undermine the preservation of our natural environment and our historically significant sites. It is for this reason
that I support the amendment moved by the member for Grayndler.

The problems with this sloppy and potentially dangerous legislation are many, and we have heard from many of the other speakers that, despite its 409 pages of amendments, the bill has failed to address the key challenge facing Australia’s environment. In 409 pages of amendments, the term ‘climate change’ is not mentioned once. The challenge of climate change is that it has the potential to forever alter the way that we live our lives. This so-called environment legislation completely ignores what is so obvious to everybody else. The bill provides the Minister for the Environment and Heritage with additional powers to establish priority themes and determine which applications will be fast tracked.

Many of our key heritage sites will be placed under threat of development, as the minister will be the only person with authority to determine which sites are of strategic national interest. Clause 194K(3) of the bill states:

In exercising the power to make changes—to the priority list—the Minister may have regard to any matters that the Minister considers appropriate.

That broadens out the matters that he has to take into consideration under the current act. That is a blatant undermining of the listing process and it puts unprecedented power in the hands of the minister.

Another reason I am opposed to this bill is because of the continuing arrogance of the government in trying to ram these 409 pages of amendments through with limited consultation. My understanding is that these amendments were not presented until relatively late last week. That has given minimal time to those in the environment movement to understand the amendments—let alone to understand the implications of them. There has been minimal time to fully explore the repercussions of the bill, there has been no consultation, and there has been reliance on a report that was written about reducing red tape for business, not about creating environmental or heritage protection measures. That is yet further evidence of the government’s arrogance.

The Senate Standing Committee for the Scrutiny of Bills concluded yesterday, in the limited time that it had to look at this bill, that it has been poorly drafted. The words of the committee, which is dominated by members of the coalition government and chaired by a Liberal Party member, are that, ‘This bill needs to go back to the drawing board.’ I cannot think of a more damning indictment of a bill than to have the Senate Standing Committee for the Scrutiny of Bills, chaired by one of the government’s own members, come down with a report that says that this bill needs to go back to the drawing board. It is not a particularly good look for the government to have something like that occur. What will be an even worse look for the government is if it ignores what the Senate Standing Committee for the Scrutiny of Bills has told it.

It is no wonder that Australians feel that the government is out of touch when it comes to issues of environmental and heritage protection. The League of Historical Cities 10th world conference is taking place in my electorate of Ballarat from 29 October, with delegates from all over the world coming together to discuss issues surrounding heritage sites. In Ballarat we are fortunate to have some of the most wonderful heritage buildings that people from all over the world come to visit—not just for this four-day conference but throughout the year. Our city and the city of Launceston are, in my view, two of the most beautifully preserved built heritage cities in the country. It beggars belief how anyone who is concerned about our en-
environment and concerned about preserving heritage, whether built or natural, could sup-
port a bill that threatens to remove funda-
mental legislative protections.

As I said at the start of my speech, this bill, with its 409 pages of amendments to the En-
vironment Protection and Biodiversity Con-
servation Act, ignores the simple fact that climate change and global warming are
devastating our natural environment. It offers
no initiatives to protect our environment
from the ravages of climate change. In 409
pages of environmental legislation, it is as
though climate change just does not exist.
Over the past few days, it has suddenly oc-
curred to the Prime Minister that we are in
drought. He has been on the airwaves on it,
and no doubt in the break he will be heading
out in his rural outfit to get some media foot-
age with farmers in devastated drought
communities. Whilst I absolutely support the
government’s measures to support farmers
and to try and help them, I cannot believe
that the government can have the audacity to
talk about the drought without acknowledg-
ing that it is the long-term effects of climate
change that we are experiencing.

Prime Minister, after almost a decade of
drought conditions in Australia it is time to
wake up to the fact that this is about climate
change. Complex environmental problems
such as drought, increased bushfire risk and
loss of biodiversity will certainly continue if
this government does not pay attention to
dealing with the issue of climate change se-
riously. It needs decent environmental legis-
lation that does everything it can to protect
our fragile environment—not this bill with
its 409 pages of amendments, which do not
even mention the words ‘climate change’

In regional areas we know climate change
is dramatically affecting us. Today’s front
page of the Ballarat Courier runs with the
headline ‘Lake runs dry’. This lake is the
sporting, social and cultural heart of our city.
It is the site of the 1956 Olympics rowing
events—the anniversary of which is to be
commemorated this year on a dry lake bed.
As someone who did row on that lake, I find
it is absolutely devastating that this lake,
right at the heart of our community, has run
completely dry.

This bill, the government’s major piece of
environmental legislation, does not mention
climate change even once. The member for
Grayndler introduced a private member’s bill
back in 2005 to introduce a climate change
trigger into the Environment Protection and
Biodiversity Conservation Act. The govern-
ment have never allowed that bill to be de-
bated, despite having that proposal to intro-
duce a climate change trigger before them
since 2001. This legislation effectively
means that is now being formally rejected by
the Howard government. This bill, rather
than protecting our heritage sites, will place
further pressure on our already fragile envi-
ronment. The Humane Society International
and the World Wildlife Fund have criticised
this legislation for removing environmental
protections, such as mandatory recovery
plans for threatened species, and for wiping
500 threatened ecological communities from
the waiting list for protection.

So when the member for Flinders bangs
on about having added X number of animals
and Y number of birds to the protected list,
perhaps he would be good enough to men-
tion the fact that during its 10 years in power
the Howard government has presided over a
41 per cent increase in species becoming
extinct, endangered or vulnerable. Perhaps
he could point out that Australia has the dis-
honour of leading the world in mammal ex-
tinctions. The government’s response to such
horrifying facts is to remove the few legisla-
tive requirements that exist to ensure the pro-
tection of critical habitat. Despite the gov-
government’s impressive rhetoric about the success of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, the simple fact is that it has failed to protect our environment and it has failed to protect and conserve our biodiversity. None of this government’s failed initiatives have come close to halting the devastation of our natural environment.

Across the country, water levels are dropping and the government is producing bills that ease the way for developers instead of protecting our water supplies. A quarter of all Australia’s surface water management areas have reached limits that make them unsustainable. This means that we stand on the brink of losing a quarter of our surface water supply. The Murray River, for so long a key component of the water supply and environmental health of the eastern states of Australia, is at its lowest level on record. The water from the Murray River system feeds into the important agricultural lands of Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia. The government’s promises on the Murray River have been absolutely false ones. They have not resulted in one extra drop of water for the Murray—not one single drop of extra water going into the Murray system. As Kim Beazley, the Leader of the Opposition, said in Sydney: if words could be turned into water then, with all the words coming from the parliamentary secretary for water, South Australia would be awash by now.

Being from Ballarat, a heritage city, I find the notion of giving the minister additional power over heritage listings an appalling abuse of government power. The minister will determine themes on an annual basis for the assessment of heritage sites and threatened species. So again this government places direct, unaccountable control of potentially controversial programs in the hands of a minister who has already shown that he will take political factors into account in his decision making process rather than environmental or scientific considerations—a minister who is now faced with a serious decision over the Burrup Peninsula. I think with this legislation and this minister’s unprecedented new powers we can kiss the rock art at the peninsula goodbye.

Of course, in the past the rights of a third party to appeal have helped to keep these processes open and transparent. This bill removes the rights of third parties and in doing so closes the door on much of the public scrutiny that previous ministers have had to face in making their decisions. This minister has demonstrated a willingness, time and time again, to interfere in the process to try and expedite a political victory. In the Bald Hills wind farm debacle and the Victorian Alpine National Park, the minister ignored independent scientific advice and environmental best practice to push his political agenda.

What arrogance from the government to increase the minister’s power and at the same time remove the right of public appeal and scrutiny! It is important to be clear about just how much power the minister is being given in this new bill. The minister’s promises on the Murray River have been absolutely false ones. They have not resulted in one extra drop of water for the Murray—not one single drop of extra water going into the Murray system. As Kim Beazley, the Leader of the Opposition, said in Sydney: if words could be turned into water then, with all the words coming from the parliamentary secretary for water, South Australia would be awash by now.

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The minister is not even required to permit a reassessment. It would be possible for the minister to turn around and say, ‘I know that there are only two orange-bellied parrots left, but I’m afraid they’ve already been assessed and I’ll not permit a reassessment.’
That is just a hypothetical example. Of course, we know that the minister is somewhat attached to the orange-bellied parrot and that it is already on the list, so that would not happen, but it is an example. This creates a political situation where previously none existed. The minister may pick and choose which species to save and which species will become extinct according to his own decision. The government promotes this bill as cutting red tape when in fact it is making the minister a tin-pot Noah, picking and choosing which animals to save and which to leave to the ravages of his approved developments.

The fact that this bill is being rushed through without sufficient time for public comment shows that the government knows that the Australian people are concerned about it. The speech to the House by the member for Flinders, with his list of the government’s so-called achievements, is deserving of further scrutiny. Surely a government that claims to have such a strong environmental record would want time to consult with the conservation movement over such a far-reaching environmental bill. Surely a government that prides itself on having a strong environmental record would wish to take that record out to the community and have scrutiny of this bill and the provisions in it by the conservation movement.

We know that this government’s record on environmental protection is not good. In fact, it is poor. The way in which it is rushing this legislation through the parliament is evidence that it does not want scrutiny of its environmental record. It is trying to rush through a bill with major amendments that include the politicising of heritage listing processes and the assessment of threatened species without proper public consultation or investigation. Key stakeholders in environmental protection have not been consulted, nor has the government listened to their concerns. The government’s lack of consultation on the bill reflects the lack of consultative processes within the bill itself. By removing the review of matters of national significance which are currently the triggers under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, the government is getting rid of a major source of public input into environmental issues.

There has been no serious study accompanying this bill that looks at the impact of climate change on the Australian environment. The government has continually refused to ratify and implement the Kyoto protocols on climate change, despite the overwhelming evidence that climate change will continue to adversely affect our lives unless real action is taken. Instead of creating a bill that would have a real impact on reversing climate change, the government has hurriedly slapped together 409 pages of amendments to the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act that completely ignore the No. 1 issue facing our environment. It now tries to ram them through this place with no regard for due diligence or public consultation, which is to be expected from an arrogant government that is systematically stripping consultation out of the processes of government. Again, the absolute danger in doing that was highlighted by the Senate Standing Committee for the Scrutiny of Bills yesterday when it said specifically to the government, ‘This bill needs to go back to the drawing board.’ If the government ignores that advice from its committee, dominated by Liberal Party and coalition members, then it is absolutely failing the Australian community in establishing good protections for the Australian environment and its heritage.

One of the other things that is worth noting about this bill is that it contains a major backdown by the government on the National Heritage List. The National Heritage List is to no longer apply to places outside of
Australia. The government went on with much chest-beating and fanfare that they were going to put Anzac Cove on the National Heritage List. This never happened. When I visited the site last year, the erosion from the government-agreed roadworks was devastating and there was much remedial action needed to restore the site. Anzac Cove has, in fact, been changed irrevocably by the roadworks at the site. The government made the promise to place it on the National Heritage List only to discover later that it was not possible for them to do so. What they have done with this bill is to basically say, ‘What we told the Australian community—that we would place it on the National Heritage List—is something that we will never ever actually do.’

To conclude, we face a worsening climate change problem. Water shortages, destroyed soil and mass extinctions of species are all part of the government’s environmental management legacy. This bill does nothing to address the problems facing our environment. Instead of taking in a wide consultation process and developing an effective strategy for dealing with environmental degradation, the government has slapped together 409 pages amendments to a bill that is failing to deliver any substantial outcomes. The bill gives the minister new, unscrutinised powers to approve developments. The minister will also be able to dismiss applications to protect species that have applied previously. The bill is unacceptable in its current form. It fails to protect the Australian environment; it fails to protect Australia’s heritage. I support the amendment moved by the member for Grayndler and ask the government to go back to the drawing board and introduce legislation that seeks to protect our natural environment against the ravages of climate change and preserves our heritage sites rather than subjecting them to greater pressure from developers and arbitrary decision-making from this minister.

Mr SNOWDON (Lingiari) (12.50 pm)—I am pleased to be able to make a contribution to this debate and to indicate my strong endorsement for the amendment moved by the member for Grayndler. Just to remind everyone, in case we need reminding, the purpose of this bill is to substantially amend the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 to make it more efficient and effective, to allow for the use of more strategic approaches and to provide greater certainty in decision-making.

This act is Australia’s primary law for the protection of the environment. It provides a framework for environmental protection and for any actions that are likely to have an impact on matters of national environmental significance. Given its importance, you would have thought that the government would have embarked upon an extensive process of consultation and dialogue with the community. You would have thought, given its importance, that the government would have sought out the interest groups that have been historically involved with the environmental issues across Australia, and communities with an involvement in environmental issues, to have a discussion and dialogue with them about its proposal to amend this piece of legislation. You would have thought so.

But, of course, we know that that has not been the case. We now have 409 pages of amendments in this place but no Bills Digest, and we are told that it will not be prepared for some time, so rushed and so important is this piece of legislation. I just wonder what it is that has triggered the rush to have this legislation in place. Why is it that we are debating this piece of legislation now and not in, say, March next year? When the person who represents the minister’s interests in this
place comes in here to respond to the debate we are having this afternoon, maybe he will tells us what the trigger is. Maybe we will come to some understanding of why it is so important that we rush through this hastily gathered together bill which, as the previous speaker, the member for Ballarat, indicated, was condemned by the Senate Standing Committee for the Scrutiny of Bills as recently as yesterday. We know that the view being expressed by the members of the government in the Senate is one that is mirrored by members of the opposition in the Senate and by members of the opposition here: that this piece of legislation is very shoddy, that it has many errors, we believe, in terms of what it proposes to do and that it is indicative of a government that clearly has decided that the arrogant way to do business is the best way to do business—that you do not really care about what others might have to say, apart from your friends in the corporate world, and that you have no real interest.

I note what Senator Johnston said about the explanatory memorandum to this legislation. I quote him; it is worth listening to. He said:

This explanatory memorandum is probably one of the most appalling I have ever seen in the short time I have been in the Senate. It discloses no motivation, no reasoning and no justification for some of the most draconian powers that this parliament can conceivably and possibly enact: rights of search and seizure without warrant, rights of personal frisking without warrant.

I mean, Ian Campbell, he’s acting like a, like some sort of an itinerant drunk full of Dutch courage. Maybe he is praising him, because I think there are people in the community who would say much harsher things about this minister for the way in which he has dealt with this portfolio and the way in which he is dealing with this piece of legislation.

But, of course, those of us who live in the Northern Territory understand how this minister really thinks about the environment, because, over the last 12 months, we in the Northern Territory, and in my seat of Lingiari in particular, have been subjected to one of the worst decisions that I have been unfortunate enough to witness in the time I have been a member of parliament, which goes back as far as 1987—that is, the decision to impose upon the Northern Territory nuclear waste facilities. Indeed, I think that is evidence enough of the government’s miserable
track record on environment and heritage protection.

I have spoken in detail in the past in this place about the widespread opposition to the proposal by the government to choose one of three sites as possible sites for nuclear waste dumps. They are: Fishers Ridge, 47 kilometres from Katherine; Harts Range, 165 kilometres north-east of Alice Springs; and Mount Everard, 40 kilometres from Alice Springs up the Stuart Highway. This was done without any discussion or dialogue with the Northern Territory, let alone any agreement. The Commonwealth government decided that they needed a site because they had presumed they would have an outcome with Woomera in South Australia, but they were prevented from doing so by the South Australian government. They needed an alternative site, so what did they do? They got the Department of Defence to do a desktop survey of available land in the Northern Territory—that is, land that was available for use by Defence, or Commonwealth land—and they chose these three sites. There was no assessment as to their appropriateness or otherwise; they just chose them. There was no discussion with the local community, no discussion with the Northern Territory government and no discussion with anyone with an interest in the environment. They just chose the sites and said, ‘We’re going to do this because we can.’

That is why this minister and the government are dealing with this legislation in the way they are: because the government are so arrogant—they know they can, because they have the numbers in the Senate. They can put anything through in this place—that is, the parliament, this House and the other chamber—knowing full well that in 99.9 per cent of cases they will be successful in getting the legislation through. They are so arrogant that they do not want to involve the Australian community in any consideration of what they are proposing to do.

Prior to these announcements being made about nuclear waste facilities in the Northern Territory, Territorians might have expected some protection of their environment from actions such as this by the Howard government under the Commonwealth legislation, which we are amending today. What we know is that protection is no longer available for those people who are concerned about the proposed sites. The Commonwealth government can go ahead and build a waste dump that Territorians do not want—and that will be a significant blight on the environment and heritage of the Territory—because the government has blocked the operation of the EPBC Act and other legislation in relation to these dump sites.

How arrogant can you be? It is not a problem for this government, though—no problem at all. They do not mind jumping over the rights of the people of the Northern Territory for their own base political purposes. They do not mind doing that. They cannot do it anywhere else in Australia but they can do it there and, I might say, in the ACT with not so much as a by-your-leave. The government have said: ‘If you think we are going to assess the sites against any reasonable environmental standards, forget it. The EPBC Act will not apply.’

I am getting sick and tired of this. I know that the people of the Northern Territory are fed up to the back teeth at the way they have been taken for granted by the government in relation to this issue. Let me just remind the House of section 6(1) of the Commonwealth Radioactive Waste Management Act 2005 which provides that:

The following laws have no effect to the extent that they would, apart from this section, regulate, hinder or prevent the doing of a thing authorised by section 4:
(a) the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984;

(b) the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.

The ‘doing of a thing authorised by section 4’, of course, covers a range of activities in preparation for the establishment of a nuclear waste dump. These activities include: gaining access to land to drive vehicles or fly aircraft to and from it; constructing roads on, or grading, land; constructing bores; operating drilling equipment; extracting water; collecting samples of flora and fauna; building structures to protect bores, monitoring equipment or other things; moving or extracting sand, gravel, soil, mineral and rock samples; and clearing vegetation.

These are activities that will obviously have a significant impact upon the environment of whichever site is finally chosen by the government for a nuclear waste dump. If the government really is committed to the EPBC Act and the protection of our environment, why did it choose to block its operation in relation to these sites? What validity can the EPBC Act be held to have in the future when, with a simple ministerial decision, its operation can be voided? Where the government sees the processes under this vital instrument for environmental protection as things that will either ‘hinder’ or ‘prevent’ some environmentally destructive policy it wants to foist on a certain community, it will simply, as it has done in this case, sidestep the act.

How can the minister introduce these proposed amendments and claim to support the EPBC Act and its objectives with any credibility? We know this government is prepared to trash this act whenever it feels so inclined, whenever it feels it needs to get its way. Of course, this has greater magnitude now. As we would be aware, we have seen clear signs from the government that it intends to embrace nuclear power. After his recalcitrant attitude on climate change—something which is not referred to in this legislation—and the refusal to sign up to Kyoto—

Mr Hunt—But deliver against the targets.

Mr SNOWDON—Climate change is a phenomenon which is now accepted. The very excitable young gentleman on the other side of the table, for whom I have some respect, clearly has decided that he is just going to jump up and down to the government tune on this.

Mr Laurie Ferguson—We know his private views.

Mr SNOWDON—Yes, we do know his private views. I am sure they do not accord with the views which have been expressed by Senator Campbell. Mr Howard has come out and told us that nuclear is the only way forward for us in terms of climate change. The PM, on last Sunday’s Sixty Minutes, said:

I’m in favour of Australia developing nuclear power for peaceful purposes. It’s clean and green, and in an age where we’re worried about global warming, we should be looking seriously at nuclear power as an option … and I can’t understand why the extreme greenies oppose it.

There are a lot of people in Australia who oppose the proposition that we might have nuclear power and they are not ‘extreme greenies’. They are simply informed, concerned Australian citizens. Using a pejorative term, hoping to describe them as ultra leftists, extreme greenies or whatever, will not wash.

But the decision for us in the Northern Territory has huge implications. Whether or not the Prime Minister and his ministerial colleagues propose to site a nuclear power generating facility in the Northern Territory is immaterial. What is material is that the waste from any generating facility will come to the Northern Territory. When we were told
that this nuclear waste facility would come to the Northern Territory, the government described the waste that would be brought in as low-level nuclear waste. I want to refer the House to a ministerial statement made this week by Marion Scrymgour MLA, Minister for Natural Resources, Environment and Heritage in the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly. I commend this document to the House because what it does, in part, is expose the untruths which have been given to the Australian people, and particularly the people of the Northern Territory, about the question of what nuclear waste will be housed in these facilities, should they proceed.

Let us firstly talk about some of the waste. We are going to be getting back from France a whole lot of waste which has been sent over there by ANSTO under a contractual arrangement reached in 1999. In 1999 ANSTO, the operator of HIFAR, and COGEMA—now AREVA—the operator of the French plutonium factories at La Hague, signed a contract for the management of ANSTO’s research reactor’s spent fuel. The agreement envisaged the reprocessing of spent fuel from HIFAR as well as future spent fuel from the now approved replacement research reactor.

We are told by the government that the spent fuel rods will all come back to Australia in 2011. What we know is that, despite what we are told, ANSTO will continue to send shipments of spent fuel to France after 2011. COGEMA will continue to process it. The waste will continue to be returned to Australia. The return shipment of waste from spent fuel is scheduled under the contract to take place to 2015, not just to 2011. So the rush to impose these sites on the Northern Territory is based on a fib.

We need to know what sort of fuel we are talking about, and it is important that we understand this. It is not physically Australian waste material that will be returned. If you listen to the government, you would say we are getting a neat package of fuel sent back to us after it has been reprocessed. This is simply not the case. What we will get back will be a proportion of the by-product of spent fuel from every country that sends its waste to France for reprocessing, divided between the contributing countries. Each country of origin of the waste will receive a proportion of different elements from the reprocessing of the fuel. The main elements are vitrified fission product—high-level waste compacted residues, the hulls and end pieces from the metallic casings—and also high-level waste uranium and plutonium.

Let us understand this: after the reprocessing COGEMA, or AREVA, will get ownership of the recovered uranium. ANSTO, in Australia, gets back generic waste generated from the global reprocessing activities at the La Hague facility in France. La Hague reprocesses diversely sourced material, much from Russia but certainly from all over. The waste returned to Australia includes waste generated from all these sources and includes plutonium. We were not told that by this government.

We are now told this legislation will protect our interests environmentally. What we know is that we in the Northern Territory are going to be subjected to getting not only the world’s waste but, if the Commonwealth proceeds down the line of having nuclear generating facilities, all that waste product too. I can tell you, Mr Deputy Speaker, even though the EPBC Act does not apply to these sites in the Northern Territory, we are opposed to this and we believe the government should change its decision. (Time expired)

Mr JENKINS (Scullin) (1.10 pm)—I rise to oppose the Environment and Heritage Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2006. It
is regrettable that, in an area of public policy as important as the environment, we should see today a piece of legislation—409 pages to the principal bill, a bill that was introduced in this place last Thursday morning and a bill that the government expects to proceed through both chambers of the parliament by November—that has caused so much controversy in the short time that the community and the parliament have had to look at the ramifications of it. It is quite extraordinary that, in a very hectic legislative period, as the world moves on, pieces of legislation and the debate can change so quickly. Often there are things that are happening, not necessarily in this chamber, that affect the way in which the debate flows.

Yesterday, while this bill was being discussed in this place, in the Senate the Senate Standing Committee for the Scrutiny of Bills tabled one of its regular reports. I have to admit to my colleagues from the other place I am not necessarily the greatest student of what goes on in the Senate, but it is instructive. The Standing Committee for the Scrutiny of Bills has a look at every piece of legislation that comes before the Senate and has clear terms of reference under Senate standing order 24. Yesterday’s report commented on 10 groups of legislation. The whole report runs for 27 pages, 12 of which are devoted to the Environment and Heritage Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2006.

I want to remind the House of one aspect of the second reading amendment moved by the honourable member for Grayndler on behalf of the opposition, and this is only one aspect. It states:

Having declined to give the second reading, the House expresses strong concern that:
(5) many of the proposed changes in the bill will reduce Ministerial accountability and opportunities for genuine public consultation …

Littered through the comments of the scrutiny of bills committee we see comments about various clauses and aspects of the bill, saying they:

… may be considered to trespass unduly on personal rights and liberties, in breach of principle 1(a)(i) of the Committee’s terms of reference.

Principle 1(a)(i) simply says that the committee needs to look at whether the bill will trespass unduly on personal rights and liberties. At 1(a)(iv) there is a comment about inappropriately delegating legislative powers. Littered through the report are more comments about clauses that impinge on personal rights and liberties: powers to search without warrant and powers given—which the Senate committee believes should only be given to police officers—to various officials. The committee looks at schedule 2, part 2, subitem 42 and says:

... it may be considered to delegate legislative powers inappropriately, in breach of principle 1(a)(iv) ...

It is quite extraordinary that a bipartisan Senate committee should come to such conclusions on so many aspects of this bill—and this is not even the committee of the Senate that will be investigating the environment and heritage matters in the bill. So when that committee finally reports in November, goodness knows what comments are going to be made. It is just not good enough when you have a government senator concluding, in his contribution to the report by the scrutiny of bills committee, that this legislation should go back to the drawing board.

I am not aware of the arcane factional arrangements of the Liberal Party. I do not know whether Senator Johnston has got it in for Senator Ian Campbell or whatever. It is hard enough to keep up with the factional arrangements of my own party! The point is that when you get a comment like that there should be alarm bells ringing. There should
be alarm bells ringing when a governing party, on so many fronts, has members of its own backbench querying the motives and reasons for pieces of legislation. Senator Johnston went on to say:

It discloses no motivation, no reasoning and no justification for some of the most draconian powers that this parliament can conceivably and possibly enact ...

Mr Martin Ferguson—That’s from a Liberal.

Mr JENKINS—That was from a Liberal about this piece of legislation. We have seen this sort of thing so often. I know it is a worry, but I am even starting to watch the debates in the Senate because they are quite intriguing. When I left to come down to this chamber they were discussing the Trade Practices Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2005, which was debated in this chamber yesterday, and it was quite instructive.

People might dismiss members of the National Party in the Senate as only being members of the junior coalition party, but they are still members of the coalition. They are still raising some interesting questions. The government in the Senate has to depend upon the Independents—the smaller parties—and now questions are being raised about the motivations of the smaller parties. On the assumption that the government, in its arrogance, will not understand the virtue of pulling the bill at this stage so that it does not progress through this chamber, when it goes to the Senate and there is a debate it will not only be restless people on their own backbench who are looking at the piece of legislation; the minor parties will also be looking at it.

That is an indication of the lack of discipline of the government and of their haziness and lack of focus. It is a further indication of the way in which so often in recent times the government have been on the back foot. As you would know, I place great importance upon what a national government sets out to achieve for the environment. I think we should consider the environment in the widest context. It needs to be done with a whole-of-government view and in a way which embraces the community. Businesses of all sizes should be involved and members of the community should be involved and encouraged. But when you pick up the Melbourne Age of today, on page 7 you read a headline: ‘Fed up with inaction: Pratt gives up on his water crusade’.

Mr Hunt interjecting—

Mr JENKINS—What the member for Flinders, in his great enthusiasm, should always remember is that, no matter what the states and territories do, the federal government has an onus to perform and to show leadership. It is not good enough for so many people, on behalf of the federal government, to blame others, because the environmental challenges that confront this nation do not require a timid approach—that somebody else should be doing it; it is somebody else’s fault. The challenges require courage and decisiveness. The member for Flinders cannot scurry away, because he knows that the criticisms by Dick Pratt are of all governments—not just state and territory governments. There is something lacking in the way in which the federal government would try to influence this.

It is not the case, in any way, that somebody should just get up and crow, ‘Well, I did my bit.’ What is the Prime Minister doing? Is the Prime Minister on side? Is the Prime Minister actually giving support for these proposals? The real problem is that we have this lack of focus; we have to have the point scoring—‘It’s always somebody else’s fault; it’s not our legislation that is dictating behaviour.’ We woke up to discussion of media ownership, and because everybody is
talking before the proclamation of the bill, it is to do with the previous legislation. What the Prime Minister should be doing is not just acting like some spin master, in some audition to replace CJ Cregg in the West Wing; he should be getting down to the business that is involved, and discussing the elements, not just the spin. He has to take the leadership role and show the decisive action, the big picture, not just give this timid reaction.

We can bet that, when the next State of the environment report comes out, it will yet again be a report on the state of the degradation of our environment. That is simply not good enough. At a time when the debate on climate change is moving into the next phase, it will possibly not just be about reaching the present targets but might lead to a challenge to governments throughout the world to revise those targets upwards. If we are failing in our endeavours to reach the targets at the present time, what is going to happen if the IPCC comes out and says that the targets should be ratcheted upwards, which is a possibility?

Again, I know that I have emphasised the role of the Senate in this speech, but Senator Heffernan is coming out and saying that he wants to transplant agricultural processes to other parts of the continent. The real key is that, regrettably, if climate change rolls on, that may have to be one of the considerations—and that will come at a high economic cost, which will have to be balanced over those things that we do not take into account when we are looking at issues like climate change. This really is the challenge. To have a piece of legislation like the one we are debating today—with 409 pages and not a mention of climate change, not an indication that we have to move on—is of really great concern. It does not show that the government is properly focused on those things that confront us directly now, not in a sense that we have to worry about them in the future.

It is appropriate that the EPBC Act be reviewed. But if you are going to do it, do it with a transparent method—take some time about it. If the government are fair dinkum about the review, they should take their time, they should embrace outside comment, they should move in a way that could encourage a bipartisan decision about any ways in which the act could be made more efficient. If that is the reason for this bill, let us be fair dinkum. But there are a lot of aspects of this bill that are not about simply the efficiency and effectiveness of the act; they are about changing the way in which decisions are made; they are about giving greater power to the minister; they are about politicising, even to a greater extent, decisions about environmental matters. It has been said by a number of my colleagues in this debate that we thought in Australia that we had moved on from that. We thought that we had moved on from environmental decisions, heritage decisions, being made on the basis of nudge, nudge, wink, wink. We are starting to see concerns that we are returning to that.

I know that, down in Gippsland, the issue of wind power and wind turbines has been a very controversial subject. I know that, in the run-up to the last federal election, it did have some influence on the electorate’s decision-making. But the way in which this environment minister of the Howard government has made a decision to intervene in decisions on wind turbines, like the Bald Hills example, is quite extraordinary. The real concern is that, if we have further decisions like that, they will devalue the credibility of environmental processes and environmental decision-making and all aspects of environmental impact. We just cannot pluck out reasons for the minister to intervene and for the minister to be able to make a decision that does not have
the ability to be challenged. That is just going back to the dim Dark Ages.

It is clear that we should not be having debates about environmental matters on a controversial basis. There is a plea that is made by this side of the House that we lessen the political interference, that we make the processes transparent. Why, if we are saying this is simply for efficiency and effectiveness, should the ability of third parties to intervene be taken out of the present act? There are often very good reasons why people who have a third-party interest should have the ability to discuss the decisions that are being made about these types of matters. What is happening with this legislation is a move away from a full discussion, a full system of decision making, to a very narrow system of decision making. The confidence of the community will be further fractured because of this. The confidence of the community in being able to agree to these measures that they are going to have to use to confront the major environmental problems of this nation will be fractured. It will actually be trashed. We need the cooperation of the community if we are going to get effective measures in place to combat climate change and to combat the way in which the lack of water in this continent is so changing our lifestyles. I hope the government will reconsider and withdraw this bill. (Time expired)

Mr MARTIN FERGUSON (Batman) (1.30 pm)—It is a pleasure to follow the member for Scullin, my neighbour in northern Melbourne, in making a contribution to this important debate. At the outset I want to say on behalf of the opposition that we agree there is very much a need to review the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act. It is very important that there is a legislative framework in Australia that actually works in terms of how we protect our environment. Firstly, we have an extra responsibility to protect Australia’s unique environment and heritage. Secondly, in protecting it, it is the responsibility of the legislators to provide an appropriate framework that allows for sustainable development in Australia in a timely way. We have to be able to do both: protect our environment while also creating a situation that guarantees economic growth and development in Australia.

For that reason it is very disappointing that the Howard government has paid so little regard to providing adequate time for the parliament, the states and territories and other stakeholders in the community to properly consider the legislation before the House this afternoon, the Environment and Heritage Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2006. There are over 900 items to be considered in this bill. The bill has been referred to a Senate committee, but members of the House are being asked to debate the bill without the benefit of the committee process and certainly without the benefit of a proper review period. The legislation was introduced on Thursday of last week, as the intent of the government was to complete the debate on Thursday of this week. The bill goes to 409 pages. How could any member of the House have had sufficient time to properly consider the range of amendments provided for in the bill before the House?

I would simply say that it is groundhog day when it comes to this bill. Part of the reason we need 900 amendments is that the bill for the original EPBC Act was rushed through the parliament—and we should remember this bit of history—back in 1999 on the back of a grubby little deal between the Democrats and the government. Let us not forget that this deal was the one that reduced the Commonwealth’s powers over environment and heritage protection, gave Australians the GST, and started the process that delivered today’s extreme industrial relations...
laws and took away the hard-won rights of working Australians. That is the history to this bill. It is not a stand-alone bill; it was part of a grubby little deal to get the GST and industrial relations changes through the Senate.

I think we are lucky that every state and territory today is governed by the Labor Party. We are yet to feel the true impact of the Commonwealth’s abrogation of environmental responsibility to state and local levels in this country. Having said that, working with the states and territories is definitely the way to go on the issue of environment and heritage, in association with the private sector—but not in the absence of national leadership and not in the absence of an ability to get things done at a national level when an impasse or a critical need arises. As my colleague the member for Rankin said last night:

... the government has not got the guts to take on the issue of water allocations and move to permanent trading in water rights.

The fact is we should not have legislation that allows the Commonwealth at any time or on any matter of national significance to do a Pontius Pilate and say, ‘There is nothing I can do; it is the fault of the states and territories.’ We hear that all the time from the Howard government. The government consistently abrogates its responsibility when it comes to national leadership, and Australia is the poorer for it in many ways. We have an energy market in name only, no progress on the Murray-Darling, the absolute squandering—that is what it is—of $248 billion of the $263 billion windfall of the last four budgets, no investment in the country’s productive future and no serious investment, at a time when we can afford it, in proper, pragmatic and practical environmental reform.

As I have obviously had little choice but to say on so many occasions during the term of this parliament, the ramming through of this bill with less than a week’s notice is yet another example of the government’s tardiness, its lack of commitment to the legislative program and its disrespect for the parliament and the people we represent. In the end, governments are made and broken in the House of Representatives. This is where government is formed, not in the Senate. To expect us to seriously consider this bill without proper notice is an absolute disgrace. It goes to the arrogance of the government and its contempt for legislative process with respect to the workings of the House of Representatives. It sends a serious warning to the Australian community that this government is now more concerned about preserving its electoral advantage than doing the hard work that makes Australia so attractive for investment and so important in the international debate about preserving our environment and heritage.

I note also that there appears to have been very little, if any, consultation with the states and territories or other stakeholders, with the exception of a small number of industry representatives and states who are immediately affected by some of the changes embodied in the bill. This is not a good look for the government. It is not a good look if we want to work with business to attract investment as well as preserve our environment and heritage. It is also not a good look for industry.

It undermines the integrity of the legislative process and the community’s confidence in it. It also undermines the reputation of some sections of industry and the standards of good corporate citizenship and good governance which it claims to observe. For that reason I support the second reading amendment by the opposition that this House appropriately expresses its strong concerns that this bill has rushed through parliament without proper consideration or consultation and therefore call on the House to allow a greater
time for public consultation and debate on the bill.

This is a reasonable request. I hope that members on both sides of the House will have the decency to have regard to the second reading amendment to secure our legislative right to a proper parliamentary process and, in doing so, show respect for the people we represent. They expect that we have time to do our job. The government has gone out of its way with respect to this bill—over 400 pages and 900 separate items—to ram it through parliament as quickly as possible. That is when you make mistakes not only with respect to the requirement to protect our environment and heritage but also with respect to the workings of the bill and its purpose to create a legislative framework which guarantees investment in sustainable development in Australia. You cannot separate one from the other.

I will go to some elements of the bill. Obviously, some of them have merit and I am not just going to can the bill for the sake of attacking the government. There is good and bad in this bill. We can also express our appreciation to the Public Service for the huge amount of work in drafting. It is about reducing red tape in approvals processes and hoping to improve the ability to enforce compliance—that is to be commended. For example, subject to further and proper consideration I cautiously welcome the amendments that strengthen the provisions relating to illegal fishing and bring the EPBC Act into line with the Fisheries Management Act. I say ‘cautiously’ because I have not—and neither has anybody else in the House—had time to properly seek legal and other relevant advice as to whether the amendments will do what is claimed.

Similarly, I cautiously welcome the introduction of strict liability with respect to damage caused to World Heritage properties, national heritage places, Ramsar wetlands, threatened species and communities and so on. This appears to remove the need to demonstrate recklessness or intent to cause damage to effect a prosecution. The extending of liability under the act to make corporations, non-corporate principals and employers liable for actions taken on their behalf also appears appropriate.

When it comes to the approvals process, I welcome some streamlining of the bilateral agreement processes to get rid of unnecessary red tape and duplication and provide certainty for investors in the development of Australia. But that streamlining must not compromise our ability to properly protect our unique environment and heritage. They are inseparable. Again, I cannot be entirely certain without the benefit of a proper review process and period that the measures in the bill are appropriate. This is a first reading on my behalf.

My colleagues have expressed some reservation about changes to the third party appeal provisions in this bill. To be fair, most Australians would agree that, while we all expect ministers to make decisions in full accordance with the acts of this parliament and we all support appeal provisions to ensure that this is the case, it is less clear that the vast majority of Australians support the right of a limited number of special interest groups to bring actions against the minister every other week to try and overturn decisions reasonably made within the law. That is the balance we have to get within this legislation. Some changes are needed to limit the opportunity for repeatedly vexatious appeals to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. I put it to the House that if the government had properly consulted and shared with members of this House the history of appeals made under the EPBC Act—the appellants, the cases, the outcomes—there may well be greater acceptance of the need for changes...
proposed in this bill. It is about due process and proper consultation.

The same thing applies when it comes to changes to the EPBC Act, which I support, that mean that plaintiffs will lose their specific exemption under the act to provide undertakings for damages when applying for interim injunctions. Plaintiffs will now have the same rights as under any other legislation or when taking civil proceedings with the Federal Court holding the discretion to not require undertakings for damages when it comes to interim injunctions. This is a fair and reasonable change.

For too long I contend that special interest groups have been able to freely indulge, in some instances, in repeatedly vexatious actions at great time, expense and delay to proponents. In most cases the interim injunctions granted have not stood the test of judicial scrutiny. Under the EPBC Act, it is my understanding that only two injunctions have been successful: one which related to the Nathan Dam in Queensland and the other to the killing of bats to protect an orchard development. In both cases, it is highly likely that the courts would have concluded that it was in the public interest to grant the injunctions and exempt the plaintiffs from any undertakings.

In the vast majority of cases it is reasonable to conclude that the exemption in the act had not been advancing the national interest but had been used for vexatious purposes by special interest groups and had created unnecessary uncertainty for important investment in Australia. This is a concern many of my portfolio constituents in resources, energy and forestry have raised with me in the short time that the bill has seen the light of day.

Similarly, my colleague the member for Rankin raised a related concern in this debate last night when he rightly pointed out that the environment movement adopted a tactic dating back to the 1980s to put as many areas as possible on the Register of the National Estate in Tasmania. The Australian Heritage Commission, inundated with listing requests and not properly resourced to assess them, adopted the precautionary principle and listed pretty much everything. That was a vexatious use of the heritage listing process in the hope that the environmentalists could achieve the protection of all national estate areas. That was never our intent in terms of doing the right thing by our environment and heritage in Australia.

The net effect of this is that we have a national estate list and a listing process for heritage and environment with much diminished status because of those vexatious actions in the past. I hope the environmental NGOs are proud of themselves for achieving this. I think it is a disgrace.

The changes to listing processes proposed in this bill are intended to address the kinds of flaws referred to above. But obviously they have gone too far. Where the act was previously silent, Senator Ian Campbell has now made sure that, as with the case of the Bald Hills wind farm and the orange-bellied parrot, he can now, unfortunately, politicise at any time and on any grounds. That is going too far.

The amendments to listing processes that allow the minister to seek and have regard to information or advice from any source are a bridge too far. This does not address the credibility of a person providing advice—for example, whether or not the person has appropriate qualifications or standing. It does not pass the test of reasonableness in terms of the types of matters that could perhaps be considered such as economic, social and environmental factors.

Obviously, this is a complex issue and a complex bill. It has to be considered in a
properly focused, calm and constructive way. But the government has created an environment which has led to a motion on the way this bill is actually being considered in the House this week. The members of the House have not had an appropriate opportunity to go away and seriously consider the 900-odd proposals actually embodied in the bill for changes to what is a complex act in the first instance.

I mentioned other matters that perhaps could be considered, because it is my view that the competition between industry and heritage should not be addressed through an argument over whether to list or not to list. The real issue, and our responsibility, is to recognise that we can have multiple land use values of listed places that should be properly managed through the use of regulation, statutory management plans and conditions on development. There are a variety of ways to actually achieve what we all desire—that is, the protection of our environment and heritage.

There is no doubt in my mind that those places with really special environment and heritage values—and, in my view, the Burrup Peninsula, for example, is one of those—should be properly listed and recognised for those values. But that is not to say that we are not having development on the Burrup. We actually need development on the Burrup because it is the key to a lot of our export earnings in Australia at the moment. It is also potentially the key to our transport security if we are able to get serious about the gas-to-liquids debate in Australia.

There is also no doubt in my mind, having said that, that if heritage places have other very special values—for example, nationally significant economic and strategic values—it is my view that when it comes to the Burrup Peninsula there is a need to find a way to protect those values as well and guarantee investment and economic development. I am personally satisfied that with goodwill on all sides this can be achieved. We can have multiple land use values and we can manage them properly so that heritage is protected but sustainable economic growth that underpins our national wealth can also still occur.

I have talked about the vexatious use of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act a lot today, and the Burrup Peninsula, as I have said, provides a good example of this. Whilst I have heard some reports from defenders of rock art on the Burrup that 30 per cent of the Burrup’s heritage sites will be put at risk by Woodside’s proposed Pluto development, mapping of the area proposed for listing and the development site clearly shows that the Pluto development will in fact occupy just a fraction of one per cent of the rock art area.

It is also about time that people told the truth about what is actually happening in some of these areas that are so sensitive in terms of the debate surrounding this bill this afternoon. Let us have a factual debate rather than an emotional debate on some of these key issues. It is time that we stopped some of the scaremongering and told the truth. We actually want to do the right thing by the environment; we also want to do the right thing by our economy. That is the balance that is intended in this act.

The government has created great difficulty in having a proper debate on those issues because of the way in which it has handled this bill. It was just plain arrogant to table last week a bill of over 400 pages and with 900 proposed amendments and then to seek to have it rammed through the House of Representatives—the people’s parliament—by the end of today. It is contemptuous of the Prime Minister, the cabinet and the coalition party room. It shows no regard for their own coalition partners, especially the backbench-
ers, who have to consider these issues, and the 150 constituencies that make up the House of Representatives. The government itself has created in the mind of the Australian community a serious question about the integrity of this bill because of the way it has sought to short-circuit the debate and stop proper due process and consideration.

The bill has been about four years in coming. Why does it therefore have to be rammed through the House of Representatives in one week? There is no good reason for that approach to legislative change in Australia. We are about proper management practices in Australia. We are about proper management practices that protect our environment and heritage. I simply say this: regardless of the merits of many amendments in this bill, there are too many orange-bellied parrot amendments for my liking. I therefore join the opposition in opposing the bill, but I also say that there is a need for a review of the act. The problem is that the government has got the process wrong and has now created in the mind of the Australian community the idea that there is no legitimacy to the bill before the House. (Time expired)

Mr GAVAN O’CONNOR (Corio) (1.50 pm)—I commend the honourable member for Batman for his contribution to this debate. Always it is a considered contribution and one that pulls no punches. I rise to oppose the Environment and Heritage Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2006. I support the second reading amendment moved by the member for Grayndler which encapsulates in the broadest sense what is dreadfully wrong with this flawed piece of legislation that is now before the House. The second reading amendment moved by the member for Grayndler expresses strong concern that:

1. the bill is being rushed through the Parliament without proper consideration or consultation;
2. the Howard Government has failed to halt the decline in Australia’s natural environment and best agricultural land;
3. the bill contains no measures to cut Australia’s spiralling greenhouse pollution or protect Australia from dangerous climate change;
4. the bill will increase the Howard Government’s politicisation of environment and heritage protection; and
5. many of the proposed changes in the bill will reduce Ministerial accountability and opportunities for genuine public consultation; and therefore calls on the Howard Government to:
6. ensure climate change is properly factored into environmental decision making under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (the Act);
7. establish a climate change trigger in the Act to ensure large scale greenhouse polluting projects are assessed by the Federal Government; and
8. allow greater time for public consultation and debate on the bill”

A central question has to be asked about this particular piece of legislation: will these streamlined procedures and amendments addressing claims of duplication of processes, insufficient flexibility and scope, ambiguities, anomalies and lack of certainty maintain at the end of the day a high level of protection for the environment? That is a fundamental question, because the government has come into this place with an extremely complex bill that we have not had adequate time to consider and, of course, we must match the amendments in this legislation against some very important benchmarks that the Australian community wants in place to protect the Australian environment.

I note the presence in the chamber of the honourable member for Corangamite—Captain Zero, as we know him in the West-
ern District. I would have thought that the honourable member for Corangamite, being a grazier from the Western District, would have had some regard for process. He has been in this parliament long enough to understand that good legislation only comes from good consideration and debate, and we have not had it in this instance. I will make sure that the people of Geelong are aware of the fact that the honourable member for Corangamite is attempting, along with his colleagues, to ram a piece of legislation through this parliament without due process—the sort of due process that his constituents and mine in the Geelong area demand of us in this place. They do not ask for it; when a significant piece of legislation comes before this particular parliament, they demand that the honourable member for Corangamite and the honourable member for Corio, as representatives, do our duty by them and allow sufficient time for consideration of these lofty issues.

The Environment and Heritage Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2006 seeks to amend in a substantial way the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999, which commenced operation in 2000. This particular legislation forms the centrepiece of Australian law relating to the environment. The bill we are debating here today is acknowledged by the government—not just by us; in the explanatory memorandum it is acknowledged by the government—that this is ‘the first comprehensive attempt to define the environmental responsibilities of the Australian government’. If it is the first comprehensive attempt to do it and we have a piece of legislation that is 409 pages long, with an enormous number of amendments, why is the government ramming this legislation through this parliament?

In the explanatory memorandum, the government goes on to say:

... enables the Australian Government to join with the States and Territories in providing a truly national scheme of environmental protection and biodiversity conservation.

This is a major piece of Commonwealth legislation. The bill contains 409 pages of amendments and the government’s own explanatory memorandum runs to 117 pages. This is indeed a complex piece of legislation. It is highly technical and it has far-reaching consequences for stakeholders, whether they are developers, farmers, environmentalists, communities, state and territory governments or private or public companies. It is legislation that is of great concern and consequence to the Australian people. Given all of this, why has the Howard government so abused the parliamentary and public consultation process to ram this bill through this parliament in this way?

Previous speakers on this side of the House, the opposition, have acknowledged that there are parts of this legislation worthy of some support, but they can only be supported if we as the opposition are given enough time to consider the detail of the bill, seek out expert advice on the technical aspects of the legislation, have sufficient time to engage in meaningful discussion with stakeholders and have sufficient time to internally reach a considered view on aspects of the bill. If the opposition are permitted to go through those processes, the government knows that at the end of the day and in the interests of the Australian people we will agree with it on the matters which we think ought to be supported by the Australian people.

I notice that the Prime Minister has entered the chamber to grace us with his presence at question time. I think there are people in the gallery who would like to know why the Prime Minister and his government are seeking to ram this piece of legislation through this parliament. It is legislation that
was four years in the making and is the most significant piece of environmental legislation in Australia’s history, and the Prime Minister, his cabinet and his colleagues on the backbench are ramming it through this parliament without adequate time for consultation and discussion. Let it be a matter on the public record that the opposition have not had sufficient time to assess the impacts of this legislation on stakeholders or the environment.

Given the lofty objectives of the bill and their significance, I would have thought that good governance and appropriate democratic practice would have dictated a different approach by the government to this legislation. This 409-page bill has been dumped on the opposition at short notice. I have requested a Bills Digest from the library but I have been informed that one will not be available for two weeks, long after the debate has taken place in the House. As I understand it, no comprehensive briefing on the detail and the implications of the bill has been provided to the opposition by the minister’s department.

The debate will occur well before Labor has had the opportunity to consult with key stakeholders or consider their evidence before the Senate committee that is scheduled to inquire and hold hearings into this bill. This is an absolute abuse of power and process, and it is the mark of an arrogant government that cares little now for proper parliamentary process and scrutiny and even less for good democratic practice.

The SPEAKER—Order! It being 2.00 pm, the debate is interrupted in accordance with standing order 97. The debate may be resumed at a later hour and the member will have leave to continue speaking when the debate is resumed.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Iraq

Mr BEAZLEY (2.00 pm)—My question is to the Prime Minister. I refer the Prime Minister to United States President George Bush’s statement on Iraq that he completely agreed with. President Bush stated:

... if the plan is now not working—the plan that’s in place isn’t working—

Mr Michael Ferguson—that’s America.

Mr BEAZLEY—that’s correct, I suppose. Yes, it’s an American statement. I repeat President Bush’s statement:

... if the plan is now not working—the plan that’s in place isn’t working, America needs to adjust.

Did the Prime Minister shift the goalposts on our troops in Iraq, again, in his statements today on national radio because George Bush told him to?

Mr HOWARD—No—no to both questions. I have not shifted my position on Iraq. My position on Iraq remains that if the coalition were to withdraw from Iraq, an enormous propaganda victory would be delivered to the terrorists. They would use our withdrawal as a recruiting ground, particularly in Indonesia. The Leader of the Opposition often talks about our obligations to deal with terrorism closer to home. I ask the Leader of the Opposition: why does he want to give a propaganda boost to JI in Indonesia? Why does he want to do that if he is so concerned about the impact of terrorism at home? He must know, with his much vaunted understanding of international affairs, that a humiliation for America, a premature retreat by the coalition in Iraq, would deliver an enormous propaganda victory to the terrorists. They would use that and they would use it close to Australia.

Iraq

Mr ANTHONY SMITH (2.02 pm)—My question is addressed to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Has the minister had the opportunity to meet with the Iraqi oil minister? If so, what was the nature of the discussions?
Mr DOWNER—First of all, I thank the honourable member for Casey for his question. I would like to take the opportunity of saying how I appreciate the member for Casey’s personal determination to stand by the people of Iraq. I was very pleased to welcome in my office today Dr al-Shahristani, the Iraqi oil minister. He is of course a senior representative in a democratically elected government—a man who was imprisoned by Saddam Hussein for many years in the Abu Ghraib jail. He told me, amongst other things, that he wanted our troops to stay for the time being so that the Iraqis themselves had the chance to build up their security forces and eventually to reach a point where the Iraqis were able to sustain security in their own country. Of course, his position is exactly our position, and obviously the sooner that can happen the better. But the simple fact is that we have to accept, as he makes clear, that if the international forces were to leave too soon then democracy in Iraq would completely collapse and the country would be plunged into complete chaos.

He did not want to see a premature withdrawal and he went on to say that Iraq was a main battlefield in the fight against international terrorism. The minister said to me that if terrorists were to win in Iraq that would be not only a catastrophe for Iraqis but a threat to the whole world. The minister rather optimistically described progress being made on the security front, particularly against the extremist Islamist fanatics coming into the country. He referred to the death of Dr al-Zarqawi and said 300 other top terrorist leaders had been killed or captured. He said that the terrorists had claimed that some 4,000 trained foreign fighters had been killed.

He went on to explain the Iraqi political strategy to achieve national reconciliation and said that a number of major tribal leaders from the al-Anbar province, which is one of the more troubled parts of the country, had joined the fight against foreign terrorists. He talked about oil production in Iraq and said that there have been attempts by terrorists to blow up oil pipelines, particularly the oil pipeline into Turkey. I notice the Turkish Minister of Justice sitting with the Turkish ambassador in the public gallery. The pipeline going into their country gets attacked rather frequently. It is good to see the minister here. The Iraqi minister made the point that, despite those security problems, oil production in Iraq is around pre-war levels and he expects over the next three months that it will be considerably above pre-war levels. For those on this side of the House who are interested in petrol prices, that is obviously good news. In conclusion, I told the minister that the Australian government would not let the Iraqi people down. We will not turn our backs on the Iraqi people and we will not contribute to any surrender in Iraq.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS
The SPEAKER (2.06 pm)—I formally inform the House that we have present in the gallery this afternoon the justice minister and government spokesman from the Republic of Turkey, His Excellency Mr Cemil Cicek. On behalf of the House I extend to him a very warm welcome.

Honourable members—Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE
Iraq

Mr BEAZLEY (2.06 pm)—My question is to the Prime Minister, and I refer to the Prime Minister’s statement this week that a decision to withdraw troops from Iraq would be devoid of moral responsibility. Does the Prime Minister believe that the decision of the Italian and Japanese governments to withdraw their troops from Iraq earlier this year was devoid of moral responsibility?
Mr HOWARD—I regretted both those decisions very much.

Wheat Exports

Mr HAASE (2.07 pm)—My question is addressed to the Prime Minister. Is the Prime Minister aware of concerns expressed by WA wheat growers regarding the impact of current marketing arrangements on the Australian wheat crop? What is the government’s response?

Mr HOWARD—In response to the member for Kalgoorlie—and he of course represents very significant wheat-growing areas of Western Australia, as do many Western Australian members on this side of the House—I am aware of the concerns that have been expressed by the Western Australian wheat growers. Those concerns arise from a conjunction of circumstances, including the severe impact of the drought, the concerns which have accumulated in relation to the proceedings before the Cole inquiry and other considerations.

Our position regarding the single desk is well understood. We do not intend to take any precipitant decision regarding the single desk until the findings of the Cole inquiry are to hand, and then they will be very carefully considered. Of course, the future of the single desk is something on which there is a range of views in the Australian wheat industry, as there is in this parliament, but in relation to the particular issue raised by the member for Kalgoorlie, and that is the concerns of Western Australian wheat growers, can I inform him that I have discussed these concerns with Mr Ian Donges, the Chairman of AWB International, and I have arranged to meet Mr Donges and some of his fellow directors tomorrow to further discuss this issue.

Let me assure the member for Kalgoorlie that decisions taken by this government in relation to this very difficult issue will have in mind overwhelmingly the interests of Australian wheat growers—as, indeed, should decisions taken by any participants in this issue have regard to those interests. The wheat industry in Australia has been an enormous contributor to the wealth of this nation over the years. The wheat growers of Australia, in company with many other farmers, are going through very difficult times and all of us need to have their interests uppermost in our minds when we take decisions about this vital industry.

Iraq

Mr BEAZLEY (2.10 pm)—My question to the Prime Minister follows his answer to my previous question, in which he said that he regretted the decision of the Italian government to withdraw its troops. I refer to the Prime Minister’s statement on 21 May 2006 about the implications of Italy’s decision to withdraw its troops from Iraq, when he said:

There are no strategic-logistic implications that I’m aware of, no.

Prime Minister, if the withdrawal of 3,200 Italian troops, the fourth largest contribution to the multinational force, did not pose any strategic or logistic implications earlier this year, can you outline why this would not also be the case if Australia withdrew its few hundred troops from Iraq?

Mr HOWARD—I will do that. The truth is that the—

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER—Order! The Prime Minister will be heard. I call the Prime Minister.

Mr HOWARD—as Australia was an original participant in the military operation against Iraq, it stands to reason that the implications of our withdrawal would be enormous, and I repeat my position that if it is all right for Australia to withdraw why isn’t it all right for the Americans and the British to do the same?
What the Leader of the Opposition has to explain to the Australian people is a policy that would deliver a monumental victory to the terrorists in Iraq and would embolden the terrorists in Indonesia. They would go the length of the Indonesian archipelago saying: ‘We defeated the coalition, including Australia, in Iraq. That is a reason to sign up to Je-maah Islamiah.’ That is the burden that the Leader of the Opposition will carry. The Leader of the Opposition has to explain to the Australian people why it would be safer to deliver a monumental propaganda victory to the terrorists by our withdrawing from Iraq. That is the essence of this issue. The Leader of the Opposition has to justify a policy that would give an enormous boost to the terrorists in Indonesia—an enormous boost to the terrorists everywhere around the world. That is what the Leader of the Opposition—

Ms Plibersek interjecting—

The SPEAKER—Order! The member for Sydney is warned!

Mr HOWARD—The Leader of the Opposition ought to focus his mind on justifying a policy that would heighten the terrorist threat in our own region. I have heard a lot from the Leader of the Opposition about how we have to focus on terrorism in our own region. I am focused on that and I know this: if you deliver a victory in Iraq you will deliver an enormous propaganda boost to terrorists in our own region and not least in Indonesia.

Economy

Mr FAWCETT (2.14 pm)—My question is addressed to the Prime Minister. Would the Prime Minister advise the House how Australia’s continued economic strength is benefiting working Australians and what the implications are of alternative approaches to economic management?

Mr HOWARD—I can certainly inform the member for Wakefield that the economic strength of Australia has been dramatically displayed in the single most important marker of economic success of a nation, and that is the capacity of a nation to generate jobs. I have often said in recent months that the holy grail of economic management in this nation is how successful you are in reducing unemployment. We now have a 30-year low in unemployment in this country, and in large areas of Australia, for all practical purposes, we have full employment. Our unemployment rate is at an historic low of 4.8 per cent and, more importantly and more contemporaneously, we have seen 205,000 new jobs created since April this year—205,000 new jobs created since the introduction of the government’s new industrial relations legislation. So much for all the prophecies of the world coming to an end, the sky falling in, wages going down, unemployment going up and there being mass dismissals and employees being persecuted all around Australia. All of those predictions have proved to be absolutely baseless. Australian workers and businesses now have the flexibility to work out arrangements that best suit their needs.

More relevantly and more importantly for the different views of the two sides of politics in this place, a very significant thing happened yesterday in the South Australian parliament. The new senior vice-president of the Australian Labor Party and Premier of South Australia joined a gaggle of senior state Labor members in distancing himself from the Leader of the Opposition’s policy of ripping up AWAs.

Mr Beazley—No, he didn’t.

Mr HOWARD—Oh, yes, he did. He certainly did. First of all, you had Alan Carpenter, the Premier of Western Australia, who knows full well that if you rip up AWAs you
throw a dagger at the heart of the resource industry in his state, you had Mr Hulls in Victoria being asked seven times to support the Leader of the Opposition’s policy and he did not, and yesterday in the estimates committee the South Australian Premier was given ample opportunity to back the policy of the Leader of the Opposition of ripping up AWAs. He used 300 words in answering a simple question, but he failed to affirm in those 300 words that he supported the Leader of the Opposition’s policy of ripping up AWAs. There is a particular South Australian reason for that, and that is that a very significant number, perhaps the majority, of the people employed at the Roxbury Downs mine are employed under individual contracts. That is the reason. I find that Premier a little errant on other issues—I do not want anybody to be under any misapprehension; he is errant on many of the issues that are important to Australia—but when it comes to the resource development of his own state, he knows darn well, as does Alan Carpenter, that ripping up AWAs would do enormous damage to the resource sector. In fact, the Australian Mines and Metals Association has found that abolishing AWAs will cost the mining industry $6 billion. We are dealing here with the one industry that, according to the opposition, is in fact responsible for the current wealth of Australia.

In conclusion, and in reply to the member for Wakefield, alternative policies would greatly damage the economy of Australia, would increase unemployment, would reduce real wages growth and, overall, would be bad news for the workers of this country.

Iraq

Mr BEAZLEY (2.19 pm)—$6.5 billion must be a record—

The SPEAKER—Order! The Leader of the Opposition will come to his question.

Mr BEAZLEY—My question is to the Prime Minister. I refer to the Prime Minister’s comments on national radio this morning when he was asked whether it was necessary that Iraq remain a single state as a prerequisite for troop withdrawal and his reply: Well, I think that’s desirable, but once again that’s a degree of micro management by another country and another leader that is not necessarily justified.

Will the Prime Minister now confirm that, as of today, his government’s policy of ‘getting the job done in Iraq’ no longer requires leaving behind a unified Iraqi state?

Mr HOWARD—What I made clear—

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER—Order! The Prime Minister will be heard.

Mr HOWARD—is that the future arrangements between the component parts of Iraq is a matter for the people of Iraq. I know why the Labor Party does not like that assessment. It is because it invests democracy in the Iraqi people. It is for the people of Iraq to determine the future state of arrangements between the different provinces of Iraq.

Ms King interjecting—

The SPEAKER—The member for Ballarat is warned!

Mr HOWARD—that is not for us to decide, and it does not in any way alter the policy of the government. The policy of the government is not to hand Iraq over to terrorists and, more importantly, not to hand the terrorists an enormous propaganda victory. That is the essence of this debate. The Leader of the Opposition can ask as many questions as he likes about future constitutional arrangements, but I do know this: if we had followed the advice of the Leader of the Opposition, we would still have Saddam Hussein butchering people in Iraq.

Mr Cameron Thompson interjecting—
The SPEAKER—Order! The member for Blair is warned!

Mr HOWARD—That is the reality and, as far as the government is concerned, the Labor Party’s policy would give an enormous boost to the terrorists—

Mr Tanner interjecting—

The SPEAKER—The member for Melbourne is warned too!

Mr HOWARD—and do enormous long-term damage to the interests of this country.

Small Business

Mr KEENAN (2.21 pm)—My question is addressed to the Treasurer. Would the Treasurer outline to the House how small business will benefit from reforms to trade practices law?

Mr COSTELLO—I thank the honourable member for Stirling for his question. I can tell him that shortly before two o’clock today the Senate passed amendments to the trade practices law, which will mean that today is a great day for 1.2 million small businesses throughout Australia. These reforms will make it easier for small business to notify and collectively bargain. They will make it simpler and less costly. They will increase the powers of the ACCC, giving it the ability to search premises and seize evidence. These reforms will also increase fines for anti-competitive behaviour so that the fine can be three times the economic gain a corporation could make through breaching the act.

These reforms have been supported by all the significant small business organisations—for example, COSBOA, whose CEO, Tony Steven, said recently:

The cooperation between the many sectors of small business and the government is at its highest level.

Unfortunately, the Labor Party voted against these reforms twice in the House and twice in the Senate, and they brought truth to the claim of the Leader of the Opposition that the ALP has never claimed to be a party of small business. His 6PR claim that the ALP has never claimed to be part of small business has been borne out.

Mr Fitzgibbon—Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order. That is untrue and the Treasurer is misleading the House.

The SPEAKER—Order! That is not a point of order.

Mr COSTELLO—the Labor Party had plenty of opportunity to vote for small business, and it voted against these bills twice in the House and twice in the Senate. Labor is not the party of small business; Labor is the party of big unions and big union leaders.

The World Bank’s latest publication, Doing Business 2007, ranked Australia eighth out of 175 economies in the world for doing business. We were the second-best country in the world for the ease of starting a business, third for the ease of accessing credit, seventh for enforcing contracts and ninth for employing workers.

I cannot let this opportunity go past without paying acknowledgement to the Minister for Small Business and Tourism for all the work she did in relation to these reforms; she did a fabulous job. I also acknowledge the wonderful work Senator Boswell did in the Senate and, indeed, the constructive work Senator Fielding did in getting the legislation through the Senate after 12 months of Labor Party delay—a great day for small business.

Mr Fitzgibbon interjecting—

The SPEAKER—Order! The member for Hunter!

Mr COSTELLO—It is great to see the coalition again standing up for small business against the Australian Labor Party.
Iraq

Mr Rudd (2.25 pm)—My question is to the Prime Minister. I refer to the Prime Minister’s answer to the previous question on Iraq’s democracy and I refer to his comments on national radio this morning on the same subject when he said that Australian troops could be withdrawn when democracy has a reasonable chance, if that is the wish of the Iraqi people. Will the Prime Minister confirm that, under the government’s new Iraq policy, it would now be acceptable for the Iraqi people to accept a non-democratic form of government for their country and that a functioning and sustainable Iraqi democracy is no longer a prerequisite for the withdrawal of Australian troops?

Mr Howard—The answer is no, and the member for Griffith knows full well from the interview that I made it very clear that the form of the future government of Iraq is a matter for the people of Iraq, and that is entirely what the situation should be. But we do know that if the advice of the member for Griffith had been taken democracy would not even have been dreamt of in Iraq.

Workplace Relations

Mr Causley (2.26 pm)—My question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Transport and Regional Services. Would the Deputy Prime Minister inform the House how the government’s workplace reforms are benefiting regional Australia? How is more choice helping to create jobs, particularly on the North Coast of New South Wales?

Mr Vaile—I thank the member for Page for his question. In acknowledging the member for Page, I acknowledge that it is his birthday today and I am sure the House congratulates the member for Page. I also note that the member for Page has indicated today that he is going to retire. We should recognise the great contribution he has made to government, both in his time in this House and as Deputy Speaker and in the state parliament of New South Wales, where he made a significant contribution, particularly during his time as minister.

The member for Page has always been a great supporter of small businesses, the engine room and the backbone of regional Australia. The government’s workplace reform packages, in a number of ways, have significantly strengthened the position of small business in our regional economies. First of all, and particularly in electorates like that of the member for Page, where both employees and employers are looking for flexible arrangements in the workplace to suit their lifestyle, that has delivered great improvements in productivity to small business people. But most importantly in the package was the abolition of the unfair dismissal aspects of the law so that no longer do small business have to confront the unfair dismissal laws that have dogged small business for the last 10 years or more. We have campaigned and campaigned on getting rid of those unfair dismissal laws, and at last we have done so.

Mr Fitzgibbon—The laws of the last 10 years were your laws.

Mr Vaile—The member for Hunter agrees with the government in getting rid of those unfair dismissal laws, so they have now gone.

Mr Fitzgibbon interjecting—

The Speaker—Order! The member for Hunter is warned!

Mr Vaile—Here is an interesting statistic: between March and September this year, the Australian economy generated 205,000 new jobs, many of which were in small businesses in regional Australia such as in the electorate of Page. By contrast, in the same period, what happened in the labour market in 1992 when the Leader of the Opposition
was the minister for employment? For the same period in 1992, the economy actually lost 15,000 jobs. So, this year, we gained 205,000 jobs but, then, they lost 15,000 jobs. We all know, as the Treasurer just pointed out—and it has been admitted by the Leader of the Opposition—that in July 2000 on 6PR radio in Perth, the Leader of the Opposition said:

We have never pretended to be a small business party.

The Labor Party continue to prove that again today. An important element of the reforms to the Trade Practices Act empowers small business to collectively bargain. It is something we have pursued for the past 12 months and that has been passed by the House and by the Senate. This is another legislative change that is going to strengthen the position of small business in our economy to help them create more jobs in the economy.

Iraq

Mr BEAZLEY (2.30 pm)—My question is to the Prime Minister. I refer the Prime Minister to an opinion poll conducted by the US State Department in Iraq last month which found:

Majorities in all regions except Kurdish areas state that the Multi-National Force-Iraq (MNF-I) should withdraw immediately, adding that the MNF-I’s departure would make them feel safer and decrease violence.

When will the Prime Minister take his own advice and give thought to the views of the Iraqi people?

Mr HOWARD—In case the Leader of the Opposition has forgotten, the normal thing in a democracy is for the expression of the will of the people to be through its elected government. I am fascinated: I know the Leader of the Opposition is very poll driven. If I had taken notice of every opinion poll that I have read on certain issues over the last 10 years, I would not have pursued taxation reform. I know it was a free vote but I might have taken a different view on constitutional change. I might have taken a different view on the sale of Telstra. I might have taken a different view on a whole lot of things but, unlike the Leader of the Opposition, I am not poll obsessed or poll driven. I am obsessed with the long-term welfare of the Australian people.

I know that it is in the long-term interests of the Australian people not to give a victory to the terrorists. I happen to think it is important not to enliven JI in Indonesia. I do not want the leaders of JI running around saying, ‘We forced the Americans, the Australians and the British out of Iraq.’ I do not want them doing that because I think they might be able to use that argument as a recruitment weapon. I do not want young Indonesians joining JI; I want them remaining opposed to radical Islam and supporting moderate Islamic leaders like President Yudhoyono. It is plainly therefore not in our interests to do what the Leader of the Opposition wants to do. He can read all the opinion polls he likes. In the end, we will make our judgements based on the authentic expression of the democratically elected government of Iraq.

Employment

Dr SOUTHCOTT (2.32 pm)—My question is addressed to the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations. Minister, is it true that long-term unemployment has fallen to a record low? What policies have contributed to this outcome and what could disrupt the consistent trend that has driven long-term unemployment lower?

Mr ANDREWS—I thank the member for Boothby for his question and his support for the government’s program. I can report to the House that it is true that the Australian Bureau of Statistics reported today that long-term unemployment in Australia has fallen to
the lowest level ever recorded. Long-term unemployment fell from 89,900 people in August this year to 84,500 in September this year. Let me put that in context. At its peak in May 1993, long-term unemployment in Australia stood at 329,800 people.

In other words, when the Leader of the Opposition was then the minister for employment, the last time he had some responsibility for running the economy in Australia, there were almost one-quarter of a million more Australians unemployed on a long-term basis than there are today. This is a massive reduction of almost one-quarter of a million in the number of unemployed in Australia. One could say that the member for Brand was hardly the minister for employment; he was, indeed, the minister for unemployment.

Not only has the number of long-term unemployed fallen, according to the latest ABS data, but also the number of very long-term unemployed has fallen to the lowest level ever recorded. Indeed, it has fallen from 50,000 in August this year to 46,000 in September. As the Prime Minister and others have pointed out over the last six months, since the introduction of Work Choices we have seen the creation of 205,000 jobs in Australia. Importantly and significantly, 184,000 of those jobs are full-time jobs for Australians. This is good news for Australians. It shows that the government’s policies in relation to Work Choices and in reforming Welfare to Work in this country have led to real outcomes for real Australians—that is, many more people now have a job and are able to provide for themselves and their families in a way they were not able to do before.

In conclusion, I have to note that the Labor Party has opposed every reform that this government has attempted to put in place to bring about these results. Whether it be Work Choices, welfare reform or other reforms in Australia, the Labor Party has stood in the way of these reforms every time, yet we see today the real outcomes for Australians. What this shows, once again, is that it is only the Howard government—the coalition, this side of politics—which has the true interests of the Australian people and will bring about better conditions for Australian workers and their families.

Iraq

Mr BEAZLEY (2.36 pm)—My question is to the Prime Minister and it follows his answer to my previous question—the one going to the fact that the Iraqi people would feel safer if we were no longer there. Has he seen the comments by Sir Richard Dannatt, the Chief of the General Staff in the United Kingdom, who said we had to:

... get ourselves out sometime soon because our presence exacerbates the security problems.

He went on to say:

I don’t say that the difficulties we are experiencing round the world are caused by our presence in Iraq but undoubtedly our presence in Iraq exacerbates them.

Is it not a fact, Prime Minister, that you personally have exacerbated the threat from JI throughout Indonesia because of your serious strategic errors in this regard?

Mr HOWARD—That is a very interesting question from the Leader of the Opposition, because the single most deadly act inspired by JI against Australia was the attack on 12 October 2002 in Bali—

Mr Swan interjecting—

The SPEAKER—The member for Lilley is warned!

Mr HOWARD—and that preceded by months the coalition operation in Iraq. So don’t, the Leader of the Opposition, come into this place and start lecturing this side of the House about the threat of JI and terrorists. The terrorists struck and killed Austra-
lians in Indonesia long before the operation in Iraq.

Mr Crean interjecting—

The SPEAKER—The member for Hotham will be warned soon.

Mr Howard—The point I am making is: don’t by our actions in Iraq in October 2006 give terrorists pause to feel triumphant. Don’t give them a propaganda weapon. Don’t allow them to go from one end of Indonesia to the other. Don’t allow them to do it, because that is precisely what will happen if the advice of the Leader of the Opposition is followed.

Mr Gavan O’Connor—What does the US intelligence agency say about it?

The SPEAKER—The member for Corio is warned!

Mr Howard—He can quote anybody he likes against me, but he has got to answer to the Australian people why he wants a policy that would give the terrorists, including terrorists in our own region, a psychological victory. Why do we want to give Jemaah Islamiah an additional recruiting weapon? Why do we want to encourage the terrorist groups in Indonesia to recruit more young Indonesians for the jihadist fight against us? That is the burden that lies upon the Leader of the Opposition and that is the obligation he has to explain to the Australian people.

Workplace Relations

Mr Johnson (2.40 pm)—My question is to the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations. Would the minister advise the House how the government’s workplace reforms are delivering economic opportunity for all Australians, including the people of Ryan? Is the minister aware of any proposals that could cut wages and jobs?

Mr Andrews—I thank the member for Ryan for his question and his strong representation of his constituents in this place. As I said earlier, in the last six months we have seen the creation of 205,000 new jobs in Australia. To put that in its historical context, the average job creation for the same six months in Australia for the past 20 years was just 75,000 jobs. That is 75,000 jobs on average for the last 20 years. This year, after Work Choices came into operation, 205,000 jobs were created in this country. Not only have we seen the creation of more jobs; we have seen wages grow in Australia over the same period of time.

The member asked me: are there any proposals that would cut wages and jobs in Australia? Indeed, I noticed that last week the
ACTU released their blueprint for industrial relations in Australia, and this is a blueprint for economic vandalism of Australia. Make no mistake about it—this would lead to cutting wages for Australians because, when you look into the detail of this blueprint, what we find is that the ACTU intend to prohibit employers offering any inducements to workers to enter into agreements that do not involve a union.

So that means that, if there is a demand by a number of workers in a place for a union collective agreement and that union collective agreement is put in place, the employer and proprietor of that business would be precluded under this ACTU blueprint from offering any worker in that business an individual contract which paid higher wages. So this is quite clearly a blueprint to drive down the wages of Australians if it were ever enacted in this country. It would drive down wages for hundreds of thousands of Australians in this country.

We know that the Secretary of the ACTU, Mr Combet, said that it was a good idea when the unions ran the country, that it would be a good idea again if the unions ran the country. What we now know is that his idea of running the Australian economy would be to impose a union official on every workplace in Australia, to be able to demand the opening of the books of every business in Australia and to be able to effectively drive down the wages of Australians in this country. It would drive down wages for hundreds of thousands of Australians in this country.

Mr BEAZLEY (2.44 pm)—Mr Speaker, my question is to the Prime Minister and it follows the first question I asked him, about the changing views of President Bush. Has he seen an article by Paul Kelly, where Mr Kelly says:

In Iraq the fix is coming. The policy will have to change. Only the politically deaf can miss the drumbeat of change in America. It is concealed now because of Bush’s need to hang tough for the mid-term election.

Further, has the Prime Minister seen, and does he agree with, the United States President’s statement on current coalition policy on Iraq:

My attitude is: don’t do what you’re doing if it’s not working—change.

Prime Minister, isn’t it the plain truth that when you are in a hole you should stop digging?

Mr HOWARD—The answer to the first question is: yes. The answer to the second question is: I have heard a lot of statements made by President Bush about Iraq and the one chosen by the Leader of the Opposition does not fairly reflect his view.

Farmers: Mental Health

Mr ANDERSON (2.46 pm)—My question is addressed to the Minister for Health and Ageing. I ask the minister: in view of very concerning reports about the psychological and emotional impact of the current drought on farmers and their families, would the minister advise the House of the government’s approach to mental health initiatives in rural areas and, in particular, where farmers can turn for professional help?

Mr ABBOTT—This is an important and heartfelt question from the member for Gwydir. I have to say that I think that city people often find it hard to understand the mental suffering faced by farming families
watching generations of hard work destroyed by drought.

Australian farmers, as the member well knows, are a tough and resilient people but many of them are now under extreme pressure. Government cannot solve all the vagaries of climate and market. We cannot massage away all the griefs of the human condition but we can and must provide good services to people in need. In addition to the Regional Health Services, which the Commonwealth government funds in some 120 towns with fewer than 5,000 people, the government has recently announced a further $51 million to provide psychological services in smaller communities.

We have just funded 17 new suicide prevention services in rural areas and we have just given another $18 million to Lifeline. Importantly, in June, beyondblue launched a new phone counselling service for rural men and this has already helped hundreds of men in areas affected by drought.

Stoicism is an admirable trait, but not if it makes problems worse. Talking about problems will not make them go away but can certainly make them easier to cope with. Like the member for Gwydir, I certainly hope that farmers in country areas will not think that silence is strength, and they will not bottle up their problems until they are beyond help.

Iraq

Mr BEAZLEY (2.48 pm)—Mr Speaker, my question is to the Prime Minister. Prime Minister, why are the views of Iraqis, the safety of Australians and the deaths of American soldiers and Iraqi civilians less important to you than your own political survival?

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER—Order! The Leader of the Opposition was heard in silence. I call the Prime Minister, and he will be heard.

Mr HOWARD—Mr Speaker, if that is the mood of the Leader of the Opposition, which, in a democratic parliament he is entitled to have and entitled to express, I invite him to move a censure, and we will take it.

PRIME MINISTER

Censure Motion

Mr BEAZLEY (Brand—Leader of the Opposition) (2.49 pm)—I move:

That this House:

(1) censures the Prime Minister for being guilty:

(a) guilty of taking Australia into the wrong war in Iraq;

(b) guilty of refusing to change strategy and bring Australian troops home;

(c) guilty of changing his story on Iraq to suit his own interests; and

(d) guilty of making Australia a bigger target for terrorists; and

(2) demands that he admit he has failed in Iraq and adopt Labor’s strategy in the Australian national interest.

In question time, I ended with the question that I asked the Prime Minister before moving this censure motion. During his remarks, the Prime Minister suggested that the Labor Party had been sitting around reading polls. This was something that he never does! The Labor Party has consistently held its views on Iraq for four years.

For four years we have suggested a different course of action to this government, through a whole variety of changes in opinions and attitudes on that. But the tip-off of where the Prime Minister was coming from was in a tiny little article written by Malcolm Farr in the Daily Telegraph and headed, ‘Iraq’s stand won’t hurt coalition’. Just read those comments; they indicate this: that he had his minions up there in the press gallery.
yesterday with one or two journalists, pointing out to them that they had read the public opinion on Iraq—they thought their position was completely safe and they could pursue it without fear and without regard to anything else—to see if the Prime Minister could twist it a little to turn it against the Labor Party. But was there anything in that article that said the government cared for the Iraqi people?

Opposition members—No!

Mr BEAZLEY—Was there anything in that article that said the government cared for United States troops?

Opposition members—No!

Mr BEAZLEY—Was there anything in that article that said that the government cared for Australian soldiers?

Opposition members—No!

Mr BEAZLEY—All that was in that article was all that drives this Prime Minister: the political survival of the government and the political advantage of the Prime Minister. That is what he is guilty of.

The consequence of what he has done has been to make this country less safe. There is no question about that. He is in there, ranting about opinions on JI in Indonesia, criticising the Labor Party for the view that we have that that particular movement, and the general area of South-East Asia, is our top counter-terrorist priority and where we ought to be concentrating our forces and initiating activity. That is what he was criticising us for at that point in time. What he completely neglects is what every serious analyst of what has happened in Iraq says, and what every serious analyst of what is going on in Iraq now says: that our presence there, the conduct of policy, the conduct of the activity, has enhanced the position of the global terrorist movement, enhanced their reputation in the Muslim world, enhanced their capacity to recruit and formed a magnet for those in the immediate region to pour into Iraq to assist them and in all ways act inimical to Australian and Western interests.

It is absolutely clear right now that things are changing in US policy. There is less debate in this country than there is in the United States and the United Kingdom. I have to say that the debate that we have been having in this place over the course of the last week is probably a year and a half to two years behind the debate which is now proceeding in London and Washington. But Paul Kelly had it right when he said this:

DON’T be misled by President Bush’s comments yesterday. In Iraq, the fix is coming. The policy will have to change. Only the politically deaf can miss the drumbeat of change in America. It is concealed now because of Bush’s need to hang tough for the mid-term election.

He then goes on to describe leaks from a study being put in place by James Baker, one of the most intelligent US officials it has ever been my pleasure to deal with. What Mr Baker is suggesting, at least in one of his recommendations, is that the United States, to get itself a cover for the extraction of US and allied troops from Iraq over the course of the next year, should do a deal or make arrangements with Syria and Iran.

Now we have come to this. We see now that two nations, one identified as part of the axis of evil and the other as a co conspirator, in terms of encouraging the international Islamic fundamentalist movement and encouraging state sponsored terrorism, are now the arbiters of our fate, the arbiters of the region. Single-handedly, and without a single casualty amongst the Iranians, the achievement of the Howard government is this: he has revived the Persian empire and he has changed the balance of power by the support he has given this operation in Iraq—against Western interests! So not only, in the narrow sense of our struggle with Islamic fundamen-
talism, has he disadvantaged this country, we also find that, in the broader geostrategic area, he has encouraged a nation that none of us, since the revolution of 1979, has ever wanted to see encouraged in international affairs. The policy of this government is total failure. When the Italians and the Japanese moved out—

Mr Swan—And the Dutch.

Mr BEAZLEY—You could add to that the Dutch—in fact, most of the 60 nations that were at one time or another in Iraq have moved out. None of them moved out with catcalls from the Prime Minister about weakening the Western alliance, collapsing the struggle against international terrorism or whatever. When the Italians moved out 3,200 troops, the Prime Minister’s position on it at that time was that that was a matter of no moment.

The point about the Prime Minister’s activity in recent times is this: he put our troops back in. People have tended to forget that. In the immediate aftermath of the war, the Prime Minister withdrew Australian forces; in the aftermath of the last election, without notice to the Australian people, he put the Australian forces back in. So let us have none of this rubbish about consistency in the Prime Minister’s position. All there has been is consistency in political calculation. That is all there has been from this Prime Minister.

Everybody in the world knows—the United States administration knows—that the coalition’s strategy in Iraq has failed. Everybody in this country knows that the writers of this failed strategic policy are the Prime Minister and the foreign minister. Even the Prime Minister and the foreign minister now base their arguments on this preamble: whatever you might think about whether or not it was a good idea to start this war, whatever you might think about the way in which we conducted it and the things we decided to do in the aftermath—and you could quite legitimately, they go on in parentheses to say, regard that as mistaken—we are right now.

Why in logic ought there to be the view prevail that those who failed in strategic judgement in the first instance so dramatically have somehow dramatically got it right now? Why should anybody operate on that assumption? No-one should operate on that assumption. But it seems to be the position of this Prime Minister that, unless and until there is a U-turn from the United States—and there certainly looks like there is some sort of turn coming—the only thing this Prime Minister can do, in the middle of the deep hole he finds himself—or in which, more particularly, he has placed Australian armed forces—is to keep digging. It is not a bad idea to dig in, Mr Prime Minister, but not when they have got your hole vectored, not when they know exactly where you are. That is exactly what those who wish us the worst know and understand.

Whatever the politicians are saying about this—and all politicians have to protect their skins in these particular eventualities and these horrible circumstances—the military men are different. Every single American general who either has direct responsibility now or had responsibility at some point in time says this: the current strategy will not work. They marched before the US Senate Committee on Armed Services only about two or three weeks ago and said precisely that: the current strategy will not work. They marched before the US Senate Committee on Armed Services only about two or three weeks ago and said precisely that: the current strategy will not work. That is what all the American generals who have a view, who are or have been directly responsible for the affairs of this region, are saying. Some of them have different solutions. Some say, ‘If you’re going to persist there, do it with another 200,000.’

The last time we saw advice like that, of course, was from General William Westmoreland after the Tet offensive in 1968.
When a substantial political victory was won by the Viet Cong, he went to the President of the United States and said, ‘I’ll do it all right with another 200,000 troops.’ There is a certain resonance in that 200,000 figure. It would not be readily possible for the United States to put another 200,000 troops in; that is all there is to it.

That is the American view, and then there is the British view—and these are the two major participants in the coalition of the willing, those with serious forces in the area. From the British, of course, we have the view, as I read out in question time, of General Sir Richard Dannatt. He did qualify it subsequently; he could do nothing else. Quite frankly, if General Dannatt had persisted in the view he had he would have had no option but to resign. So he did in fact somewhat modify his point on the timing of British withdrawal, nothing else. He modified nothing in his comments except the timing of British withdrawal. But what he did say, and he said it at length, was that the British should:

… get ourselves out sometime soon because our presence exacerbates the security problems. Because we are there, bad things happen. It exacerbates the problem. The second thing he said was:

I don’t say that the difficulties we are experiencing around the world are caused by our presence in Iraq, but undoubtedly our presence in Iraq exacerbates them.

So his overall judgement about the situation in Iraq was that every policy feature of the Western alliance aided our enemies and discomfited our friends. He went further; he had a lot to say about Afghanistan. And I might say, he had things to say about Afghanistan which are identical to what the Labor Party has been saying for a considerable period of time—that failure in Afghanistan is almost entirely a product of wrong strategy in Iraq. He had that to say about it. What Dannatt thinks and what most of those who sit down and analyse these affairs think is: whatever else you do, you have to get yourself out of there; you have to get yourself unhooked.

What we need—from this country’s point of view, and I think we need it across the alliance too—is a new strategy. We need the strategy that Labor are advocating. John Howard wants to know what I would do if I were Prime Minister. Well, I will tell him. I would have the courage to tell my American friends that we are bringing our troops out of Iraq. I would have the compassion to help the Iraqi people with aid and training, which is what they need most. I would have the common sense to put our troops in the region and our resources into practical measures. I would be the ally that the United States needs, not the ally that the current administration wants. That is what I would do.

It is very clear that, at the top level, our ally is now changing its position. Our ally is now, according to its leader, going to a change of strategy. What Mr Bush has said is not insignificant. He said:

If the plan is now not working, the plan that’s in place isn’t working, America needs to adjust, I completely agree.

They are preparing to shift ground. Not necessarily included in that shift will be the need for Iraq to be a functioning democracy and a unified entity. Included in that shift in ground will be a judgement about security inside Iraq that falls well short of an assumption that there is no trouble in the streets, that there are no bombs exploding. They will change. They will change—but they will change without any help from us—because they understand that the troop presence is making things worse.

Firstly, coalition troops in Iraq are a magnet for jihadists from around the world who are destabilising Iraq. It might be said, how-
ever, that they are no longer the principal source of massive instability, murder and mayhem in Iraq. They are one source but not the principal source. The principal source is now a massive religious dispute between the Shiite and Sunni communities as they jockey for advantage. Nevertheless, the jihadists are there, getting the training they want and getting the experience they want. So when they ultimately leave Iraq they will leave with the sorts of skills possessed by the jihadists who left Afghanistan and gave us 9-11 and subsequent terrorist attacks. They are being trained, they are being skilled up, by the continuation of our capacity to attract them into Iraq. You have to start using your noggin in this particular exercise, at least on some occasions, and start to think through things seriously.

Secondly, the coalition leadership in Iraq is a security blanket for the Iraqi civilian leadership that allows them not to solve their own problems. They do know that when there is a bit of trouble in a district and you ring up a battalion of US soldiers, you can keep it quiet while those US soldiers are in the district. So if you have not been able to arrange the appropriate agreement, settlement or whatever between local Sunni and Shiite forces—if the ethnic cleansing process has got to a point where you cannot calm it down—rather than sit down and negotiate an outcome you invite the coalition forces in and then for a period of time there is quiet in that area. But the quiet ceases once the American forces are withdrawn.

It means that the impetus for the Sunni and Shia leadership in the government in Iraq to get the political settlement that only they can provide is dissipated, foreshortened by the ease with which you can solve the immediate problem with an immediate fix from the United States armed forces that are present. It has to be said: when they are fighting Sunnis or Shias what they are not doing is struggling with global terrorism—they are not doing that.

Keeping the peace in the Shiite districts of Baghdad and protecting the Sunni districts of Baghdad have got absolutely nothing to do with the global jihadist struggle—nothing whatsoever. We have been dragged into a fight that has sucked the oxygen out of us at the very time when we needed to be at our most clever and most effective in understanding what it is that we needed to do. Because all of those who are involved with us are in some way or other, I am afraid to say, tainted with this confessional dispute, this religious dispute between the various forces. Hardly any secular candidates won seats in those elections; they were all won by those with associations with tribal groups and religious fundamentalist groups and most of them with militias on the Shia side that at one point in time or other had been funded by the Iranian government. Why do you think James Baker is talking about incorporating the governments of Syria and Iran in some sort of settlement to cover a withdrawal of American forces? He is doing that, of course, because they are influential in this regard. That is what they have let themselves into.

The Iraqi people do need our support. They need our political support, and we will give it. They need our economic support, and we will give it. They need humanitarian support, and we will give it. They need training support, and we will give it. They do not need a foreign troop presence that is making things worse and to which they object—they do not need that. That is why we will bring our troops back home. They can fight the war on terror in our region. My advice to this Prime Minister is: stop digging. Like your colleagues, change strategy; change it for the better. Get a better basis for your relationship with Iraq than the one you have now. Get a better basis for the struggle in the war on
terror than the one that you are fighting at this moment.

The SPEAKER—Is the motion seconded?

Mr Rudd—I second the motion and reserve my right to speak.

Mr HOWARD (Bennelong—Prime Minister) (3.10 pm)—This censure motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition is built upon two arguments, both of which are utterly false.

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER—Order! The Prime Minister has the call. The Leader of the Opposition was heard without interruption. The Prime Minister has the call.

Mr HOWARD—The first of the Leader of the Opposition’s propositions is that the position of the government and, in particular, my position is built on political considerations. He read from an article in the Daily Telegraph today which said that the reason the government is taking its position on Iraq is the politics and not the merits. I cast no aspersions on the person who wrote that article but I go to the heart of the Leader of the Opposition’s charge that our policy on Iraq has been poll driven.

I say without fear of contradiction that the decision I took on Iraq in March 2003 was the most poll defiant decision I have taken in the whole time I have been Prime Minister of this country. When I heard the Leader of the Opposition read out this resolution at the beginning of his speech, I recalled an article in the Melbourne Age and the Sydney Morning Herald in January of 2003, which recorded that only six per cent of people polled in an AC Nielsen poll about attitudes to Iraq supported the course of action my government ultimately took.

If we had been listening to the polls and were poll driven on Iraq, we would never have joined our American allies. If we had simply asked the Australian people, ‘Do you agree or disagree with this?’ then, as now, we would have taken the supine advice of the opposition, turned our backs on the Americans and the British, turned our backs on the Iraqis and, being poll driven, had no political courage, no long-term commitment to that great alliance, which has meant more to this country than any alliance in our history, and the whole course of debate in this country would have been quite different.

I say to the Leader of the Opposition: call me anything you like on this issue but the last call that has any credibility is that I have been poll driven. At every point, if you polled the Australian people they would have had reservations about what we were doing or what we contemplated doing. It is the responsibility of any Prime Minister of this country to listen to public opinion, distil it and be guided by it but, in the end, if he is worth his salt he has got to make a judgement based on his assessment of the longer term interests of this country. And so it was in March 2003 that this government took the most poll defiant decision it has taken in the whole 10½ years it has been in government.

If censure motions are meant to be based on arguments, reason and fact, fact No. 1 from the Leader of the Opposition crumbles away immediately. We have never been poll driven on Iraq. We have always had a position on Iraq that has probably not been supported by the majority of the Australian people in opinion polls. It is the job of any government and of any prime minister with a backbone, on occasion and after having listened to people, to back his own judgement and take the decision.

I accept responsibility for that decision I took. I knew that it was in defiance of the polls. I knew that it was in defiance of recorded public opinion. But I took it because I
believed it was the right decision. I still believe that it was the right decision that we took. It is still my view and, stripped of all of the verbiage and these long incantations of the discussions he has had with senior American officials from the Leader of the Opposition, it still remains the case—and the Leader of the Opposition knows this—that if we withdraw from Iraq, the Americans and the British have the same right to do the same thing.

If the coalition goes from Iraq it will deliver two great victories to the terrorists. It will deliver an enormous propaganda victory not only in the Middle East. Imagine the impact on the stability of Saudi Arabia of a terrorist victory in Iraq. Imagine the impact on other Arab states of a terrorist victory in Iraq. It will deliver not only an enormous propaganda victory but also an enormous strategic victory to the terrorists because al-Qaeda will be afforded a platform in Iraq in the same way that they were afforded a platform beside the Taliban in Afghanistan.

The Leader of the Opposition quotes people saying that the terrorists have found a jihadist cause in Iraq. If you believe that, you must also believe that in relation to Afghanistan. If you believe it in relation to Afghanistan, then why don’t you withdraw from Afghanistan as well? Why doesn’t the Leader of the Opposition’s logic extend to Afghanistan?

Mr Hatton interjecting—

Mr HOWARD—Somebody interjects, ‘We have.’ The last time I checked we had almost 600 Australian military personnel in Afghanistan, so do not give me this nonsense about us withdrawing from Afghanistan. The other premise—and this is a very interesting premise—of the Leader of the Opposition’s attack this week—and I say this week because it is not only in his censure motion today—is that the Leader of the Opposition himself all along has been a ferocious opponent of the government’s policy in Iraq. The truth is that, on very careful examination, that is not quite in accordance with the facts and the truth. When you delve back into what the Leader of the Opposition had to say you get very interesting pieces of research. This is the Leader of the Opposition when he was not the Leader of the Opposition; this was the member for Brand who was keeping that respectable, magisterial distance from the decisions being taken by the then Crean-led opposition. He was just a little bit back and a little bit to the side so that, if it turned out a little bit differently from what the Labor leadership had said, he would have been able to say: ‘Well, of course, I would never have gone in as hard as Simon did. I would never have said all of these things.’

I came across an article dated Friday, 19 July. The heading is ‘There’s a case for taking out Saddam Hussein, but the challenges are great’. You bet there was a case for taking him out. There were about 1½ million cases of dead Iraqis for taking him out. But here he was—he was trying to get a little bit distant so that, if it all worked out a little bit differently, he would then be able to say, ‘Well, of course, I always thought they went a bit overboard in opposing Howard over Iraq.’ He says in this article: Much discussion of US intentions in Iraq—and this is July 2002; mark the date—revolves around the credibility of claims that the Iraqi dictator is developing nuclear weapons. He may be. What he has done unquestionably is establish a substantial biological capability.

This is the Leader of the Opposition who now says that we lied about all of these things. He was to go on to say, at the beginning of 2003—

Mr Downer interjecting—

The SPEAKER—The Minister for Foreign Affairs is warned!
Mr HOWARD—that as far as he was concerned there was not a foreign ministry in the world that did not believe that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction. His colleague the member for Griffith in addressing the State Zionist Council of Victoria in 2003 said that it was an empirical fact. He said, ‘If you don’t believe the intelligence, believe the American scientists.’ He was not relying on the intelligence briefings he claimed he had got; he was relying on something else.

What this lot were doing back in 2002 and 2003 was setting up a case to cover themselves in case things turned out differently from what Simon Crean said. At least Simon Crean was up-front in his opposition. This other lot were just having two bob each way. That is what they were doing. Now he comes into this place and works himself up into a lather and says, ‘I was always viscerally opposed to what the Americans and the Australians did.’ He had another very interesting thing to say in that article of July 2002. He said:

But should an attack be imminent Hussein can change course on inspection to play for time. Once a US force is in place, it will be used. This is in part because the agony of getting such a force in place is so great. Not to eliminate Hussein having done so would be unthinkable.

That is what the Leader of the Opposition said in the article. He said, ‘Not to eliminate Hussein would be unthinkable.’ What the Leader of the Opposition, in his then guise as the ever ready, dignified, knowledgeable man who never quite got into bed with Simon Crean on the issue, was doing there was leaving open the possibility that, if things worked out as a short, sharp American victory, he could have said: ‘That’s what I would have told Dick Cheney to do. We shared those experiences in Gulf War No. 1. We were great mates together. We would have shared it all and we would have agreed.

And silly old Simon should have never gone in hard.’

The SPEAKER—Order! The Prime Minister will refer to members by their seat.

Mr HOWARD—That is the truth and that is the second insubstantial ground on which this motion is built. First, the Leader of the Opposition falsely asserts that we have been poll driven on Iraq. I have to say again that it was the most poll defiant decision I have taken in the 10½ years that I have been Prime Minister. I took it against the advice of the polls because I believed the action I was taking was right. That is our position. Second is the idea that the Leader of the Opposition has always been a crusader against what we were doing. He believed Iraq had WMD. He sort of accepted that once there was an American build-up they had to go in and do it and he was all ready to jump in and say, ‘I told you so. You should never have taken such an outlandish anti-American position.’

That really brings us down to what really matters about this debate. What really matters about this debate is: how can the Leader of the Opposition justify making the Australian people less safe by his policy on Iraq? Because what the Leader of the Opposition is arguing for is a course of action that will not only give an enormous propaganda boost to the terrorists in Iraq, it will not only provide al-Qaeda with another platform in Iraq, as they have in Afghanistan; what the Leader of the Opposition is advocating is a course of action that will embolden the cause of Islamic fanaticism and fascism all around the world. The great fight for the soul of Islam is being fought between moderate leaders like General Musharraf in Pakistan and President Yudhoyono in Indonesia against the fanatics of al-Qaeda and the fanatics of Iraq. By our actions, our deeds, our retreat, our lack of resolve and our lack of will, if we provide them with an enormous propaganda victory,
which the Leader of the Opposition advocates, we will live to rue and lament that day for many years into the future.

I do not pretend that things in Iraq are easy and I do not pretend for a moment that the struggle is easy. But I do know this: if we go from Iraq, the Americans and the British have the same moral right to go as we have. And if we all go from Iraq we will deliver a victory to the terrorists, we will betray the democratic hopes and aspirations of the Iraqi people, but, worst of all, we will bring to the terrorists on our doorstep a sense of hope and encouragement that they will use as a recruiting weapon, as surely as we sit in this parliament today, to recruit people for the jihad cause against moderate Islam, the forces and the values of the way of life that all of us hold so dear.

Mr Rudd (Griffith) (3.25 pm)—This Prime Minister argues in his core defence that he is not poll driven. This nation has never had such a poll driven Prime Minister. Every element of domestic policy, every element of foreign policy, every element of national security policy—all driven through the prism of one man. It is not the Minister for Foreign Affairs or the Minister for Defence; that one man is Mark Textor. There is nothing that I see done in this parliament that is not shaped fundamentally by this Prime Minister’s recourse to market research.

This Prime Minister’s response to things like ‘children overboard’ was also shaped by market research. You cannot point to a single national security policy scandal where market research and polls have not fundamentally shaped the way in which this Prime Minister operates. The reason for it is this: first and foremost, this Prime Minister is a clever politician and, last and least, he is the leader of this nation. This Prime Minister, as he cuts and runs from the chamber of the House of Representatives, is a clever politician. He is not a leader in the tradition that this country has seen in the past and not a leader prepared to take decisions in the nation’s long-term interest—not a leader in Curtin’s tradition, not a leader in Chifley’s tradition and not even a leader in Menzies’ tradition. This leader is in a league apart, whereby political research and the short-term political interest of his own career come first, but this nation’s interest comes a long last.

His second argument concerned the Leader of the Opposition’s position on the war. I just say this: when it came to a vote in this parliament, when we actually sat down and looked at that resolution on the war, we voted against it. We voted against the war, every one of us united. Each one of you voted for the war. Let us cut the nonsense from this debate. There could not have been a sharper divide in this nation and this parliament when we looked at the arguments that this mob put for taking this country to a war—in defiance of the UN charter; in defiance of the United Nations Security Council resolution. We had the integrity to vote against this war; they had the expediency to vote for this war. The argument that you have advanced concerning the Leader of the Opposition collapses in one heap because this party was as one.

This Prime Minister advances as his third defence that, if there were a withdrawal of troops from Iraq, it would lead to a massive compounding of the existing jihadist threat in South-East Asia. The CIA, the Central Intelligence Agency, is a funny old thing. Sometimes it puts out things which do not exactly fit this government’s interests. A bloke named Porter Goss—a decent fellow—was recently the head of the CIA; he was in the congress before that. Back in 2005, in testimony to the United States congress about what was then going on in Iraq—at that time and under the circumstances, there was no talk of leaving Iraq—he said:
Islamic extremists are exploiting the Iraqi conflict to recruit new anti-U.S. jihadists.

He went on to say:

These jihadists—that is, those there now—who survive will leave Iraq experienced and focused on acts of urban terrorism. They represent a potential pool of contacts to build transnational terrorist cells, groups, and networks in Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and other countries.

Could those other countries include South-East Asia? You had the head of the CIA saying way back then that, as a product of the United States’ policies in Iraq—like right now—that you had a bubbling-out of freshly trained jihadists from Iraq into the rest of the world. So do not come to us with the argument that your policy is somehow reducing the spread of jihadism to the rest of the world. You are compounding it.

The fundamental historical and strategic error they made was this: to take a Western invasion force into the middle of the sacred sites of Islam and somehow believe that the Islamic world was going to sit around and say, ‘It’s okay—not a problem.’ Well, it was a problem. It remains a problem. It remains a huge fuelling agent for jihadists worldwide; a unifying agent for previously split traditions of militant Islam into one united force of Islam and militant Islamism. This is the singular, national security policy legacy of this mob opposite, who have the audacity to call themselves the responsible government of Australia.

There are many things we have known in this debate over the last two or three years. It has been known for years now that this government lied about pre-war intelligence on Iraq. It has been known for years now that this government lied about the impact of Iraq on Australia as a terrorist target. And we have known for almost a year that this government lied about the warnings it got about $300 million going to Saddam Hussein’s back pocket. We have the foreign minister—Saddam Hussein’s bagman of choice; his preferred bagman—as the person responsible for authorising, through the agency of the Customs regulations, $300 million worth of cold, hard readies for the back pocket of the Iraqi dictator. The Howard government is of course the best friend Saddam Hussein has ever had. We have known these things for some years.

The importance of the censure motions this week, the questions in the House of Representatives and some of the answers given is this: the debate has now entered an entirely new important phase in the history of the Iraq debate in this country, because it is now a debate about their strategy for the future of Iraq. It is about the plans that they have for Iraq’s future. It is about how they propose to stabilise Iraq’s security. It is a debate now about how they will in fact bring about political arrangements in Iraq which give the Iraqi people, long suffering people that they are, some hope for their future.

So far in this debate, which has now raged for some years, we have not had a strategy from this government but a slogan. The slogan is ‘cut and run’ or ‘stay till the job is done’. But you know what? The business of government is a serious business. It is about what really works. What will actually deliver a half-decent outcome for the poor people of Iraq? What actually works on the ground? This Prime Minister says he is not poll driven. You should actually look at the substance of his policy. If this man were a leader of the nation he would put forward in a formal statement to the parliament his outline for how Iraq will be stabilised over the one, two and three years ahead. That is missing. It has not been there at all. Instead, he has a focus group, with Mark Textor at work on the key line and theme. If you want evidence to counter the argument put by the Prime
Minister at this dispatch box only 15 minutes ago, it is that: no strategy, only a slogan. Of course, the market researchers say, ‘Don’t argue a strategy, you might be held accountable to it. Give them a slogan and that’s all they’ll remember.’ That is why this government stands so condemned in terms of the effectiveness of its policy on Iraq. The member for Bennelong is not a leader. The member for Bennelong is a clever politician. The primary prism through which he looks at national security policy and foreign policy is in fact what the market researchers tell him.

When you look at the arguments which the government has put forward for the future of its strategy in Iraq it is important to focus on the new developments in the last day or two. They concern these things: the transfer of responsibility to the Iraqi security forces for security in their own country—plank No.1 of the government’s new emerging policy on Iraq. Plank No. 2 is whether Iraq should be a unified state or a separated state. Plank No. 3 is whether or not we are really serious about having an Iraqi democracy anymore. Let us have a look at those.

The first one, I think, is terrific. When harassed today on ABC national radio about whether he had any sort of strategy for the future of Iraq, the Prime Minister was forced to say: ‘A signpost for determining Australia’s troop withdrawal will be the handover of security responsibility to the Iraqi forces.’ Iraq has 18 provinces. This morning the Prime Minister was asked how many provinces handover has occurred in. His answer was two. Foreign Minister, you are following me in this debate: how many provinces do we need where security responsibility has been handed over to the Iraqis for you to believe that there is a reasonable basis of security that would justify the withdrawal of foreign troops?

Mrs Irwin—He’s cut and run!

Mr Rudd—When it comes to cutting and running, our Alex is in a league of his own. If we look at the data, as of 7 August 2006 we find that there are five Iraqi army divisions, 25 brigades, 85 battalions and two national police battalions. The breakdown for the forces is: police, 123,500—trained; total of other police units, 176,000; army, 129,700; total armed forces, including the other two, 131,600; and—as of this document I have here from the United States State Department—the total number of trained and equipped Iraqi security forces is 307,800, as of 11 October 2006. The opposition is up to date!

My question to the foreign minister is this: how many do we need? Where do they need to be deployed? How many need to be trained? I have given you the up-to-date numbers. Two provinces have now been handed over and there are 16 to go. Is the number of provinces going to be eight or nine? Just give us a ballpark figure, and give us one for the total number of troops. Or, Foreign Minister, are you saying to the parliament that is all too hard, because the pollsters have said to you, ‘Whatever you do, don’t articulate a strategy. Stick to the slogan’? That is what this mob is all about.

Plank No. 2 of the unfolding new Howard government strategy on Iraq is this—and this is a really interesting one: should Iraq remain a unified state? Pardon me if I have missed something here, but I have been following this debate over the years and I thought that we were on about keeping Iraq together. I actually thought that that was the general view. I must have missed something because the pollsters have said to you, ‘Whatever you do, don’t articulate a strategy. Stick to the slogan’? That is what this mob is all about.

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turn out to be a split state.’ That has never before been said by this mob. They also said further, ‘That would be acceptable to them.’

Now, suddenly, plank No. 2 of the unfolding new mystery tour—otherwise called ‘the Howard government strategy on Iraq’—is that we will have an Iraqi state which is potentially divided into two or three or half-a-dozen or whatever. Again, Foreign Minister, could you let us know from the despatch box whether the government believes that the Iraqi state should be unified or split prior to the withdrawal of Australian troops. That is, I think, a pretty basic question for the future strategy in Iraq.

Here is question No. 3. I think this is a good one too, because we have the lion of democracy, the champion of democracy, about to take to the dispatch box. How many times have we sat here in this chamber while we have been savaged by the dead sheep opposite on the whole question of this unfolding avalanche of democracy—this domino theory of democracy—that once we democratised Iraq everything else that was a nondemocracy in the Middle East and the Arab world would roll over like ninepins—bing, bing, bing, bing, bing? That was how it was going to work. Do you remember all those speeches?

It has not gone entirely to plan. Hamas and the Palestinian Authority have been a bit of a problem in that script. There have also been a few problems in Lebanon of late—but let us not complicate it. There have not been huge advances in democracy in some of the other authoritarian states in the Middle East—not that I have seen, but I am sure the foreign minister will tell us if there have been some. But now the last domino falls, which was the first domino. They no longer believe that it is an absolute precondition that we have a democracy in Iraq either, because if you listened to our fearless Prime Minister today—the captain of political purity; he who never reads the market research—he said, ‘Democracy has a reasonable chance if that is the wish of the Iraqi people.’ This is the first statement from this mob, otherwise called the government, where they say that they could themselves leave Iraq if in fact it devolves into a nondemocracy—an authoritarian state perhaps, maybe run by a strongman, maybe a moustachioed strongman. Who knows how it could turn out? But we have here for the first time in this government’s consistent approach to its Iraq policy the possibility that Saddam II could be back on the road.

Plank No. 1 falls, plank No. 2 falls, plank No. 3 collapses in a heap, and the champion of democracy opposite here said to us all in this parliament:

A democratic Iraq will be part of the solution to an expanding democratic process in the Middle East.

You reek of hypocrisy, Foreign Minister, on this question. This government stands condemned, it stands censured, for taking this country into a war in Iraq which has not improved our national security circumstances but worsened them—a war in Iraq which has left 50,000 Iraqi civilians dead and almost 3,000 American troops dead. According to the Lancet, up to 600,000 Iraqi civilians lie dead. Foreign Minister, as your last challenge today when you answer this censure, how about this: what is the government’s figure on the number of Iraqis who now lie dead as a consequence of your policy? (Time expired)

Mr DOWNER (Mayo—Minister for Foreign Affairs) (3.40 pm)—Can I thank the honourable member for Griffith for describing me as a ‘lion of democracy’. Can I thank the honourable member for Griffith for describing me as a ‘champion of democracy’. Can I thank the honourable member for describing me as a
‘fearless foreign minister’. I think on all of those three points he is absolutely right, but I think the speech of the Leader of the Opposition is the one we need to focus on.

I thought the proposition put at the beginning of the Leader of the Opposition’s speech was reprehensible; that is, that the Prime Minister and I—of course we are both identified as the architects of the Iraqi strategy—have done this for popularity reasons on the back of opinion polls. Whether the Labor Party likes it or whether the Labor Party does not like it, it is important to understand in the context of this debate that both the Prime Minister and I believe that the course we are pursuing is the right course. We believe that, and we believe that although alternative courses are superficially more popular. The opposition rush around the press gallery with the latest Lowy poll and an ACNielsen poll, I think it was, on Iraq and say, ‘Look, the government’s position is unpopular.’ They are the people who have been running around saying that, not us. I accept that, but I also accept the proposition that when you are in the position of the Minister for Foreign Affairs—or, more importantly, the position of Prime Minister—you must sit down very carefully and make judgements and decisions that you think are going to be in the best interests of Australia and in the best strategic interests of the international community.

There is a great battle going on around the world, as the Prime Minister put it, for the soul of Islam. There is a battle between moderates, who are spread throughout the Islamic world and who are the vast majority of Muslims, and the extremist Islamists, particularly epitomised by Jemaah Islamiyah in our own region and al-Qaeda in the Middle East. They are of course linked up. The challenge for the international community, whether they are the Western countries, Muslim countries or a combination of both, is to make sure that moderate Muslims and moderate leaders in the Muslim world are triumphant and ultimately able to suppress and defeat the extremist Islamists. There are other great challenges that the world has to face, like climate change, but in international security that is the single most important challenge.

This issue of Iraq has to be considered in that context. What can we do to assist people like President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono or President Musharraf in Pakistan—great moderate leaders in the Islamic world—or governments in countries like Turkey and, indeed, the secular community of Turkey? We have a Turkish minister here with us today. During the day I joined him in opening the new Turkish embassy. What can we do to help those great communities around the world? There are a lot of things we can do, but if we were to aid, abet and allow the Islamist extremists to win a truly great victory the consequences for that struggle for the soul of Islam would be catastrophic. It would be the greatest single thing that could happen to advance the interests of al-Qaeda and, in South-East Asia, Jemaah Islamiyah.

The opposition criticises the government for saying, ‘Whatever you think about the original decision, you have to work out what you think is the right thing to do now.’ I think the Australian public would understand that that is a commonsense proposition. I know a lot of people thought it was the wrong thing to overthrow Saddam Hussein but, suffice it to say, the Prime Minister and I, and the coalition members and senators, believed it was the right thing. There was enormous support throughout the Liberal and National parties from one end of this country to the other to see the passing of Saddam Hussein’s regime, even if it did not win the overwhelming approbation of the Australian people. But we think that was the right thing to do and we believe that, if you analyse what would have happened had Saddam
Hussein had a great victory, the consequences become rather apparent. But we have to deal with the here and now and, in the here and now, if we were to grant the Islamist extremists a victory in Iraq, it would be a simply massive setback in the struggle for the soul of Islam and for global security. Some people say, ‘That is what the Liberal Party here would say.’

I thought it was interesting and coincidental that the Iraqi oil minister happened to be here today. He was meant to be here yesterday but he got delayed because of a sandstorm in Iraq. He had a press conference this morning and was, of course, asked about these issues. Here is a man who, in repudiating Saddam Hussein many years ago, spent—I think I am right in saying this—15 years in the Abu Ghraib jail. The Leader of the Opposition may think he is some grand strategic analyst. That is the way he rather pompously presents himself, despite chopping and changing his position the whole time. As the Prime Minister demonstrated, if you sit down and analyse what he says you find he has a lot of conviction very weakly held. The Iraqi oil minister lives in Iraq. The Iraqi oil minister knows what it was like under Saddam Hussein’s regime because he was imprisoned by him for 15 years. His story is a rather more important story than the sort of latter-day General McClellan that we have opposite us. Those of you who understand Lincoln and the American Civil War will know the reference.

Mr Howard—Yes!

Mr DOWNER—Obviously the Prime Minister does. He said this today—the Iraqi oil minister, not Abraham Lincoln:

We expect the international community to stay with the Iraqi people in this war against international terrorism because if these people are allowed to succeed—God forbid—in Iraq, then they will be a threat to the whole world. He went on to say:

Until we overcome this insurgency, we don’t think it’s wise for the international community to withdraw their support.

The Prime Minister and I, and the members and senators of the Liberal and National parties, feel passionately about this in the teeth of opinion polling. We have seen opinion polling in the last two or three weeks showing our position is unpopular, so I was not quite sure what the Leader of the Opposition’s explosive point was supposed to be. We believe that this is the right thing to do.

The Leader of the Opposition speaks very loudly about American strategy and how President Bush is about to change his policy. The Prime Minister and I know President Bush, Condoleezza Rice, Nick Burns and various other people in the US administration by virtue of the offices we hold. We know that, although the Americans will constantly be refining, adjusting and improving their tactics, they are not about to abandon the people of Iraq, and nor are the British. No matter what quotes the Labor Party may dig out, nor are the British. Why? Because the Americans and the British know the consequences.

In the case of the Italians, which the Leader of the Opposition asked about in question time, I was in Italy three weeks ago and I discussed the issue of Iraq with the Italian foreign minister, Mr D’Alema. It is true that the Italians are leaving Iraq by the end of this year, but the Italian government’s view is at variance with the Labor Party’s view. The Italian government made an election commitment to leave, but the Italian government do not believe that international forces should immediately pull out of Iraq. That is not their view.

That brings me to the next point I wanted to make. When Mr Latham was the Leader of the Labor Party, he said that Labor would
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pull Australian troops out of Iraq by Christmas. The present Leader of the Opposition—who did not, in my view, hold that view—has a different position from Mr Latham’s. The position of the present Leader of the Opposition is actually more extreme than the Latham position. The present Leader of the Opposition says that, if he were to become Prime Minister, he would immediately pull the Australian troops out—but there is an extra bit to it. He wants all of the international troops to be taken out of Iraq. He has said that he would go to Washington and tell the President that the United States should withdraw immediately from Iraq, and go to London no doubt and tell Tony Blair, or Gordon Brown or whoever succeeds Tony Blair, the same thing. I only make this point: even Mr Latham did not think pulling all of the international troops out at once was going to be a great idea for Iraq. But the present Leader of the Opposition thinks it is going to be the right strategic decision. I simply could not disagree more. Regardless of what the polls might say, I could not disagree more.

What is more, we heard something more absurd from the Leader of the Opposition today. He said he wanted to see all of the troops taken out, but I wonder how many members were listening to the other thing he said—that he would then send in an aid program. So, in an environment where the Islamist extremists and the insurgents have taken over Iraq, who is going to be sent in from Australia? Aid workers. Unarmed aid workers are going to be sent into that sort of environment.

Mr Rudd interjecting—

The SPEAKER—Order! The member for Griffith will withdraw that remark.

Mr Rudd—To assist the chair, I will withdraw.

The SPEAKER—No, you will withdraw without reservation.

Mr Rudd—I withdraw.

The SPEAKER—I thank the honourable member for Griffith.

Mr Downer—When you get into analysing this, it is a completely absurd proposition. The last point I want to make is a broader point about the region. I have made the point I wanted to make about the soul of Islam, but I want to make a point specifically about the Middle Eastern area of operations, as we sometimes call it. The opposition argues that we should keep troops in Afghanistan because if we do not the Taliban will take over Afghanistan again, and that will be a catastrophe in the war against terrorism. Whether or not that is popular, I agree with it; that is right. But what is the logic of arguing, what is the intellectual logic of saying, that it makes sense to keep troops in Afghanistan so that the Taliban do not take over Afghanistan again and the democratic government of President Karzai can remain in office but that it does make sense to pull troops out of Iraq so that the democratically elected government of Prime Minister Maliki will collapse in the face of Islamist extremists and insurgents? What is the logic of that?

The Leader of the Opposition goes on to argue that Labor thinks we should bring our troops back from Iraq—that is 1,400; I suppose it would be fewer than that because we would still have to leave some of the support over there for the troops remaining in Afghanistan—in order to fight terrorism in South-East Asia. Excuse me as the foreign minister if I ask: where, pray, are those troops going to be sent? Are they going to be sent to Yogyakarta or to Jakarta itself? Are the troops going to be inserted into southern Thailand, or would Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi welcome an Australian company or even a battalion into Penang or somewhere? All of this is a political stunt, because when you dissect what the Leader of
the Opposition has been saying, for all the blown-up pomp and ‘I am such a great strategic expert’—when you actually dissect it all—there is no logic to it. He has not done any homework.

I know I can be a bit cruel sometimes about the Leader of the Opposition. I can be a cruel person sometimes and I feel bad about it, really, because they are always so lovely to me! I really appreciate the charming expressions I hear at the dispatch box about ‘my parents’ and so on! The simple fact is that the Leader of the Opposition is intellectually lazy. This has not been thought through. This is a stunt for this week, and it has gone on every day this week. Throughout this week the Labor Party has argued a completely incoherent case. Let me make this point: whether or not our position is popular, the Prime Minister and I, the Minister for Defence, the cabinet and the parliamentary parties think it is right. The fact that something is right is enormously important to us, and we will stick the course. We will not surrender; we will not ask our partners and our allies to surrender. The Leader of the Opposition thinks that to lose is the right strategy. I think to lose would be disastrous.

Question put:
That the motion (Mr Beazley’s) be agreed to.

The House divided. [4.00 pm]
(The Speaker—Hon. David Hawker)

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

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Mr ABBOTT (Warringah—Leader of the House) (4.08 pm)—I move:

That the House, at its rising, adjourn until Monday, 30 October, at 12.30 pm, unless the Speaker fixes an alternative day or hour for the meeting.

Question agreed to.

BUSINESS

Mr ABBOTT (Warringah—Leader of the House) (4.08 pm)—I move:

That so much of the standing and sessional orders be suspended as would prevent:

(a) consideration immediately of the Senate’s further amendments to the Trade Practices Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2005 with the amendments being taken together; and

(b) a Minister then moving—that the Senate’s further amendments be agreed to—with speech time limits as follows:

for the Minister—5 minutes
for the Member next speaking—5 minutes; and

(c) the question to be then put immediately without further debate or amendment.

Question agreed to.

TRADE PRACTICES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (No. 1) 2005

Consideration of Senate Message

Message received from the Senate returning the bill and acquainting the House that the Senate does not insist on its amendment (1) to which the House has disagreed, has agreed to the further amendments made by the House and has made further amendments in which it requests the concurrence of the House.

Ordered that the further amendments be considered immediately.

Senate’s amendments—

(1) Schedule 1, item 27, page 10 (line 23), after “agrees”, insert “or the Commission so decides”.

(2) Schedule 1, item 27, page 16 (line 22), after “is”, insert “subject to subsection (3),”.

(3) Schedule 1, item 27, page 16 (after line 30), at the end of section 95AO, add:

(3) However, if before the end of the period referred to in subsection (1) (including any period that is taken to be substituted for that period by any other application or applications of subsection (2)), the Commission decides that the matter cannot be dealt with properly within that period, either because of its complexity or because of other special circumstances, which must be notified in writing by the Commission to the applicant, the period is extended by a further 20 business days and the longer period is taken to be substituted for the period referred to in section 95AO (or any other period that is taken to be substituted for that period by any other application or applications of subsection (2)).

(4) Schedule 1, item 27, page 19 (line 14), after “is”, insert “subject to subsection (8A),”.

(5) Schedule 1, item 27, page 19 (after line 21), after subsection 95AR(8), insert:
(8A) However, if before the end of the period referred to in subsection (7) (including any period that is taken to be substituted for that period by any other application or applications of subsection (8)), the Commission decides that the matter cannot be dealt with properly within that period, either because of its complexity or because of other special circumstances, which must be notified in writing by the Commission to the applicant, the period is extended by a further 20 business days and the longer period is taken to be substituted for the period referred to in subsection (7) (or any other period that is taken to be substituted for that period by any other application or applications of subsection (8)).

(6) Schedule 1, item 27, page 22 (line 14), after “is”, insert “subject to subsection (11A).”.

(7) Schedule 1, item 27, page 22 (after line 22), after subsection 95AS(11), insert:

(11A) However, if before the end of the period referred to in subsection (10) (including any period that is taken to be substituted for that period by any other application or applications of subsection (11)), the Commission decides that the matter cannot be dealt with properly within that period, either because of its complexity or because of other special circumstances, which must be notified in writing by the Commission to the applicant, the period is extended by a further 20 business days and the longer period is taken to be substituted for the period referred to in subsection (10) (or any other period that is taken to be substituted for that period by any other application or applications of subsection (11)).

Mr COSTELLO (Higgins—Treasurer) (4.10 pm)—I move:

That the amendments be agreed to.

This is the conclusion of the debate over the amendments to the Trade Practices Act as recommended by Sir Daryl Dawson when he did a review of the competition provisions of the Trade Practices Act. He recommended that it be made more transparent, that provisions be modernised and that it be more applicable in relation to small business collective bargaining and merger provisions. This amendment bill was initially introduced to the parliament a year ago. It was passed by this House, the Senate added amendments to it, which were unacceptable to the House, and essentially it has been frustrated for 12 months.

I brought the bill back into this House two days ago and we had a very thorough debate then, where the House decided that it would not accept the Senate’s amendments and the House improved a number of aspects of the bill. As I explained to the House on that occasion, the areas where the House improved aspects of the bill were in relation to authorisations, which will now go to the Australian Competition Tribunal. The House put amendments in place which will allow the ACCC to be heard in relation to those applications, to call evidence, to examine and cross-examine and to make submissions.

When the bill with those amendments went back to the Senate, the Senate did not insist on its original amendments. It accepted all of the amendments that the House put in here in debate a couple of days ago and it made only one final amendment. That amendment was moved by Senator Fielding, who moved that, where a formal merger application is made, the time limit which gave the ACCC 40 business days to consider it could be extended for another 20 business days upon the application of the commission itself. So that is the sole amendment that is now before the House—whether or not that time limit of 40 days is extended by another 20 and therefore is a maximum of 60 days.

I do not believe either side of the House would be opposed to that amendment. I be-
lieve that even the opposition, judging from its intervention in the debate, will support it, and of course the government will support it because the government voted for it, or at least indicated its support for it, when the matter was before the Senate. So, after a long legislative history, the good news is that this amendment has now passed the Senate and we bring it back for final endorsement here in the House.

What this bill will do is make it easier for small business to collectively bargain. Small business will be able to move to collective bargaining without authorisation, just with notification, unless the ACCC wants to contest it. It will therefore be able to go into negotiations with suppliers that will improve its position. All of the small business organisations of Australia that have had something to say about this in the last couple of days have supported the passage of this bill with the government amendments and have pleaded with the parties in the Senate to let it through.

Can I indicate that the breaking of this impasse would not have been possible without the good work of Senator Ron Boswell, who worked so hard and so well in relation to this matter in the Senate. I also pay tribute to Senator Fielding, whose amendments we are deliberating on here today and who was also a very big part of negotiating the passage of this bill with the government amendments and have pleaded with the parties in the Senate to let it through.

Can I indicate that the breaking of this impasse would not have been possible without the good work of Senator Ron Boswell, who worked so hard and so well in relation to this matter in the Senate. I also pay tribute to Senator Fielding, whose amendments we are deliberating on here today and who was also a very big part of negotiating the passage of this bill. Can I thank the Minister for Small Business and Tourism for the work that she has done. This is a great day for small business. It is a great day to get this improvement through for the Trade Practices Act. I hope all sides of parliament will support these amendments and get this into law for the benefit of the small businesses of Australia.

Mr FITZGIBBON (Hunter) (4.15 pm)—The Treasurer got one thing right, and that is that the opposition will be supporting the amendment put forward by Senator Fielding, as we did in the other place. We think it is a very minor improvement to the bill. But I can announce that we will still be opposing this bill because it is a flawed bill. It is a flawed bill because, although it gives something to small business, it taketh something away.

The Treasurer, for the last 12 months, at least, has been holding a big gun to the head of small business in this country. He says, ‘You can have a new collective bargaining regime.’ I should remind the House that we have always had a collective bargaining regime. This is just a measure to simplify that regime, but it is a measure to simplify a regime that we support. It has always been there. What the Treasurer has said consistently is this: ‘You can have your new collective bargaining regime, but only if you support our weakened merger proposals.’ Weaker merger proposals! That is, of course, a measure which is detrimental to the interests of small business and consumers in this country.

Unfortunately, there is another way in which the Treasurer is holding a gun to the head of small business. Having acknowledged and identified that there is a real problem with section 46 of the Trade Practices Act, particularly in terms of the ability of the ACCC to secure a prosecution for predatory pricing, and having put forward some suggested proposals to fix that problem, the Treasurer has said consistently that small business cannot have those important trade practices reforms until he gets his merger proposals through this parliament. In other words, he says, ‘You can have collective bargaining in new streamlined proposals and you can have some reforms in section 46 of the Trade Practices Act, but not until the BCA and big companies in this country get changes to the mergers law that make it easier for them to consolidate’—which of
course is a result which would be bad for small business.

We proposed, alternatively, a win-win-win for small business: effective changes to section 46 to strengthen that part of the Trade Practices Act; a new streamlined collective bargaining provision, which is good for small business; and, of course, maintaining the current strength we have in mergers law in this country, which is beneficial to small business. So that would be a win-win-win from the opposition. The government’s perspective was that the small business community could have something but only if it agreed to something which was detrimental to its interests—and that was the weakening of the mergers law.

We put forward some very reasonable amendments to the authorisation processes or changes the government put forward. It would have kept the ACCC—the appropriate economic expert body best placed to determine whether any consolidation, even though it may lead to a substantially lessening of competition might, in any case, be in the public interest—in the game. Instead, the government has sidelined the ACCC and in future will allow applicants for merger proposals to go straight to the Australian Competition Tribunal.

Not only that—and I am going specifically to the nature of this particular amendment—but the government is changing the clearance provisions under section 50 of the Trade Practices Act. In future, an applicant proposing a merger, and going to the ACCC, will not go informally—as it has always done—but go for a formal application. This is not a subtle change in the law, it gives the merger applicants a new appeal right and it severely constrains the ACCC.

Mr Costello—Quite wrong.

Mr FITZGIBBON—Why does it constrain the ACCC? Because the Treasurer is providing the ACCC with a very limited time period on which to make its assessment—I think it was 30 or 40 business days. The Fielding amendment extends that period.

There is one thing I would like to ask the Treasurer this afternoon about his changes, as he interjects. I ask the Treasurer whether or not an ACCC clearance for a merger proposal can be revoked under the new law, as it was always able to be revoked under the old law. In other words, if the ACCC clears a merger proposal and down the track the ACCC comes to the conclusion that the merger outcome is now having a detrimental impact on the Australian economy, can the ACCC revoke that formal clearance approval? (Time expired)

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. IR Causley)—The question is that the amendments be agreed to.

Question agreed to, Mr Katter dissenting.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

Mr GAVAN O’CONNOR (Corio) (4.20 pm)—Mr Speaker, I wish to make a personal explanation.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. IR Causley)—Does the honourable member claim to have been misrepresented?

Mr GAVAN O’CONNOR—Yes.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—Please proceed.

Mr GAVAN O’CONNOR—Yesterday the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry issued a press release accusing me of misleading Australian farmers by providing inaccurate information in a press release on drought declaration rollovers. The information in that press release came directly from the answer to a question on notice provided by the minister’s department to a Senate committee, and if anyone is misleading farmers it is the minister. I seek leave to table the answer to the question on notice which
details the end dates of EC declarations for
drought declared areas in Australia.

Leave granted.

**PRIVILEGE**

Mr WILKIE (Swan) (4.21 pm)—Mr Deputy Speaker, under standing order 51 I seek to raise a matter of privilege. On 9 October I was invited to announce a new Green Corps project in Queens Park in my electorate and informed that an official launch, to which I would be invited, was imminent. Less than an hour later the invitation was withdrawn on the basis that I was not a Liberal member of parliament. My office was informed it was a major error to inform me of the project and invite me to participate in its launch.

The Green Corps program is publicly funded. It is administered by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations in consultation with the Department of the Environment and Heritage. The project officer who invited me to participate in the launch of the Queens Park project believed I was entitled to do so on the basis that I was the representative of the people of Swan in this parliament. The decision to un-invite me was not one made by the project officer. That officer was merely following the dictate of the government. I believe the decision to deny me the opportunity to participate in the launch of this publicly funded project constitutes a grave interference in the free performance of my duties as a member of parliament.

I seek leave to table written confirmation of the invitation and un-invitation to participate in the project launch. I have four emails here: firstly, one from Monday, 9 October at 1 pm advising me that I was being invited to the project and calling for a press release announcing it, secondly, one 48 minutes later advising me that a major mistake had been made on behalf of the people. I have another one from 10 October that talks about how, because there was a bit of misinformation around, they wanted to find out that there were no Liberal members for Swan or Brand. I have another one, also from 10 October, saying that, given that there were no Liberal members for Swan or Brand, they had been informed they should be inviting the Liberal patron senators to conduct the event.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I ask that you give this matter consideration with a view to giving precedence to a motion to refer this issue to the Committee of Privileges.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. IR Causley) (4.24 pm)—The member does not need leave to table documents regarding privilege. I will refer the matter to the Speaker, who I am sure will take it into consideration.

**DOCUMENTS**

Ms JULIE BISHOP (Curtin—Minister for Education, Science and Training and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Women’s Issues) (4.24 pm)—I present documents on the following subjects, being petitions which are not in accordance with the standing and sessional orders of the House.

- Australian involvement in the US missile defence system—from the member for Perth—178 Petitioners
- Falun Gong—from the member for Prospect—2022 Petitioners
- Asylum seekers in Indonesia—from the member for Corio—20 Petitioners
- The proposed Telstra antenna in Geelong West—from the member for Corio—167 Petitioners
- Live animal exports to the Middle East—from the member for Deakin—54 Petitioners
- Same sex relationship—from the member for Gellibrand—792 Petitioners
- Internet pornography—from the member for Chisholm—284 Petitioners
Human cloning and creation of embryos for destructive research—from the member for Goldstein—169 Petitioners

**DOCUMENTS**

Ms JULIE BISHOP (Curtin—Minister for Education, Science and Training and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Women’s Issues) (4.24 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 Industrial Relations Commission and the Australian Industrial Registry—Reports for 2005-06.

Debate adjourned.

**MAIN COMMITTEE**

Treaties Committee

Reference

Mr BARTLETT (Macquarie) (4.25 pm)—by leave—I move:

That the orders of the day for the resumption of debate on the motion to take note of the following reports of the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties be referred to the Main Committee for debate:

- Report 79—Treaties tabled on 10 May (2), 5 and 6 September 2006—Report, October 2006; and

Question agreed to.

**MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE**

Visas

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. IR Causley)—Mr Speaker has received a letter from the honourable member for Watson proposing that a definite matter of public importance be submitted to the House for discussion, namely:

The Government’s use of the 457 temporary work visa to drive down wages and conditions.

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

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

Mr BURKE (Watson) (4.25 pm)—The 457 system is not out of control. It would be nice to be able to say it was out of control when you see the rorts that are happening, but it is actually worse than that: it is completely within the control of the government and doing what the government wants—driving down wages and driving down conditions.

This government has been hiding behind false claims to avoid confronting that fact. Yesterday, at the end of question time, we had the Prime Minister making claims against the AMWU, in particular against the secretary of that union, Doug Cameron. Only today the union had a meeting with deputy Queensland director of the department of immigration, Mr Mike Kennedy, where it was conceded by the department of immigration that the union had not impeded, had not obstructed and had not stopped in any way the departmental investigation; that there had been no barriers put in place; and that they had not been involved in preventing access to the department of immigration to the 40 Filipino workers who were so clearly being exploited. The exploitation ought to be pretty obvious to anyone, when you have a situation of 40 workers being put eight to a house and individually paying $175 a week rent. That is $175 a week rent going back to the employer for accommodation provided by
the employer, eight of them to a single dwelling.

The new extreme industrial relations laws have interacted with the 457 visa system and created this problem. There are two parts of those IR laws in particular that have done this. The first is the way AWAs are now run and the second is the change in the unfair dismissal laws. With new AWAs, what you have now is a system with no no-disadvantage test, no protection—you can have people working side by side on radically different rates. What does that mean for the 457 visa holder? We already know it is bad enough for the young Australian who goes in applying for work and is told: ‘You either sign the contract or you don’t get the job.’ What chance is there for the visa holder who is told: ‘You either sign the contract or you don’t get the visa’? There is no negotiating power there at all.

It gets even worse when fees are brought in. We have found in the last few weeks the situation of Mr Jack Zhang at Aprint, who had to pay $20,000 in fees to be able to get a $38,000 job. And once he had paid back those debts, he was fired. We had the situation of Mr Zhihong Fu, who had to pay $21,000 and also had to sign a form indicating that he would not be involved in any trade union activity while he was in Australia. We had the exorbitant rents being charged to the Filipino workers, whom we have been talking about this week. But at every stage there is one thing happening, and it is one thing that the government absolutely wants—to see wages and conditions driven down.

You only have to see how they have dropped the ball on compliance. Yesterday the department of immigration released its annual report. In that annual report, on page 84, we have the figures for what is happening with 457 visas and compliance checks, and you can see just how much this Prime Minister has changed things. Only two years ago, the compliance checks on 457 visa sponsors were running at 100 per cent. But once this Prime Minister got control of the Senate it went from 100 per cent down to 65.2 per cent. This government want the rorts to continue. They believe in them. They are driving wages down in exactly the way the government want.

Debate interrupted.

ADJOURNMENT

The SPEAKER—Order! It being 4.30 pm, I propose the question:

That the House do now adjourn.

Australian Security Intelligence Organisation-Australian Federal Police Raids

Mr BEVIS (Brisbane) (4.30 pm)—In June of last year, ASIO and the Australian Federal Police were involved in raids on suspected terrorist locations in Melbourne and Sydney. We know this because we all saw it on the news. Amazingly, someone had managed to tell TV crews exactly where to go and what time to be there to witness the ASIO and Federal Police officers raiding those particular premises. At the time it caused a great deal of consternation in the community and public comment.

This week the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security released his annual report, in which he comments on a range of activities over the last year including that particular incident. The report reveals some alarming activities. The report says:

ASIO and the AFP conducted investigations into whether any leaks had come from their respective organisations.

That is in relation to those raids.

Since then I have sought and obtained access to the records of that ASIO investigation. The conclusion reached by the investigation was that
there was no indication that any leak was from ASIO. Having examined the investigation records personally, I am satisfied that the ASIO investigation was conducted thoroughly and professionally and I saw no reason to question the conclusion reached.

So what has transpired since that very public expose of the raid—a raid that should have taken place in confidence and with sensitivity but did not—is that the Australian Federal Police and ASIO have conducted thorough investigations into whether their officers were responsible for tipping off the media to get some cheap publicity. Their investigations have been audited by the inspector-general, who confirms their finding that no-one in the AFP and no-one in ASIO was responsible for that leak.

That leaves the question open: who was responsible for tipping off the media, quite improperly, so that journalists were there at the house when Federal Police and ASIO agents arrived to enter the premises with their warrant? There are only a small number of people who would have had advance knowledge of that, and they include the Attorney-General and his staff and perhaps a couple of other senior ministers. Has there been an investigation in the last year into what the Attorney-General and his staff and other senior ministers knew or did in relation to this? No, there has not. The ASIO investigation was into the activities of ASIO and the AFP. The only people in the last year who have not been subject to an inquiry into their role in this are the government ministers involved—the government ministers who had prior knowledge of this raid.

A raid by ASIO and AFP officers is not something that is widely broadcast. There are only a small number of people who are privy to that knowledge in advance. On this occasion someone who was privy to that knowledge decided it would be a good idea to have the TV crews out there to embarrass the people who were the subject of these raids—or perhaps they thought it was a clever idea to get a bit of additional political advantage. At the time, the Sydney Morning Herald reported concerns that Mr Ruddock himself, the Attorney-General, had been the source of the leaks. The Sydney Morning Herald on 29 June 2005 recorded a response from Mr Ruddock:

… Mr Ruddock said there was no legal basis that would support the allegations against him or his staff.

That is cute—there is no legal basis to support them. The reason is that not all warrants are subject to secrecy by law. The only ASIO warrants that are subject to secrecy by law, that you are not allowed to talk about, are questioning warrants, and the act this parliament adopted makes it an offence to tell people of the operation or existence of those questioning warrants. But the warrants that were used in June last year were not questioning warrants; they were enter-and-search warrants. So the cute splitting of hairs by the Attorney-General is that there is no legal basis that would implicate his office because no legal offence has been committed.

But there is a grave miscarriage of decency and justice. The execution of warrants by ASIO and the AFP in antiterrorism matters is a highly important and sensitive matter. It should not be politicised. What we have from this government and what we have in this case from this Attorney-General is political spin and tabloid headlines getting precedence over the balanced administration of what are sensitive antiterrorism laws. The Attorney-General should come clean. He should allow the AFP and ASIO to conduct a thorough investigation of his involvement in that sorry affair, and the people who were unjustly exposed to the scrutiny of the media, and who at that stage had done nothing at all wrong, deserve an apology. (Time expired)
Mr TICEHURST (Dobell) (4.35 pm)—

Over 4,000 former national servicemen from around Australia, along with their families, have made their way to the New South Wales Central Coast for their 55th national anniversary reunion. The reunion is a get-together for all those who were involved in the National Service Scheme from 1951 to 1972. It also includes the CMF and reserve forces. More than 300,000 national servicemen served over that period of time, playing such an important role in the defence of our nation through the two post-war national service schemes. Of the 325,800 national servicemen over the 21-year period, 187 gave their lives on active service and some 1,500 were wounded.

As patron of both the Tuggerah Lakes branch and Central Coast branch of the National Servicemen’s Association, I would like to thank the organising committee for selecting the beautiful Central Coast for this year’s big celebration. The reunion will contribute significantly to the economic growth of the Central Coast. Our hospitality industry and local small businesses will also benefit due to the increased spending from people visiting the area for the specific purpose of attending the reunion. Daily bus tours around the scenic Central Coast and surrounding areas are a feature of the week’s activities. Unfortunately, the famous Tumbi Creek is not on the itinerary!

The reunion will take place over five days. It commenced on Wednesday, 18 October and it concludes with a giant street parade and memorial service next Sunday, 22 October. Wednesday started off a busy week with a meet and greet, allowing old mates to find each other and catch up. Later, a giant get-together was held, with an official welcome and the opening of the week’s activities.

Today brought all the excitement of the Wyong Racing Club featuring the main race of the day, the Nasho Cup. Unfortunately, I do not know the winner of the race, so I cannot let people know how their fun started. A two-day bowls carnival began against local teams at Toukley Bowling Club, and this evening a country music concert will be held at the Central Coast Leagues Club in Gosford, featuring the Wolverines and James Blundell.

Tomorrow it is R&R, tours, bowls and a memories concert featuring Lucky Starr, who is a constituent of Dobell, and Little Pattie, supported by a 20-piece concert band to be held at Tumbi Umbi’s Mingara Recreation Club. Saturday brings the national conference of the National Servicemen’s Association and the national council and concludes with a formal gala commemorative dinner for over 1,000 people, which I will be attending.

Finally, on Sunday I have been invited to the saluting dais to represent the Prime Minister and review the street parade of over 2,000 former Nashos, representing over 300,000 that were conscripted to service. This will be followed by a memorial service and a picnic in the park with entertainment for families and friends.

Planning for this reunion has taken some time, and I commend the organising committee for their mammoth efforts in bringing this all together. Two significant members that deserve a special mention are founding committee member Mr Noel Moulder, who has captained the team as the chairman, and Peter Nobbs, who has ensured that every part of the planning was properly accounted for as the financial officer.

Besides the Department of Veterans’ Affairs, a number of local businesses and organisations will be assisting the success of this event. These include Terry Webster...
Graphic Design, Wyong Racing Club, Wyong Shire Council, Gosford City Council, New South Wales Police, Central Coast Tourism, St John Ambulance and a number of registered clubs, including Mingara Recreation Club, Toukley Bowling Club and Central Coast Leagues Club. I wish the 2006 Nasho Reunion Association every success with this great event and I feel very honoured to be a part of what will be an unforgettable commemoration of a very important milestone in Australia’s history.

**Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy**

Ms GRIERSON (Newcastle) (4.39 pm)—I rise to draw attention to a government discussion paper released this week entitled *Measures to improve settlement outcomes for humanitarian entrants*. Having spoken in this parliament on at least four other occasions about the shortfalls in the administration and delivery of Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy services in general and in the Newcastle and Hunter Region in particular, I welcome the government’s belated acknowledgment of the need for vastly improved settlement outcomes for refugee and humanitarian entrants, particularly because we told them so.

The new arrangements for delivering IHSS services—arrangements that this government put in place in October 2005—have consistently failed to meet the needs and expectations of refugees and the wider Newcastle community alike, and this new discussion paper recognises that fact. I remind the House of just some of the concerns that have been raised by me in this chamber and with the then Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs prior to the introduction of the new model, which came into effect on 1 October 2005.

I noted that the tender process had highlighted a number of worrying features, not least of which was the fact that local community based organisations were effectively excluded from being able to bid in their own right for work in their own community. Regional organisations were particularly disadvantaged in this regard. I noted with regret that the local MRC and their long-established community networks and volunteers would no longer be involved in the provision of IHSS services in the Newcastle and Hunter Region and expressed my dismay that a consortium led by ACL, a Sydney based business with no operational experience or reputation in the region, was the successful tenderer.

I also sought assurances then from the minister that current and future refugees and humanitarian entrants would not experience a reduction in the quality or range of services in the Newcastle and Hunter region. Despite ongoing disasters with the new model, the minister continued to express full confidence in those services provided to refugees and described these services as world class. In truth, they have been far from world class. Indeed, they have consistently failed to meet targets and key performance indicators as detailed in the IHSS contracts. Even more alarming is the apparent inability of the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs and her department to insist that contractual obligations are met. Why doesn’t this government enforce the terms of its contracts? The IHSS contract in the Newcastle and Hunter region is worth $27.5 million, yet this minister has no idea if service providers are providing what they are supposed to provide under the terms of the contract.

According to the government’s own discussion paper, the main features that are not being delivered are the provision of specialised case management assistance; support and assistance to clients in crisis situations; advice and support to settlement service providers and other service delivery agencies;
strengthening of the integration of services provided to humanitarian entrants across agencies through effective networking and information sharing; and monitoring the access and appropriateness of services provided.

These are not new features of the IHSS program; they are services that were supposed to have been provided all along at a considerable cost to the Australian public. Instead of enforcing the terms of the contract, however, this government simply proposes to insert another layer of bureaucracy, another layer of money to try to make sure that the IHSS is delivered properly; hence, the proposal for a new complex case support network. This network will apparently provide specialised case support. Curiously, IHSS services used to provide complex case management and support to refugees and humanitarian entrants with complex needs.

In my area, these needs have not been met; they have been passing them onto other providers like the MRC and asking them to fix the problem. If the minister is seriously considering this new proposal, I would hope that she and DIMA would consider integrating this new program into the existing Settlement Grants Program rather than just giving more money to the failing IHSS service providers. The outsourcing of intensive human services to large corporate entities has a dismal track record and should cease.

Moreton Bay Access Alliance

Mr LAMING (Bowman) (4.43 pm)—There have been many tall tales told in fishing but rarely have there been stories with such serious undertones and repercussions as the threat to fishing in Moreton Bay and the upcoming advisory committee and review process for the marine park. We know very well just how stressed the ecology of southeast Queensland is with one in seven Australians living in that location, hundreds of families moving there every week and up to 500,000 people enjoying the opportunity for recreation on Moreton Bay. Of course, striking a balance between commerce, industry and recreation with a very delicate bayside and island environment is a challenge. But the point I make today is that that is no zero-sum game of trench warfare where there has to be constant battling between environmental views and the views of those in recreation and commercial activities—far from it.

We had a state government that lignified and ossified in their position and just stopped listening to ordinary people. Today I want to acknowledge those who stood together—those with an interest in angling, both commercial and recreational; those with an interest in the seafood industry; those who care about tourism; and those who care about the future use of the bay for all people. They stood together and formed an alliance, the Moreton Bay Access Alliance, on 1 September this year. They took it to a state election and gained really important concessions from the Deputy Premier—not easily or quickly; after cancelled meetings, attempts at coercion and perhaps even threats of removal of state funding in an effort to erode their commitment. They brooked all of that. They met with the Deputy Premier and extracted, two days before the state election, important concessions.

Why did they have to fight for such simple concessions as a seat on the review process for the Moreton Bay Marine Park, a chance to have both the office of state development and fisheries and primary industries involved in any cabinet submission that went to the Premier, and an agreement to share information? Those were basic concessions that should never have taken the battle that we saw in September. What we had was the signing of a petition, with thousands of people at the boat show putting their names to it.

Moreton Bay Access Alliance
That will be lodged by me in the next sitting week. We saw a postcard campaign. There was also a convoy of boats and trailers to Parliament House just the week before the state election.

These marine protected areas are a challenge for all of Australia, not just south-east Queensland, but I give my commitment today to people like Tony Webb and the other commercial fishers, to the half a million recreational fishers and to those who are involved in boat clubs right up and down south-east Queensland that we will work to find a solution that enables, as I have said, the delicate ecology to be protected for future generations but allows basic activities like fishing to also occur. One thing I know about fishermen through my experience over the last few years as a federal member is that they are prepared to adhere to laws—they will see what is going to be good for their area and their ecology, for fish stocks and for biomass, and stick by those laws in the main.

The traditional elders are strongly supportive. There is Vince Martin from the Nunukul Ngugi, a traditional pioneer in sea cucumber processing, who has Regional Partnerships money. The work of John Conley, from Redlands Tourism, is legion in my area. Kelly Williams, young and dynamic, agreed to head up the industry association together with John Page, a committed third-generation fisherman from Moreton Bay. He made the very good point that fish swim into Moreton Bay and back out the other side again—we are catching biomass that moves through it. If they did not move through we would have long ago fished it out and turned every rock a generation ago. There are ways of fishing sustainably in Moreton Bay.

Donna Browne became the heroine of the campaign, and Bruce Alvey, the industry’s national treasure of all things fishing, was also heading up that campaign. To Keith Hall, Trevor Higgins, Frank Lee, Jeff Sorrell, Shane Boese and Rick Huckstep, the results are obvious. We have extracted the commitment that we all wanted. But the next step is turning it into reality and fighting to make sure that there is mutual agreement between the environmental argument and those who want to continue using the bay so that it can be preserved for future generations.

We have, of course, that precautionary principle that we should make a decision about whether threats are serious and irreversible enough to put regulation in before we do the science. The commitment from this group is to find the science, take it to the Queensland government and ensure that we have a solution for all of those who use Moreton Bay on a daily and weekly basis.

Health Expenditure

Ms GILLARD (Lalor) (4.48 pm) — I rise to inform the House of startling new information obtained by the opposition today relating to the government’s expenditure in health. This new information makes it clear that the claims often made by the government about its performance in health are simply not right. Indeed, these figures show the hypocrisy of many of the claims that the government has made.

Every member of the House would recall that the Minister for Health and Ageing comes into this place regularly and spruiks the success of the Howard government in getting doctors into areas of need. But figures obtained today by the opposition through the Senate estimates process show that the truth is that the primary care strategies program was underspent by more than $80 million in 2004-05 due to a lower than expected take-up rate for the government’s program to get more graduate doctors into outer metropolitan areas and for other purposes such as the coordinated care trials and support for procedural GPs.
The hollowness of the government’s claims does not end there. The minister for health also frequently talks up the Howard government’s funding of practice nurses, but the figures obtained today show that the truth is that the take-up rate for the Practice Incentive Program, the GP IT support program, the broadband access for health program and the Practice Nurse Program was lower than expected, resulting in $55 million of allocated funds not being spent.

The minister also loves to laud the Howard government’s performance in after-hours care. But in 2005-06 there was an underspend on programs like Round the Clock Medicare and After Hours Primary Medical Care. The uptake was so low that $14 million was left unspent. In Indigenous health, an area of clear need, the minister has managed to underspend in 2004-05 by $24 million and again in 2005-06 by $21 million. The minister claims that he is really on the job when it comes to avian flu, but even there we see an underspend of almost $5 million.

The minister for health also holds himself out as the man who fixed the medical indemnity crisis. Either he got the dimensions of the crisis wrong or his fix is not working, because there was an underspend of almost $41 million in 2004-05 and a staggering $84 million in 2005-06.

The one thing that the minister for health is not out and about boasting about is his plan to further cut the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme—a plan that is being worked on now and is likely to be revealed by the Howard government before the end of the year. Even in the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme we see an underspend of almost $67 million in 2004-05 and almost $8 million in 2005-06. Unbelievably, the health department claims that this is because the demand for arthritis, antidepressant and cholesterol-lowering drugs has been lower than expected. Where is the evidence that in this community the rates of arthritis, depression and high cholesterol have gone down? The proposition is laughable.

What has in fact happened is that the Howard government’s policies when it comes to medicines have made medicines for these conditions unaffordable for a section of the community that is in need, because these people are already battling chronic illness. With the PBS cutback package of the Howard government’s Minister for Health and Ageing which we will most likely see between now and the end of the year, I fear that there is worse to come for these Australians who are in chronic need. Every health dollar is precious and should be spent to make a difference for a sick Australian. The minister for health is too incompetent to achieve that result.

**HMAS Canberra**

Mr McARTHUR (Corangamite) (4.52 pm)—I am delighted to acknowledge the contribution of the Minister for Defence, the Hon. Brendan Nelson, in making the announcement on behalf of the government that HMAS Canberra would be sunk off the coast of the Bellarine Peninsula and become a dive wreck. The achievement of this wreck is great for the people of Corangamite. The Victorian Artificial Reef Society came to visit me some six months ago and put the proposition that HMAS Canberra should be selected to become a dive wreck ship. I was unfamiliar with the background of the dive society, but they impressed me with their genuine commitment to the sport of diving and in particular to diving at wrecks. So following my lobbying of the minister on the possibility of HMAS Canberra coming to Victoria or going to New South Wales, yesterday the minister made the announcement that it was coming to Corangamite. The member for Lowe is a very good supporter
of Corangamite, and I am pleased. He knows that HMAS Canberra is coming to Victoria and not to New South Wales. On behalf of the people of Corangamite, I am delighted with this decision.

The Howard government and the minister will contribute $2.8 million towards preparing HMAS Canberra for scuttling. It has to be environmentally acceptable to the people of Ocean Grove and Barwon Heads. By way of background, HMAS Canberra has sailed 800,000 miles in serving Australia in the Persian Gulf; it has been in the Southern Ocean, at the Solomon Islands, east of Africa and south of Russia. The ship is 138 metres long and, when it was commissioned, it displaced 4,100 tonnes and had a crew of 210. So in its own right, it is a historical vessel. I think the people of Corangamite will be delighted that a vessel with an Australian background will be there for the divers.

The interesting thing is that the sport of the Artificial Reef Society attracts a large number of divers from around the world. Some estimates that have been given to me suggest that 150,000 divers would participate in diving and inspecting this wreck on the ocean floor. I am not familiar with all that; I am familiar with the diving that is done along the Great Ocean Road, at the Lockhart Gorge—Mr Speaker, you would be aware of that—where divers have looked at a wreck and have taken some valuable artefacts from a particular ship.

The CEO of Geelong Otway Tourism, Mr Roger Grant, has been lobbying me in support of this proposition. The Victorian government, as I understand it, have been cooperative. I had discussions with the Chairman of the Victorian Artificial Reef Society this morning and they indicated that the exact location is going to be agreed next week—where it is compatible to the sea lanes, compatible to access by divers and compatible to the environment.

It is a great triumph that the government has seen fit to allow HMAS Canberra to be scuttled off Ocean Grove. It will provide a tourist opportunity for international divers. I was surprised that so many people would come just to participate in inspecting this wreck. I understand that there are a couple of older submarines in the area as well so it could become a focus of dive wrecks around the world. People could actually come to Corangamite—member for Lowe, you ought to note that: they like coming to Corangamite, compared to Lowe—and inspect these wrecks. That will improve the tourism potential and it will give us another string in our bow before people go down the Great Ocean Road, which is partly represented by the Speaker but more fully represented by the member for Corangamite. We now have another competing icon at the Great Ocean Road for tourists who come to Corangamite and the Bellarine Peninsula. I commend the minister, thank the government, and look forward to participating in the actual scuttling and sinking of HMAS Canberra at Ocean Grove. (Time expired)

Senator Fielding

Mr MURPHY (Lowe) (4.57 pm)—What pious hypocrisy flows from the mouth of Packer and Family First Senator Steve Fielding! This week—Anti-Poverty Week—on Tuesday evening, Senator Fielding told the Senate that he was ‘pleased to stand up against poverty earlier this week’ and that his former party ‘believes it is even more important that all of us think carefully about what part we can play to help people in developing countries’. Senator Fielding must take his own advice, think carefully and then put a search engine through his conscience.

Senator Fielding must explain to the Senate and his former party why, last week, he
stood up for Australia’s richest man to make him $4.5 billion richer out of the anti-family misery of poor people who lose their money in poker machines and casinos. Senator Fielding must explain to the Senate and his former party why he met Mr Packer, secretly, and Senator Coonan, secretly, and then surrendered his vote to massively concentrate media ownership in Australia, reaching for his portion of Liberal Party preferences at the next election. Senator Fielding must apologise to all the people who voted for him and all the members of this 41st parliament. Only then can he seek redemption for putting the Packer family first, not Australian families first.

Immigration: Tran Family

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler) (4.59 pm)—I wish to briefly say that I wrote to the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs today about the Tran family. Mr Tran, his wife and their three children, now aged five, 13 and 16, arrived in Australia almost 10 years ago. This week the Refugee Review Tribunal has found that Mrs Tran is a refugee and therefore a person to whom Australia has protection obligations. There is a clear case for the minister to now intervene on Mr Tran’s behalf on compassionate grounds so that this family is not split up.

On the eve of Refugee Week next week, the case of the Tran family is a timely reminder of the uncertainty and distress many asylum seekers face while their applications are being processed and considered. I ask the minister to intervene.

The SPEAKER—Order! It being 5 pm, the debate is interrupted.

House adjourned at 5.00 pm until Monday, 30 October 2006 at 12.30 pm, in accordance with the resolution agreed to this day.

NOTICES

The following notice was given:

Mrs May to move:

That the House:

(1) recognises that:

(a) 23 percent of women who have ever been married or in a de facto relationship have experienced violence by a partner at some time during the relationship;

(b) the immediate impacts for children of victims include emotional and behavioural problems, lost school time, poor school performance, adjustment and relationship problems;

(c) child abuse is more likely to occur in families experiencing domestic violence; and

(d) children of victims are also at risk of continuing the violence with their own children and partners and are at heightened risk of alcohol and drug abuse and delinquency later in life;

(2) also recognises that:

(a) the social, health and psychological consequences of domestic violence have far-reaching and longstanding negative impacts on families who suffer from domestic violence and on the community as a whole; and

(b) there is no excuse for violence and abuse;

(3) calls on the Government to:

(a) establish a National Domestic Violence Death Review Board;

(b) establish a National Committee on Violence Against Women; and

(c) increase efforts in the area of primary prevention; and

(4) calls, on a bipartisan level, for a more coordinated and sustained approach to be undertaken by all levels of government in the area of domestic violence.
Thursday, 19 October 2006

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. IR Causley) took the chair at 9.30 am.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Mr Peter Norman

Ms ROXON (Gellibrand) (9.30 am)—I would like to take this opportunity today to com-
memorate the life and recent death of a constituent of mine, Olympic medallist and Williams-
town resident, Mr Peter Norman. Peter Norman won an Olympic silver medal in the 1968 Mexico City Olympic Games and still holds the Australian 200-metre sprint record today, which is quite an inspiring feat for any athlete. But Mr Norman’s performance at those Olym-
pics was all the more inspiring for the support that he gave his co-finalists on the podium. Mr Norman was joined by American sprinters Tommie Smith and John Carlos, who mounted the podium in bare feet and, during the American national anthem, lowered their heads and gave the Black Power salute to protest the treatment of African Americans in the United States. Mr Norman stood side by side with them, wearing a human rights badge pinned to his tracksuit. The American sprinters were heavily criticised and sent home for their protest, while Mr Norman was cautioned.

Mr Norman’s involvement in this protest is something that we should all be proud of. At a
time when the right for Australian Aboriginals to vote had only just been recognised a year earlier, Mr Norman was a role model for all Australians in his stand and support for equal rights. With the American civil rights movement in a way heralded and symbolised by this action, the world began to recognise the right of all people to live free from oppression. Mr Norman’s action at the 1968 Olympics, standing in solidarity for the rights of others, is worth reflecting on again today. After all, human rights are all about caring not just for yourself but for the plight of others around you.

Nevertheless, I do not want this moment in history to overshadow his outstanding sporting achievements and lasting contribution to the community. Mr Norman’s silver medal remains the highest placing of an Australian 200-metre men’s sprinter in Olympic history. He was five times 200-metre sprint national champion and remained committed to sport as a physical edu-
cation teacher, sports administrator and Olympic team fundraiser and educator.

Mr Norman is survived by his wife Jan, their children Belinda and Emma, and his first wife Ruth and children Gary, Sandra and Janita. I would like to express my heartfelt sympathy for their loss and for Australia’s loss of a great sportsman and humanitarian. Mr Norman’s life shows that our national pastime, sport, can be coupled with a commitment to social justice and equality for all and was perhaps the start of a rich tradition of Australian sportsmen and sportswomen who have used their sporting success to highlight and combat social inequity. I am thinking here primarily of AFL stars such as Michael Long, and I am sure that Mr Nor-
mam, with his well-documented love of AFL, would be proud to stand alongside these many other sports stars who are using their profile to make a stand on similar issues of disadvantage and social inequity.

Nuclear Energy

Mr SLIPPER (Fisher) (9.33 am)—Today I rise in the Main Committee to talk about the issue of nuclear energy and about suggestions that a nuclear power station could possibly be
I have to say I think that, as traditional sources of fuels become less available—we appreciate that they are finite—as a responsible nation we clearly have to look at all of the alternatives to make sure that, as we go further into the 21st century, we are able to meet our nation’s energy needs but in a way, of course, that is clean and green and environmentally responsible. I am advised that some 16 per cent of the world’s power is currently provided by nuclear power stations and that Australia has the largest supply in the world of uranium—obviously something that is essential for the use of power stations. I suppose in a sense there is also a slight lack of logic in that we insist that overseas countries buying our uranium ought to have safeguards in place—and I support that policy—but we ourselves say that nuclear power is so unsafe that we will not use it on our own shores.

It is unfortunate that this resurgent debate has immediately been hijacked and injected with comments and arguments that are designed to inflame hysteria and cause fear rather than being genuinely focused on the debate that we have to have. Nuclear power has not been rubber-stamped by this government as a sure thing, but the government is prepared to look at nuclear power along with other options. We also support renewable energy and bioenergy and we support, in a responsible way, whatever is necessary to make sure that we are able to meet our nation’s energy needs.

When one looks at some of the disasters that have taken place in the area of nuclear power stations, one could wrongly, in my view, assume that nuclear power is not a safe form of energy production. I just think that we cannot rule out any options as we are facing the end of finite traditional sources.

I have to say, though, that I would be totally opposed to a nuclear power station being constructed on the Sunshine Coast—which, of course, as the member for Moncrieff would probably agree, is the most desirable holiday destination anywhere in the nation; his own area comes a close second. It really is important to make sure that people are not diverted from coming to the Sunshine Coast as a result of wrong perceptions over nuclear power stations. This is an important debate and it is a debate that we have to have. I support the debate. I support the possibility of nuclear power. But I am resolutely opposed to a nuclear power station being constructed in this most beautiful part of the nation. (Time expired)

**Tree of Knowledge**

Ms LIVERMORE (Capricornia) (9.36 am)—I am here today to lament the death today of one of Australia’s great icons. The Tree of Knowledge in Barcaldine in Queensland is a symbol of the strength of Australian workers and a clear reminder of the importance of collectivism. The tree was estimated to be somewhere between 150 and 200 years old and was included on the National Heritage List late last year in recognition of its outstanding heritage value.

Sadly, the Tree of Knowledge was poisoned in May of this year and was officially declared dead a couple of weeks ago. It is estimated that, in a callous and cowardly act of vandalism, up to 40 litres of poison was poured around the base of the tree.

The Tree of Knowledge played a crucial role in the formation of the Australian Labor Party. In 1891, shearsers used the tree as a meeting place during their strike activity. On 1 May that year, the strikers marched through the streets of Barcaldine. This act began a linking of May
Day with Labor Day in Queensland. After the strike was broken on 6 May by the Queensland and New South Wales governments, the strike leaders were found guilty of conspiracy and sentenced to three years hard labour. As a result of this, unions formed what is today called the Australian Labor Party and in 1892 TJ Ryan became the first Labor representative in the world to be elected to parliament.

The Tree of Knowledge embodies this era of Australia’s history and serves as a reminder to all Australians of the value of a fair day’s work for a fair day’s pay. Why anyone would wilfully destroy a piece of Australia’s history is beyond me and I sympathise with the people of Barcaldine who have had this act perpetrated against them. I know that it was a very sad day for the people of Barcaldine when the tree was officially declared dead, but I know that Barcaldine will fight on and continue to be a very special place.

Members of all parties have joined in condemning this act, and the ALP have put forward a reward for information of $10,000 to help police catch the individual or individuals responsible for this pathetic act of cowardice.

Mr Pat Ogden, a dear friend of mine, staunch Labor man and unofficial caretaker of the Tree of Knowledge, has been closely following the fate of the tree since the poisoning was first discovered. Pat placed the value of the Tree of Knowledge equal to that of another great Australian icon when he said in last week’s Courier-Mail:

It’s not only Barcaldine, it’s Australia’s history ... It’s just like Sydney losing the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

To the individual or individuals responsible, I say that it will take a lot more than 40 litres of Roundup to destroy the memory and ongoing legacy of the Tree of Knowledge. The memory of the tree and the spirit of the shearers who gathered beneath its branches to demand justice will live on. It will live on in the Labor movement’s present fight for fairness and decency—a fight that we will win.

National Water Week

Mr CIOBO (Moncrieff) (9.39 am)—I am pleased to rise and inform the House that this week is National Water Week, and I know that across a number of electorates throughout Australia many Australian communities are experiencing the ravages of what is now Australia’s worst drought. The same applies in my electorate of Moncrieff on the Gold Coast. While the Gold Coast has had a regular amount of rainfall over the past 12 months, the fact is that as a community we are concerned about the declining levels of rainfall that have been occurring throughout Australia and on the Gold Coast.

I was very pleased, therefore, to know that the Howard government has responded very effectively and comprehensively through the National Water Initiative. In particular, we have allocated some $2 billion under the National Water Initiative to a host of community projects, both at a local level and at a national level, to ensure that we are doing all that we can to bring to the forefront of people’s minds the need to conserve water.

For those of us on the Gold Coast and in my electorate of Moncrieff, I was especially pleased to be able to allocate to a number of community groups throughout my electorate funding that was provided under the Community Water Grants program. The Community Water Grants program is an Australian government initiative that the Howard government introduced, which has provided thus far some $61 million to over 1,750 community groups across...
Australia, all of whom have come up with different initiatives to play a part in conserving water. The water savings from these community projects are projected to be around 18 gigalitres—that is, 18 billion litres of water—every single year, and a second round of grants is currently being assessed.

I was very pleased in my electorate of Moncrieff to be able to announce to Bellevue Park State School, to the Friends of Federation Walk, to Impact Ministries and to Miami State School grants that respectively were $48,000, $44,800, $31,800 and $27,000. Each of these grants will play a crucial role for these community groups to take initiatives in their local community on the Gold Coast to make sure that we conserve water. Bellevue Park State School is obtaining its grant of $48,000 to install new water tanks to flush the toilets within the school grounds. Friends of Federation Walk, a group with which I am very familiar—and I am very proud to call Lyn Wright, their convener, a good friend of mine—is receiving some $44,800 for the expansion of a recycled effluent water irrigation system. The Friends of Federation Walk is responsible for maintaining what is a scenic walk along the spit on the Gold Coast, an area that is battered by the harsh salt winds from the ocean and has very little access to fresh water. So this $44,800 will play a very great role in ensuring that recycled effluent water is used to irrigate—what has been countless hours of hard yakka by local Gold Coasters who have planted literally thousands of trees—that area.

Impact Ministries is receiving their grant for access to and rehabilitation of a dam enabling an irrigation project as part of their church preschool facilities, and Miami State School is receiving a school indoor water efficiency project grant, which will amount to $27,000. I commend the Howard government for its National Water Initiative. I encourage Gold Coasters and all Australians to be water wise in this National Water Week and I commend this grants program to the House.

Communications: Free-to-Air Television

Ms KING (Ballarat) (9.43 am)—Sport lies at the heart of the Australian community. Thankfully, up until now, all Australians have been able to share major sporting events such as the AFL grand final or the Australian Open on our free-to-air television. These are not just sporting events but are a part of our national identity and culture. We have only to look at the success of the world cup telecast earlier this year, where we all saw the unprecedented success of the Socceroos, and there was unprecedented interest in soccer by our entire nation. The whole nation shared the roller coaster ride because it was free to air. Young Australians were able to watch new heroes develop, and older Australians were able to see their dream of once again seeing Australia play in World Cup soccer.

Thanks to this government, the Australian public will not see the Socceroos qualifying games on free-to-air television in the lead-up to the next World Cup. Soccer has a large following in the electorate of Ballarat, which is growing with each season. Not surprisingly, I have been contacted by a number of constituents who are upset about this matter. We have 11 clubs in my electorate and the popularity of the game is growing, with the new Total Girls soccer tournament attracting over 100 young women under the age of 14 into playing this sport.

Games in qualifying rounds used to be protected from competition, with pay TV being used on an ad hoc basis. Despite the ongoing calls of the Australian Broadcasting Authority that they be properly protected by being placed on the antisiphoning list, that has not happened.
with this particular issue. The ABA has recommended to the government that each international soccer match involving the senior Australian representative team and the senior representative team of another country be protected. The government has continued to ignore the growing and unwavering public demand to see our Socceroos engage in international competition. The Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts was so dismissive of Australian soccer and so dismissive of Australians’ love for the game that she did not even bother to include the 2010 World Cup on the antisiphoning list until she was subject to intense pressure. Yet she has not included all of the qualifying matches on the anti-siphoning list. Any people who wish to watch the qualifying matches—and many people in my electorate do—will not be able to do so.

I call on the minister and the Howard government to explain to Australian soccer fans how they can consider so many Australians’ primary sporting interest to be so unimportant. I will be launching a petition in my electorate next week to get the minister to change her mind on this issue. If the minister does not deem international soccer matches to be of national and cultural importance, then people in my electorate will certainly signal to her that they do. I want to conclude with a quote from one of my constituents, who says:

... like most low-income students ... we can’t afford pay TV and will be unavailable to watch all ... Australians make history in their key sporting events.

Shame, Minister! (Time expired)

Ryan Electorate: Roads

Mr JOHNSON (Ryan) (9.46 am)—Last week I met with residents from The Landing, a beautiful part of Moggill, in the western suburbs of Brisbane and in the Ryan electorate. As I always say in this parliament, I have the great privilege of representing them and other Ryan residents. These residents from The Landing were concerned that the proposed Goodna bypass, also known as the northern option, would involve more than the current federal government’s two-bridge proposal and would, in fact, see the construction of four bridges across the Brisbane River.

I reassured them in no uncertain terms that, as the federal member for Ryan, I would not support any federal and state government partnership involving the Goodna bypass that involved anything other than the current preferred federal government option of only a two-bridge proposal across the Brisbane River—and across Priors Pocket specifically. I reassured them that my position was unchanged. I reminded them, as they already knew, that I went to the last federal election on this basis. I reassured them that I would only support a two-bridge proposal across the Brisbane River and that those two bridges would go across towards the Priors Pocket part of the western suburbs. I reassured them that I would not support any construction proposal that involved any on- or off-ramp.

On another major concern, I reassured them that there would be no federal government proposal to construct a bridge across the Brisbane River to replace the Moggill ferry, a very popular ferry that runs from the south side of the river to my Ryan electorate side of the river. They were pleased that my position was unchanged, and I am delighted to say to them in the parliament, as I assured them I would, that my position will remain unchanged and that I will continue to lobby the federal government to ensure that the northern bypass option, also known as the Goodna bypass, will have only have two bridges.
I want to take this opportunity in the parliament to reassure not only the many residents of The Landing, but also the surrounding Ryan electorate residents of Bellbowrie, Moggill, Kenmore and Chapel Hill, that I as their local member would never countenance a federal government proposal that involved the construction of four bridges across the Brisbane River in the waters surrounding the Ryan electorate. The proposal is one that I went to the last election on and will go to the next election on. John and Lorraine Hemming of The Landing, who hosted me, and their fellow residents will be pleased to know that in the parliament I am rock solid on this position, as I was in the last election. (Time expired)

**Vietnam**

Mr BOWEN (Prospect) (9.49 am)—On 8 April this year, 118 Vietnamese citizens signed a declaration calling for the introduction of democracy in Vietnam. Potential political change on a large scale comes out of courage, and what we are seeing in Vietnam at the moment is reminiscent of the campaigns of Solidarity in Poland and Charter 77 in Czechoslovakia in the lead-up to the fall of the Berlin Wall. Fifty US members of congress recently signed a declaration supporting the Vietnamese declaration, and soon members of the Australian parliament will be invited to sign a similar statement. I would call on all honourable members to sign it and I would hope that we could get more than 50 members supporting the campaign for democracy in Vietnam. Other parliaments and assemblies have also signed the declaration supporting the call for democracy in Vietnam, as have members of the former Charter 77, which I referred to, including former President Vaclav Havel.

In November, APEC will be meeting in Vietnam. This is a major opportunity to highlight human rights breaches that are occurring in Hanoi and throughout Vietnam. Unfortunately, the Vietnamese government has cracked down on those 118 people and the hundreds of others who have since joined them who signed the declaration calling for democracy. Truong Quoc Huy was arrested in an internet cafe for participating in an online discussion on democracy. His whereabouts are currently unknown. Others have been placed under house arrest, they have had their computers seized and their telephone lines cut.

A few months ago, with the honourable member for Blaxland, I attended a function in Bankstown where there was a telephone hook-up with one of the Catholic priests who signed the declaration calling for democracy in Vietnam. It was a great honour and a privilege to hear him on the telephone. When democracy comes to Vietnam, as it will, 8 April 2006 will be seen as the turning point. I am glad that we are being joined in the chamber by the honourable member for Oxley. He is also a vocal supporter of democracy in Vietnam and I know he has been a supporter of the declaration of 8 April 2006.

There is an obligation on all of us who are elected democratically to speak up for those who have had their rights taken from them from by repressive regimes. This is the best organised and most potent campaign for democracy that we have seen since 1975. Economic reform, which the Vietnamese government have embraced, is not enough. They also need to embrace democratic reform. Those campaigners for democracy in Vietnam have the support and best wishes of all of us.

**McArthur River Mining**

Mr TOLLNER (Solomon) (9.52 am)—I rise today to pay tribute to a great corporate citizen of the Northern Territory. I am speaking about Xstrata Zinc’s McArthur River Mine.
McArthur River Mine need to be congratulated on the way they have conducted themselves over the past few years and, most recently, their efforts to expand their mine to an open pit. They intend to spend around $110 million developing that open pit mine. McArthur River Mine are a great creator of jobs in the Northern Territory and are a great supporter of their local community. They subsidise the community in a whole range of different areas. They put money into the health centre and the local school. They also fund the local recreation club and a barge service, which operates from their port, which is half-owned by Aboriginals. Most of the food and groceries are subsidised in the township by way of the McArthur River Mine. They allow the township to use part of the trucking service that brings in the food to the township of Borroloola.

McArthur River Mine have been, I suppose, somewhat controversial of late because of their plan to further develop the mine with an open pit and to divert the river some 90 kilometres downstream in an area that is dry for nine-tenths of the year. It is only at the height of the wet season that there is water running through that river. Needless to say, it has created some controversy in the Northern Territory. Opponents of the mine, led by the Northern Territory Environment Centre, say that the sky is going to fall in and the mine should not go ahead. This flies in the face of rational thought.

McArthur River Mine have put a huge amount of work into their environmental assessments, environmental impact statements and environmental reports, which are all publicly available. They are very open and accountable, and all of those reports can be seen at their website, www.mcarthurriver.com.au. It is certainly worth having a look at, because it shows the effort the mine have gone to to ensure the environment remains in pristine condition. They are a great company and I will be adding my support to their efforts—(Time expired)

Mr Allen Worley

Ms GILLARD (Lalor) (9.55 am)—I rise in this place on behalf of Mr Allen Worley, a pensioner from Victoria. Mr Worley sent me a letter he wanted delivered to the Treasurer and enclosed with it a money order for $51.40. Mr Worley wrote to the Treasurer:

Having witnessed your address to the matter of good citizens during your budget address rather than be damned by faint praise or grovel in gratitude for a pittance herewith find a money order to the value of $51.40 paid into my bank account by the government you so effectively represent.

The writer has engendered a life time custom never to accept demeaning, patronisation from any person.

Perhaps it is a personal trait that you cannot make that which may be regarded as an act of governmental good will without creating offence.

But then, it may be a talent after all, the government gets the money back, as was the case involving a cheque to the value of $300 regarded at the time as reminiscent of a bribe.

Having received that letter and money order from Mr Allen Worley, I did forward it, as he asked, to the Treasurer. It was delivered to his office on 4 September. In response, Mr Worley received a letter from a liaison manager with the Treasury, which stated:

I acknowledge receipt of your letters of 10 July to the Treasurer and 2 August 2006 to the Member for Lalor, Ms Julia Gillard, MP, concerning the one off payment to seniors in the 2006-07 Budget.

The Treasurer has asked me to thank you for taking the time to write and to advise you that he is unable to accept your money orders. Therefore, I am returning the money orders to you.
To that, Mr Worley’s reply, as recorded in a letter to me, received by me on 3 October 2006, is as follows:

Herewith please find letter and money orders returned by Comrade Costello (one of which was cancelled). Apparently he can hand out money on behalf of the government but cannot accept it on behalf of the government. That conundrum strikes me as somewhat curious—particularly as I thought it was his job.

It might also be an item of some concern for Australian taxpayers, who certainly think that Mr Costello does not mind receiving money from them. Mr Worley has taken grave offence at the demeaning payment forwarded by the Howard government to pensioners, and I wish to record his views in the *Hansard* of this parliament because they are important and I do not believe that they have been weighed with sufficient importance by the Treasurer.

**Mr Charlie Weir**

_Mrs GASH_ (Gilmore) (9.58 am)—Charlie Weir is a constituent of mine. He is 78 years old, an ex-fisherman and now vice-president of Shoalhaven Riverwatch and a dedicated champion for the protection of the once mighty Shoalhaven River. I say ‘once mighty’ because, through the New South Wales government, the river is being plundered to supplement Sydney’s water supply—which is being supplemented in this way because there has been inadequate planning to cater for increased water demand by the Sydney metropolitan area. Charlie says that the river is slowly dying. Let me quote his words:

A lot of the fish have gone. We have got no prawns left. They have gone. This was the greatest river in the South Coast once for prawns. I have had a lot of experience—78 years of it—with my dad up and down the river. I can see what is happening and nobody will take notice.

The New South Wales government is certainly taking no notice of Charlie or Shoalhaven residents. I am not suggesting that the New South Wales government have been the sole contributor to the degradation of the river, but they have been the most significant contributor. Human habitation over the years has meant that the river has suffered a dramatic decrease in freshwater flow downstream, particularly since Tallowa Dam was built and during the recent dry spell.

Riverwatch have been involved in remedial and stabilisation work on the foreshores of the Shoalhaven River, but they are facing a mammoth task in the face of the last decree from the state government that they intend to pump even more water out of the river. This can only be an intermediate solution, for if global warming starts to take its toll there will be less and less fresh water to sustain the ecology of the river in the years to come. The *Sydney Morning Herald* wrote two years ago:

_Sydney is facing unprecedented demand for water, with people using more, while rivers face ecological disaster unless more water is returned to them._

The article went on to emphasise the need for improved water efficiency standards, but instead the New South Wales government has taken the easy way out, deciding to draw off another water system. This cannot go on.

I must say I am disappointed by the silence of our state member for Kiama, Matt Brown, whose new electoral boundaries will be bordered by the river. Mr Brown is a junior minister in the Iemma government and he is well positioned to protest effectively at the policies of his own government and to stick up for the people of the Shoalhaven. Instead he is silent. His
silence is tantamount to an endorsement of the policy of pillaging advocated by the government of which he is a member. It is a shameful response and I wonder how he can claim to be representing his new constituency by allowing this to go on without a whimper of protest.

The Sydney Morning Herald also ran an article headlined ‘Sydney’s great river robbery’, which was about how the government continues to draw more and more water out of the Shoalhaven River. The article stated:

The state Government published a discussion paper detailing its plan to pump as much as 105 billion litres a year from the river, scrapping the system of only using Shoalhaven water in drought.

This is 10 per cent of the Shoalhaven’s flows, although in most years only half this would be used.

I am not known for jumping into bed with greenies over many issues, but on this one I share the concerns of the Chairman of the Shoalhaven River Alliance, Mr Terry Barrett, that the New South Wales government’s plan to construct a pipeline from the river to the Sydney water supply leaves the door wide open for future exploitation. The state Labor government, despite its rhetoric, has a reputation for doing whatever it wants, despite community protest.

(Time expired)

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. IR Causley)—Order! In accordance with standing order 193 the time for members’ statements has concluded.

MARITIME LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (PREVENTION OF POLLUTION FROM SHIPS) BILL 2006

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 11 October, on motion by Mr Vaile:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr RIPOLL (Oxley) (10.01 am)—I rise to speak on the Maritime Legislation Amendment (Prevention of Pollution from Ships) Bill 2006. This bill will amend the Navigation Act 1912 and the Protection of the Sea (Prevention of Pollution from Ships) Act 1983 by implementing two revised annexes to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships. This is commonly known as MARPOL. The two specific annexes I want to refer to are annex I, the regulations for the prevention of pollution by oil, and annex II, the regulations for the prevention of pollution by noxious liquid substances.

The International Maritime Organisation, the IMO, adopted the revised annexes back in October 2004 and, like most international agreements, there is a long lead time before coming into force. In this case it will not actually come in until January 2007. This bill should commence on 1 January 2007, which will coincide with the international entry into force of revised annexes I and II.

Australia is a member state of the IMO and this bill is required under Australia’s obligations as a member. I believe there is certainly no argument from the opposition about the importance of these matters, as there should not be any from the government. This bill will pass through this House as a matter of course. It is important because it contains a number of significant environmental measures. It takes some sound steps in the right direction in terms of protecting the sea. We need to do everything we can to make sure we have legislation in place to protect Australia’s pristine coastal environment, our heritage and our wildlife. So I welcome this bill.
Revised annex I regulations for the prevention of pollution by oil incorporate the amendments adopted since the 1983 MARPOL agreement. These include the regulations on the phasing-in of double hull requirements for oil tankers. That is an important step forward. As we have seen historically, over time single hull tankers can weaken, break up and have mishaps, resulting in them losing their cargo, losing their load. Spilt oil causes environmental disasters, and we have seen many examples of that. Of course, the clean-up costs are often more expensive than it would have been to properly maintain the ship or to have had a double hull to start with. In addition under annex I, separate chapters have been created for the construction and equipment provisions out of the operational requirements. The distinction between the requirements for new ships and those for existing ships has been made clear.

The requirements in revised annex I include: firstly, for oil tankers constructed on or after 1 January 2007, a pumproom bottom protection on oil tankers of 5,000 tonnes deadweight and above; and, secondly, for oil tankers delivered on or after 1 January 2010, accidental oil outflow performance. Construction requirements for these tankers are to provide adequate protection against oil pollution in the event of stranding or collision. Both of these changes are a step forward in protecting the environment in the case of accidents. They are certainly a step in the right direction and are supported by Labor. We have a number of speakers on this bill who will be making these points and supporting that view.

Revised annex II, the regulations for the prevention of pollution by noxious liquid substances, includes a new four-category categorisation system for noxious and liquid substances. These new categories are categories X, Y, Z and ‘other substances’. Category X includes noxious liquid substances that, if discharged into the sea from tank-cleaning or deballasting operations, are considered to present a major hazard to either marine resources or human health. That is something that needs to be dealt with and done properly under these new categories. Category Y includes noxious liquid substances which, if discharged in the sea from tank cleaning or deballasting operations, are considered to present a hazard to either marine resources or human health or to cause harm to amenities or other legitimate uses of the sea. Category Z includes noxious liquid substances which, if discharged into the sea from tank-cleaning or deballasting operations, are considered to present a minor hazard to either marine resources or human health. The fourth category is classified as ‘other substances’, which includes substances which have been evaluated and found to fall outside the other three categories because they are considered to present no harm to marine resources, human health, amenities or other legitimate uses of the sea when discharged into the sea from tank-cleaning or deballasting operations. The discharge of bilge or ballast water or other residues or mixtures containing these substances are not subject to any requirements of MARPOL under annex II. So this covers the broad range of all circumstances in terms of deballasting operations and substances which may be bilged out from the ship into the sea.

We have seen many technical improvements in shipbuilding over many years. Some members and senators would be aware of a program that was on not too long ago showing South Korea’s shipbuilding operations at its Hyundai plant and some of the amazing technology and the systems and methods used in shipbuilding today. Technology has improved shipbuilding in incredible ways. Efficient stripping techniques have made it possible to significantly lower discharge levels of certain products. Therefore, this has been incorporated into annex II.
For ships constructed on or after 1 January 2007, the maximum permitted residue in the tank and its associated piping left after discharge will be set at a maximum of 75 litres for products in categories X, Y and Z. This compares with previous limits that set a maximum of 100 litres or 300 litres, depending on the product category. So this is a significant reduction. Depending on how you look at it, 75 litres is either a lot or a little. Depending on the type of substance, the type of product, 75 litres can be absolutely disastrous. Even at that figure we need to be cautious about what is discharged and the potential harm to the environment. It really does depend on the product. But 75 litres is certainly a lot better than up to 300 litres.

Alongside the revision of annex II, the marine pollution hazards of thousands of chemicals have been evaluated. This has resulted in a hazard profile which indexes the substance according to its bioaccumulation, biodegradation, acute toxicity, chronic toxicity, long-term health effects, and effects on marine wildlife and benthic habitats—the habitats of animals and plants that live on the floor of the sea.

So it is important to recognise that all these substances have been evaluated. There have been research and studies done in this area. While it is part of the International Marine Organisation—and Australia is a signatory—we should encourage other countries and the rest of the world to sign up to and adopt the same principles and make sure that we do not have repeats of the Ships of shame report and all those instances where rusty hulks are bobbing around our oceans, coming perilously close to our shores and often right into our pristine marine environment.

There have been some significant advances made. Obviously it is very important that the detrimental effect of substances are known so that we know at least how to deal with them. This certainly will assist, in cases of accidental spills, in knowing the requirements for actions that need to be taken. It will certainly make the clean-up process speedier, more accurate and more involved. It will also make it safer—something that may not be recognised—for the people who have to work in those environments if they better understand what the substances they are dealing with actually are and how to treat them. It will improve safety not only for the environment, marine life and a ship’s crew but also, in the case of an accident, for those people who are charged with the responsibility of having to clean up the mess. Such things as vegetable oils, which have previously been categorised as being unrestricted, will be carried in chemical tankers. The revised annex includes provision for the administration to exempt a ship certified to carry individually identified vegetable oils, subject to certain provisions relating to the location of the cargo tanks carrying the identified vegetable oil.

This is a good bill, supported by the Labor Party—a bill that is very much needed in terms of protecting our environment and our sea. I fully commend the bill to the House.

Mr MARTIN FERGUSON (Batman) (10.11 am)—I welcome the opportunity to make a few brief remarks this morning on the Maritime Legislation Amendment (Prevention of Pollution from Ships) Bill 2006. In doing so, I want to say at the outset it has the full support of the opposition. The bill is important when you think about my shadow ministerial responsibilities of resources and tourism and also in the context of the fact that we are an island nation and a trading nation. It is important for the environment. I might also say it is exceptionally important from a health and safety perspective in trying to further guarantee the safety of our Australian seafarers and international seafarers at work.
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The opposition therefore clearly states that it is a sensible bill. It is exceptionally important that Australia seeks to align our requirements with international obligations, as a member state of the International Maritime Organisation and as a party to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships. As we appreciate, Australia is one of 119 countries party to the agreement and stands alongside countries in our own backyard, including New Zealand, and also other great trading nations, the United States and the United Kingdom, in support of the protocol that seeks to minimise sea pollution through dumping, oil and exhaust pollution and to conserve the maritime environment, which is exceptionally important.

Oil pollution of the seas was first recognised as a problem in the first half of the 20th century. Globally we have come a long way in minimising our impact on the sea so that our ocean transport activities can be maintained at a sustainable level. The MARPOL convention is the main international convention covering prevention of pollution of the marine environment by ships from operational or accidental causes. History will show it is a combination of two treaties, adopted in 1973 and 1978 respectively, and obviously updated by amendments through the years, and I think we have debates such as this fairly frequently in the House with respect to our international obligations as a result of MARPOL.

Today the opposition stands in support of the two amendments of MARPOL by the IMO that were introduced in October 2004 and will enter into force internationally on 1 January 2007. In moving to support the bill I also urge that the bill commence internationally on 1 January 2007. The bill will incorporate the amendments into Australian domestic law, allowing Australia to enforce the more stringent technical requirements contained which aim to protect human health and the marine environment. This is not only smart environmentally but also good for Australian business.

Revised regulations in annex I and annex II include two important amendments: firstly, the phasing in of double hull requirements for oil tankers and the separation in different chapters of the construction and equipment provision for operational requirements. Together they are about further improving safety at sea and about protecting our environment. This is important in making clear the distinctions between the requirements for new ships and those for existing ships. Secondly, it incorporates regulations for the control of pollution of noxious liquid substances in bulk and features a new four-category system for noxious and liquid substances. The new requirements under the first annex include pumproom bottom protection of oil tankers of 5,000 tonnes deadweight and above, constructed on or after 1 January 2007. Essentially this means that the pumproom will need to be double hulled. Obviously we should have been thinking about this long ago.

The annex also includes updated standards on accidental oil flow performance and is applicable to oil tankers delivered on or after 1 January 2010, with construction requirements necessitating the need to provide adequate protection against oil pollution in the event of stranding or a collision. I believe this is an important amendment. The tanker industry and its seaborne transportation service of oil is a critical lifeblood for much of the world in satisfying its need for petroleum. Consequently the tanker industry has a unique global responsibility. Tankers account for about 50 per cent of all seaborne trade and transport approximately 50 per cent of the oil that the world consumes. An estimated 2.25 trillion litres of crude oil are transported across our oceans every year, in addition to 1.75 trillion litres of refined product per annum. This figure is likely to increase in the foreseeable future unless new sources of oil are
found within pipeline range of existing consumer markets or until alternative energy sources are found at a viable enough standard to replace fossil fuels. Obviously I think that something Australia has to think about, with a properly focused debate on alternatives to our reliance in the Middle East on oil. I simply say to the government again today, on the energy debate, that it is about time they got serious about working with the private sector to get investment in Australia so as to enable us to pursue the gas to liquids and coal to liquids downstream production process in a more serious way.

I am pleased to say that at least there are some initial investments starting to occur, such as the Monash investment in the La Trobe Valley and some small opportunities in places such as Chinchilla in Queensland. But not enough is being done by the Howard government in terms of the energy debate, and today’s debate on our reliance on international oil tankers again focuses our mind back on the issue of energy security at home, rather than Australia just being concerned with the energy security of Shanghai or Tokyo. It is about time we got serious about the energy security of Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Dubbo, Darwin and every other place in Australia.

Given all this activity and the hazardous nature of the seas, for those very reasons we have to have practical standards in place, and that is what this bill is about. It is about further improving the safety standards that Australia has historically been prepared to support, despite the fact that I continue to have serious questions in my mind about the government’s unwillingness to promote the Australian maritime industry and its too-ready acceptance of continuous and single voyage permits. That also raises questions about the security of Australia and terrorism and whether or not the crews on board some of these ships are being properly examined prior to them coming into port. These are serious issues which will be raised by a number of members of the opposition in this debate. With that aside, can I say that many in the seagoing industry accept that advancements made over the past 15 years, in particular, in the building, operating and maintaining of double hull oil tankers has made them considerably safer.

However, it is also important to note that the double hull tankers are only a part of the present-day operation of the forward-looking tanker industry. The picture also involves qualified officers and crews—something the Howard government forgets from time to time—dedicated shore staff, continuous training, information technology and a committed, transparent management team. These aspects of modern shipping sometimes escape the attention of people who tend to focus on only one aspect instead of considering a more global perspective—a whole-of-industry approach. However, as has been said on many occasions, a good ship with a poor crew is a disaster waiting to happen. And we have to be conscious of that as a nation—a nation that has historically prided itself on its ability to train locally Australian seafarers, not only for our own local trade but also for the international trade.

That takes me to the second annex, which reflects the improvements in ship technology such as the efficient stripping techniques which have made possible significantly lower permitted discharge levels of certain products, which are laid out in the amendment. The new four-category categorisation system has resulted from the evaluation of the marine pollution hazards of thousands of chemicals and the creation of a hazard profile which indexes the sub-
stance according to its bioaccumulation, biodegradability, acute toxicity, chronic toxicity, long-term health effects and effects on marine wildlife.

The opposition believes that this is an important aspect of the bill. As the shadow minister for tourism I want to stress today the need to conserve our marine environment through embracing and putting in place these new international standards. On that note I refer to the fact that, in 2004, a Queensland Tourism Industry Council report estimated that the World Heritage-listed Great Barrier Reef contributed in excess of $5.8 billion to Queensland’s $11 billion annual tourism budget. This is important, with growth forecast in the next decade ranging from five per cent to 10 per cent.

So these amendments are also about us protecting other export-earning opportunities for Australia, including the important tourism industry not only on the Great Barrier Reef but generally in Australia. It is not surprising that tourism is the largest commercial activity in the Great Barrier Reef. We all appreciate its international importance. For that very reason—just as an example—in 2005 there were approximately 820 operators and 1,500 vessels and aircraft permitted to operate in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. That is exceptionally important not only for employment in Queensland but also for international export earnings. It is an industry that was virtually non-existent in the area in 1950, so it has grown significantly over a very short period. I refer to a 1946 report produced by the then newly established Queensland tourism development board, which stated proudly that 5,000 visitors a year were visiting the group of Barrier Reef islands off the Whitsunday passage, already selected by the board as one of Queensland’s outstanding tourist attractions—so we have come a long way.

The number of companies involved in the industry at the reef, like the number of tourists, has increased dramatically over the years—from fewer than 12 operators in 1968 to 180 in 1987 and 742 in 1998. Similarly, there has been a huge increase in the number of visitors. In the early 1980s this was estimated at 150,000 visitor days per year—40 times the visitation of the pre-1950 period. In 1987, this had risen to 450,000, and 10 years later, 1997, 1.6 million visitor days were recorded. Last year the visitor numbers topped 1.9 million.

In raising these issues today I want to stress the responsibility of the Australian government and our state and territory governments for making sure that we are especially cautious when it comes to the seagoing industry around Australian shores, because just one accident can have a huge impact on the whole Australian economy—when you think about an accident that could occur, for example, off the Queensland coast. It is therefore clear that areas such as Queensland, in terms of tourism, have become key components of the economy, underpinning, as I have said, many jobs and enhancing the attraction of Australia to international tourists.

We also have to make sure we go out of our way to preserve our opportunities because the international tourism market is now very tough. Not only have we got problems on the domestic front; we are actually going backwards, unfortunately, in one of our very strong markets, the Japanese market. Obviously there is a growth in Chinese numbers, but there is a huge different between Chinese tourists and Japanese tourists. The Japanese tourists are high-yield tourists. They spend a lot more money. It is important, because obviously Queensland and our coast have been very attractive in the past to these high-yield tourists, that we preserve our coastal opportunities for the purposes of tourism.

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I simply raise these issues to again remind the government of why we must always go out of our way to be vigilant, not only locally but also internationally, to play our role in strengthening these international protocols. It is to our long-term betterment and economic prosperity as a nation.

In conclusion, I seek further feedback from the minister as to what stage the proposed ratification of the ILO convention on seafarers’ rights has reached. The convention was ratified by the ILO last year. It brings together a series of historically important international conventions going to the health and safety and the entitlements of seafarers. The Australian government voted in support of this convention. It represented the outcome of a lot of hard work by government, employer and union representatives. The government has previously given a commitment to pursue the ratification of this convention. I think it is important that it engages with the state and territory governments and employers and unions on this as a matter of urgency because that is the normal process for the consideration of ratification of ILO conventions in Australia. Just as we are embracing the amendments in terms of the protection of the Australian coast by the bill before the House this morning, I think it is imperative that the government seek the ratification of this workers convention with the support of employer representatives sooner rather than later. I seek information from the minister as to where that process is up to in his response to this debate. I thank the House for the opportunity to address this bill. It might not be seen to be contentious, but I must say it is exceptionally important to Australia.

Mr HATTON (Blaxland) (10.27 am)—I am pleased to support all of the speakers who so far have dealt with the Maritime Legislation Amendment (Prevention of Pollution from Ships) Bill 2006. I note at the outset, in the brief time that I have, that I went to consult the Parliamentary Library’s Bills Digest—always the best source of objective information about this—and I found that the only Digest I could have a look at was for the previous bill, of 2003, because the library is under a great deal of stress from the demands put on it to produce material for us to use related to this.

However, that Digest, the work of Angus Martyn, goes to the core of why we are dealing with this particular bill now, what generated it. And what generated it was that there was recognition that the sea could no longer be a dumping ground, accidental or otherwise, for massive amounts of pollutants. That goes back to the 1960s when the Torrey Canyon oil tanker was grounded in the English Channel. There were 120,000 tonnes of crude oil poured into the sea, causing massive environmental damage.

It is a result of that particular damage—and we have seen plenty of other examples since then on a massive scale—that MARPOL, the International Maritime Organisation’s International Convention for the Prevention of Marine Pollution from Ships, was incorporated. It has six different annexures. In 2003 an annex that had not been ratified domestically, or indeed internationally, was put before the House in order to try to kick along Australia’s participation within that.

What is important about this is that it is an international activity. Tanker operations are international in their scope. Their impact is felt on every corner of this globe, and deleterious impacts can be felt right around the shores of this continent. Those come not only from the things we are dealing with today—chemical pollution or pollution from oil—but also from other things that members are aware of. There can be not just noxious substances but also
noxious little beasts which enter our ecosystems, as they have done in Tasmania—the black-lipped mussel being one of those, I think. They can be easily carried in storage areas and, being carried in those storage areas, they are allowed to go out when the ships are being cleaned out and they cause massive environmental problems.

This bill is about international cooperation and putting a set of standards into place. The federal government is doing absolutely the right thing in saying that measures need to be taken with regard to two of the annexures of this agreement—that is, annexures I and II. Annex I seeks to put in place two forms of protection. One form of protection is absolutely fundamental, and that is double hulls. Why is that critical? We know from the Ships of shame report that having ships with a single hull and rusted hulks that were not looked after by the people who ran them led to a greatly increased possibility that if they were grounded or otherwise impacted upon there would be massive spillages of oil or other pollutants. That is the first measure that we are supporting here.

The second measure—as the member for Batman, the shadow minister, pointed out, it is probably something we should have got onto earlier—concerns pumproom bottom protection. On oil tankers of 5,000 tonnes dead weight and above constructed on or after 1 January 2007, the pumproom shall be provided with a double bottom. That is another area that has been identified as being fundamentally weak. Under this bill we will deal with tankers produced from now in one way—there will be a series of prescriptions in relation to them—and the ones produced previously will come under a different regime.

The second set of changes are also important. Annex II lists a range of noxious chemicals. Depending upon their nature and impact, they are dealt with in particular ways. There are categories X, Y and Z. There is an absolute prohibition on any of the X chemicals being discharged from ships because of the damage they could do to the marine environment or to humans. There is a sliding scale in terms of Y and Z in relation to the amount that can be discharged relatively safely and there is a catch-all beyond that. That catch-all goes beyond those noxious substances in the sliding scale to something as simple as vegetable oils. In the past, vegetable oils have been allowed to be ejected from ships. They have been allowed to be carried without any specific protection. The provision recognises that the sea should not be an accidental or deliberate dumping ground for our waste. Vegetable oils can have a dramatic impact on the environment and, therefore, they should be carried in the kinds of vessels that are appropriate for the purpose. So the containers should be the equivalent of the chemical containers that are used to run chemicals from one end of the planet to the other.

I congratulate the government on the technical measures contained in this bill and on being part of an international regime for standardisation of the carriage of these noxious substances. I also congratulate it on being part of an international attempt to not only get better standards and controls but also ensure that there is a greater understanding of the fact that the sea, despite its breadth, its depth and its capacity to absorb the damage we have done to it as a worldwide civilisation, is not just treated as a dumping ground, that it is protected from the products of our industrial civilisation and that it is allowed to be in as pristine a state as possible, and also a state where we can not only clear up the damage that has been done but prevent further damage in future. I thank the Deputy Speaker for his indulgence for staying in the chair so I could say a few brief words on this bill.
Ms HALL (Shortland) (10.34 am)—I would like to commence my contribution to this debate by thanking you all for your cooperation in allowing the member for Blaxland to continue to speak although he was due to take the chair. That was greatly appreciated by those on this side. I know how hard it is at times to organise the speakers panel and the speakers. We really appreciated your cooperation, and I want that placed on the record.

The opposition welcomes the Maritime Legislation Amendment (Prevention of Pollution from Ships) Bill 2006. It is legislation that will actually improve the situation in relation to protecting our waterways, protecting the sea and protecting the ocean from pollutants from ships—action on this issue that I think all of us here are very mindful and very supportive of. The bill will amend the Navigation Act 1912 and the Protection of the Sea (Prevention of Pollution from Ships) Act 1983, implementing two revised annexes to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, commonly known as the MARPOL convention.

Annex I looks at the prevention of pollution by oil and annex II looks at the prevention of pollution by noxious liquid substances. The International Maritime Organisation adopted the revised annexes in October 2004. Like most international agreements, this will have had a long lead time before it comes into force, and in this case it is due to come into force on 1 January. As part of Australia’s international obligation as a member of the IMO, it is necessary for this bill to pass through the House.

I always take great interest in legislation that looks at shipping and at preventing the pollution of our oceans. The Shortland electorate is a coastal electorate, so it is very vulnerable to pollution caused by shipping. I think that when we look at this piece of legislation it is important to highlight the fact that if we do not protect our waterways there is the potential to have some serious problems.

There have been many examples of our environment being damaged at times. Environments throughout the world have been damaged by pollution. In the past few years there have been many collisions. In the seven years preceding 2003, there were 35 collisions and groundings of more than 50 large commercial ships in the Great Barrier Reef and Torres Strait waters. Since 1995 there was the Corolla—which is a German ship—a Danish ship, a Panamanian ship, an Egyptian ship, an Indian ship, a Singaporean ship and a Malaysian ship. The Corolla had been responsible for pollution.

This bill has two annexures. Annex I looks at regulation for the prevention of pollution by oil and incorporates amendments adopted since the 1983 MARPOL agreement. It includes regulation on the phasing in of double hulls for oil tankers. In addition, separate chapters have been created for the construction and equipment provisions taken out of the operational requirements and the distinction is made clear between the requirements for new ships and for existing ships.

I believe that the phasing out and the phasing in of double-hull requirements for oil tankers is very important from the point of view of ensuring the safety of our coastline from pollution because it makes it much less vulnerable and particularly because we have many foreign owned and foreign flagged ships circumnavigating the coastline of Australia. These issues were identified in the Ships of shame report, which has already been mentioned in this debate, and also mentioned in the report of ICONS and then more recently in the Independent Review of Australian Shipping, IRAS, where they have been looked at once again.
The simple fact has been found that we have so many foreign owned ships that are flagged in one country, but often the captains of those ships come from another country and the crews of those ships come from yet another country. I have often used in this parliament the example of one of the ships that I visited, *Angel III*. It was a Maltese flagged ship, it had a Greek captain and it had a Burmese crew. This ship had a continuing voyage permit and it was constantly circumnavigating the coastline of Australia.

This legislation, which will come into effect after it passes through this parliament, should at least give us some certainty or put us in a bit better position when it comes to ensuring the safety of the ships. I am still very concerned about the fact that we are going to have ships of very dubious character with SVPs and CVPs circumnavigating Australia, but at least when we look to the future we can hope that the double-hull requirement for oil tankers will improve the situation, at least in that area.

I do note that there is a very clear distinction in the legislation between existing ships and new ships. So existing ships, such as the *Angel III*, will continue to circumnavigate Australia, traverse our waters, put Australian waters in danger of pollution and create situations where our Great Barrier Reef, one of our greatest tourist icons, is constantly put under threat. That ship can continue to do so, but the simple fact that we are signing up to this convention, which member states of the IMO are required to do, I think will improve the situation.

The new requirements in annex I include oil tankers constructed on and after 1 January 2007, but I do really worry how much longer those rusty hulks will travel around our coastline. This is the future. I think the government needs to think very seriously about the past and about delivering some safety to the Australian shorelines. It can do this by recognising the importance of the Australian shipping industry to Australia. Australia has been noted for its maritime expertise internationally. Australians working in the maritime industry are highly respected for their knowledge and their professionalism. Unfortunately, the Howard government has undermined the shipping industry, which provides jobs for Australian workers in an Australian industry.

Countries like the UK appreciate the importance of a strong shipping industry. It is important from the point of view of onshore and offshore activities, and considerable effort has been put into rebuilding the industry because of the benefit it provides to nations. The UK, the European Union and, for that matter, the USA have all recognised the importance of the shipping industry to their nations.

I hope that the parliamentary secretary who now has responsibility for shipping will really embrace all the issues and make a commitment to seeing that our shipping industry motors along as it is doing at the moment. She can be the person who is responsible for a growth in our shipping industry and for giving a real commitment to an Australian shipping industry, a real commitment to jobs and a real commitment to the future. By doing that, I think she will place herself in the history books as a person who has really benefited her nation.

Annex II deals with regulations for the prevention of pollution by noxious liquid substances. The revised categories are categories X, Y and Z—and I am not going into those categories, because previous speakers have done so. Other substances which will be evaluated fall outside categories X, Y or Z because they are considered to present no harm to marine resources, human health, amenities or other legitimate uses of the sea when discharged into the sea from tank-cleaning or deballasting operations. The discharge of bilge or ballast water

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or other mixtures contained in these substances is not subject to any of the requirements of MARPOL annex II. I add the quick comment that we always have to be careful of what we discharge into the sea.

Technological improvements in the shipping industry, such as efficient stripping techniques, have made possible significantly lower discharge levels of certain products and therefore that has been incorporated into annex II. For ships constructed on or after January 2007, the maximum permitted residue in the tank and its associated piping left after discharge will be set out as a maximum of 75 litres for products in category X, Y and Z.

Along with the revisions of annex II, the marine pollution hazards of thousands of chemicals have been evaluated. This has resulted in the hazard profile, which indexes substances according to bioaccumulation. These are significant advances. Vegetable oils, which have previously been categorised as unrestricted, will be carried in chemical tankers. I think members of this House would appreciate the reason for that and the danger that vegetable oils—oils of all kind—create for our marine environment. The revised annex also includes provision for the administration to exempt ships certified to carry individually identified vegetable oils.

In conclusion, I would like to return to the comments I made just a moment ago about hoping that the parliamentary secretary can be a breath of fresh air for our Australian shipping industry and will make a real commitment to the growth and rebuilding of it. In that vein, I would like to support the request that the member for Batman made about the ILO convention on seafarers. When will it be ratified? As you know, I am particularly committed to health and safety issues, and the health of safety of seafarers, as with other workers, is paramount in my mind. I think that it is very important to get all parties together and see if we can work on this and bring it into effect as soon as possible.

Mrs DE-ANNE KELLY (Dawson—Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Transport and Regional Services) (10.49 am)—It gives me great pleasure to sum up the debate on the Maritime Legislation Amendment (Prevention of Pollution from Ships) Bill 2006. In doing so, I would like to acknowledge the contributions from the member for Oxley, the member for Batman, the member for Blaxland—your good self, Mr Deputy Speaker Hatton—and the member for Shortland. Australia is a member of the International Maritime Organisation and, as such, we are party to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships with both annex I and annex II. Annex I deals with prevention of pollution by oil; annex II deals with prevention of pollution by noxious liquid substances. This international convention is commonly called MARPOL.

In October 2004, the International Maritime Organisation adopted the revised text of both of those annexures and they reflect the development of technical best practice in the maritime industry. Amendments to annex I include phasing in double-hull requirements for oil tankers and designating oil discharge prohibited special areas under that annex. For instance, it requires that tankers of 5,000 deadweight tonnes or more constructed after 1 January 2007 should have a double hull. There are also accidental oil outflow performances applied to oil tankers delivered after 1 January 2010 and there are construction requirements to provide adequate protection against oil pollution in the event of stranding or collision.

In terms of revisions to annex II, there are now four categories of noxious liquid substances. All of these apply to vessels which have tank-cleaning or deballasting operations.
Category X is deemed to be a major hazard to both marine life and human health and therefore the substances in this designation are prohibited from discharge into the marine environment. Category Y, again, is seen as causing a hazard to marine resources or human health and there are limitations on the quality and quantity of the discharge. Category Z presents a minor hazard and therefore there are less stringent restrictions on the discharge of those substances. There is a designation for other substances which are seen as presenting no harm.

There has also been considerable work done on preparing hazard profiles, which have enabled these categorisations. This indexes substances with regard to bioaccumulation, biodegradation, acute toxicity, chronic toxicity, long-term health effects and effects on marine wildlife and benthic habitats. As a result of these categorisations and the hazard profile, vegetable oil, for instance, which was previously categorised as being unrestricted, is now required to be carried in chemical tankers.

Many members have quite rightly touched on the Great Barrier Reef, which, of course, runs up and down the Queensland coast and is very near and dear to the hearts of many Queenslanders, who quite rightly want to see the Great Barrier Reef and other significant marine environments protected. I am pleased with the support the legislation has had from those who have spoken. The member for Blaxland—your good self, Mr Deputy Speaker Hatton—has congratulated the government on its responsible approach; the member for Batman has seen the legislation as sensible; and others have likewise supported the government’s initiatives.

The member for Batman asked about the progress of the International Labour Organisation convention on seafarers’ rights. He mentioned that the Australian government voted in support of this and asked whether we are in fact pursuing ratification and consultation with the states and territories. I advise the member for Batman that this is the responsibility of Minister Andrews, the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations. However, the government is aware of the necessity for a full consultation process including the states and territories and takes this responsibility very seriously. But that is rightly a matter that should be addressed to Minister Andrews.

In conclusion, I thank those who have made such a worthwhile and energetic contribution to this debate and assure the parliament that the Australian government is committed through this bill to ensuring that marine life is protected and human health is protected as well through these measures. I commend the bill to the House.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Ordered that the bill be reported to the House without amendment.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hatton)—Prior to going to the next matter of business, on behalf of all those present, I would like to welcome to the Main Committee today Mr Henrik Tvarno, Secretary General of the Folketing of Denmark. That is a wonderful name for the parliament in that country, and it is reminiscent of the very first parliament in Europe, the Althing in Iceland. Secretary General, it is great for you to grace the Main Committee today and give it more stature than it has. In concert with the Clerk of the House of Representatives, I welcome you. You know how important it is to provide the backup for parliamentarians to
do their job. We hope you enjoy your stay in Australia and your time in the House and the Main Committee.

Honourable members—Hear, hear!

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE AMENDMENT BILL 2006

Debate resumed from 9 October.

Second Reading

Mr NAIRN (Eden-Monaro—Special Minister of State) (10.56 am)—I present the explanatory memorandum to this bill and move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

This bill is to amend the Public Works Committee Act 1969 to alter the value and definition of a public work that requires referral to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works.

The amendments in the bill reflect the changes in the Commonwealth public works environment since the act was last amended in 1989. This was based on feedback from the committee and other sources on the practical operation of the act.

The amendments particularly take into account new methods of procurement and the increase in construction prices since the threshold was last amended in 1985. It has been a significant period of time since that threshold was changed.

The bill updates the threshold value at which projects must be referred to the committee from $6 million to $15 million. This reflects the increase in the cost of construction since the value was last amended in 1985.

The proposed legislation also allows for the value to be otherwise set by regulation. This provides for greater flexibility for future updates of the threshold value to accommodate future changes in the value. A regulatory regime will help avoid freezing the threshold at inappropriate levels, allowing for more regular adjustment.

The change to the definition of a ‘public work’ firstly clarifies that works funded by way of public private partnerships, or PPPs, must be referred to the committee. This reflects the current understanding that works funded through PPPs are implicitly covered by the act.

The amended definition of a ‘public work’ specifically includes those public works funded through leasing or other similar arrangements. These are often fit-outs of leased accommodation, which are included in the act. However, their funding arrangements caused them to fall outside the definition of a ‘public work’.

The revised definition does not refer to the specific funding methods. Instead, the characteristics of a public work have been amended so as to include these works. Two amendments have been made to achieve this end.

The first allows for indirect funding of the work. This covers, but is not limited to, deferred payment, payment through a PPP vehicle, or payment through leasing or similar arrangements.

The second removes the requirement that the Commonwealth or Commonwealth authority is proposed to become the owner of the work. Under either funding method, the Commonwealth or Commonwealth authority may not necessarily become the owner of the work.

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The revised definition does not extend to cover works that are not ‘for the Commonwealth’, or ‘for a Commonwealth authority’. An example of this is a pre-commitment lease, where the private sector constructs a building that is subsequently occupied by a Commonwealth (or a Commonwealth authority) tenant.

No other changes are made to the definition of a ‘public work’.

The amendment to the definition of a public work removes the requirement that the Commonwealth must become the owner of the work. However, in order for it to be a public work, the reason for undertaking the work must be that it is for the Commonwealth or a Commonwealth authority.

For example, a PPP will be undertaken for a Commonwealth purpose and simply represents an alternative procurement method. A pre-commitment lease on the other hand, implies that the Commonwealth, or a Commonwealth authority, will be the first tenant in a facility that is not custom designed for it. Pre-commitment leases differ from PPPs in that the construction of the facility is not predicated on the Commonwealth or a Commonwealth authority being a party to the contract.

Any works currently under scrutiny by the committee still require a report to the parliament, even if the amendments to the act would otherwise cause that work to no longer be covered by the act.

Finally, the language of the act is updated to reflect the modern approach of using non-gender specific terminology. References to the Minister for Housing and Construction have also been updated.

I commend this bill to the parliament. The changes that have been made are necessary. A good example of the need for the change to PPPs is the new Defence Headquarters, which is being constructed in my electorate, between Queanbeyan and Bungendore. This is the first PPP of the Commonwealth where construction is being done specifically for the use of the Commonwealth as opposed to not specifically for the Commonwealth. While it went through the Public Works Committee, it was necessary to make these changes for the future to include those various options. I commend the bill to the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hatton)—It is probably completely out of order but, as a former member of the Public Works Committee and current member of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, I would like to say these are very interesting changes that are very timely.

Ms HALL (Shortland) (11.01 am)—Unaccustomed as I am to speaking on public works legislation, I feel so passionate about this piece of legislation that I need to make a contribution to the debate. The Public Works Committee Amendment Bill 2006 seeks to amend the Public Works Committee Act 1969 to increase the threshold from $6 million to $15 million for works that must be referred to the committee. It also seeks to allow the threshold to be changed by regulation and it changes the definition of a public work so that public-private partnerships or similar arrangements and certain leases over the threshold are referred to the committee. This will capture works such as fit-outs funded through lease incentives.

The work of the Public Works Committee and the amendments do not cover large Commonwealth leases, which I think is fairly important, including pre-commitment leases on purpose-built premises. The proposed changes reflect changes in property procurement practices
since the act was last amended, in 1989. The threshold was last changed in 1985 and is too low. Six out of 17 projects since September 2005 cost less than $15 million.

The bill is unanimously supported by members of the Public Works Committee—and since there is a unanimous report of the Public Works Committee it is obvious that we, on this side of the parliament, will be supporting the bill. It has been developed after extensive negotiations with DOFA and it is consistent with previous administrative practices. It is also envisaged that the committee will write to departments so that works valued between $6 million and $15 million—that is, works on a medium scale—are notified to the committee.

The bill extends the Public Works Committee’s oversight of public works to include newer forms of public financing such as public-private partnerships and to cover works funded through lease initiatives. It also allows for resources to be better deployed and allows the Public Works Committee to focus on scrutinising larger projects, which is once again quite important.

I take this opportunity to emphasise that there has been an ideologically driven and less than rigorous approach by the Commonwealth in recent times towards disposing of assets. I actually do not believe that has been in the interests of the Australian people. The Auditor-General found that the costly sale and lease-back arrangements of Commonwealth property could—and I say probably would—result in a potential negative return to the Commonwealth in these lease periods. This is something that the government has to look at very seriously.

The Commonwealth sold 59 properties for $983 million in the three years to 2001. What I think is happening is that the government is hell-bent on divesting itself of its properties. It has been driven by the desire to sell all rather than by a rational assessment on a case-by-case basis of whether it is in the interests of the Commonwealth to retain ownership of these assets.

As passionate as I am about public works, I will end my contribution to the debate here. In doing so, I say that I support the amendments in the bill. Given the fact that the Public Works Committee unanimously supported the bill, I certainly agree with it. But I do have some concerns that since the Howard government have been in power they have divested themselves of Commonwealth properties. I question whether that is actually in the interests of the Australian people.

Mr FORREST (Mallee) (11.06 am)—I am really pleased to be able to address the amendments in the Public Works Committee Amendment Bill 2006 to the Public Works Committee Act 1969. Those of us who have been on the Public Works Committee have been urging reforms like these for some time. I am pleased because this debate gives us an opportunity to remind the House just how important the Public Works Committee is. Mr Deputy Speaker Hatton, I acknowledge your former role as a participant on the committee. I am speaking in this debate not just as a member of the committee myself but on behalf of our current chair, the member for Pearce, the Hon. Judy Moylan, whilst she is engaged in duties overseas.

Briefly, the Public Works Committee is one of the oldest investigative committees of the parliament, having been established in 1913. It cannot claim to be the oldest public works committee in Australia; that honour goes to New South Wales, whose Public Works Committee was established in 1888. Back in 1913 there was a clear and identifiable need for a public works committee. Joseph Cook, the then Prime Minister, informed the parliament that the

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methods for conducting public works policy were crude, inefficient and altogether inadequate for the purposes of securing taxpayers against loss and waste.

In those days, £3 million to £4 million was being spent each year on public works, yet there was no full or detailed investigation of the projects to which the expenditure related. Nor did the parliament know very much of the actual details of the expenditure, which in those days would have been significant sums of money.

The act of 1913 and subsequent amendments define the committee’s role. It is, firstly, to consider each public work that is referred to it and to report to both houses on the suitability of the work being undertaken, having particular regard to: the purpose of the work and its suitability for that purpose; the need for or the advisability of carrying out the work; whether the money to be expended on the work is being spent in the most cost-effective manner; the amount of revenue that the work will generate for the Commonwealth—if that is its purpose; and the present and prospective public value of the work. In 1913 that meant that all proposals for expenditure exceeding £10,000 were to be submitted to the committee for inquiry and report to the parliament. We have come a long way since then, when Prime Minister Joseph Cook introduced the act to overcome what was described as the chaotic state of our public works.

Thankfully it is not like that today: it is a great committee to work on. There is a very strong bipartisan will. Credit goes to the member for Gorton, the deputy chair of the committee, who inspires that spirit as we beaver away, in the interests of the generous taxpayers who provide the funding, to ensure it is being spent appropriately. The functions of today’s committee are still reflective of its antecedents. The public works now coming before it are much more sophisticated, more complex and larger in scale than ever before, with different procurement arrangements, which I will discuss shortly. Geographically, the spread of projects ranges right across the breadth of the Australian continent, in the territories and each of the states—Darwin, Central Australia, Western Australia and in the Antarctic and in other countries where we have embassies or high commissions.

The committee has looked at projects with a price tag of over $2 million and projects associated with Australia’s defence capability in excess of $400 million. To give an example of how hardworking the committee is, in overall terms, the committee approved expenditure of $990.8 million on 22 public works projects in 2005. Yesterday the deputy chair presented our 17th report for this year, so we are well on the way to meeting that huge target. This is a huge workload for the committee.

That leads me to the bill that is now before us in the House today. Its purpose is to amend the act to reflect the changes in the Commonwealth public works and procurement environment which have occurred since the act was last amended, in 1989. Over the many years since that early £10,000 was determined to be the threshold for the submission of public works proposals to the committee, there have been a number of adjustments to the threshold that reflect increased prices in materials and ancillary costs associated with the overall costs of construction.

To illustrate this point: in 1969 the threshold was set at $750,000, in 1973 it was raised to $2 million and in 1985 it was raised to $6 million. This bill seeks to increase that threshold to $15 million, which is an adjustment to encompass 20 years of inflation. The bill also provides for this figure to be amended by regulation in the future rather than by an amending act,
thereby providing greater flexibility for future updates of the threshold. I note that this has 
caused some concern and discussion because of the possibility that works below the threshold 
might not have the supervision of the parliament. I would remind members that the committee 
still has the right to make inquiry on an informal basis on any projects below that—in fact, 
even with the current threshold at $6 million, we still exercise some scrutiny of what are de- 
scribed as minor projects.

But, most importantly, in addition to raising the threshold from $6 million to $15 million, 
the bill changes the definition of a public work by clarifying that works funded through pub-
lic-private partnerships or similar arrangements must be referred to the committee. This is an 
issue which has occupied the committee’s activities for some time, as procurement arrange-
ments are changing dramatically in the modern world, with partnerships developing with pri-
vate enterprise.

Essentially, public-private partnerships involve the use of private sector capital funds and 
assets and are used more and more frequently in major infrastructure procurement arrange-
ments. PPPs, as they are often referred to, reconfigure the procurement process by placing 
emphasis on the service or capability that the public sector requires rather than the asset used 
to provide them. It saves the Commonwealth accumulating a huge amount of assets when 
really it is the Commonwealth’s purpose to deliver services. It has been an interesting period 
of inquiry for the committee as we have wrestled with these issues. This bill gives some cer-
tainty to us and to the proponents of projects about what everyone’s responsibilities are.

As part of the amendment to the definition of public works, the bill addresses the difficul-
ties which the committee has already experienced in addressing these anomalies. The amend-
ments that are contained in the bill, and which I have spoken to here, reflect feedback from 
the committee and other sources on the public operation of the act, especially as it related to 
these procurement arrangements. It is not just about construction costs and adjustment for 
inflation; it is also about giving certainty to the purpose of a standing committee of the par-
liament.

Finally, I want to conclude by complimenting my fellow committee members—current and 
former—particularly the chair and the deputy chair. It is a joy to work on a committee without 
the partisanship that often occurs on some committees. We are united in our purpose to ensure 
their money is well spent. The committee as a whole supports this bill and accordingly I commend it to the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hatton)—I thank the member for Mallee, effectively the 
unpaid engineering expert on the committee.

Mr Brendan O’Connor—There is a mistake on the speaking list. The name of my good 
friend the member for Corio is down but—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—Certainly, there can be no doubt the member for Gorton is in 
fact the deputy chair of the Public Works Committee.

Mr BRENDAN O’CONNOR (Gorton) (11.16 am)—Yes; therefore I feel it is my duty to 
rise after the member for Mallee’s contribution, to speak on the Public Works Committee 
Amendment Bill 2006. Before the member for Mallee rose I did hear you utter some concern, 
Mr Deputy Speaker, after the minister indicated the reasons for the amendment. I want to as-
sure you, as a member of the parliament and a former member of the committee, that these amendments are made to make the committee work better and make sure that we put as much effort as we can, in an effective way, into examining the way in which the Commonwealth spends money.

We now have a situation where, because of the $6 million threshold that was introduced into the parliament in the early- to mid-eighties, we are putting as much effort into examining projects that are between $6 million and $8 million or $9 million as we are into projects that are worth hundreds of millions of dollars.

As the member for Mallee indicated, we had, I think, 22 projects last year, many of which were in that $6 million to $15 million bracket. That is not to say that we should not be inquiring into those. Indeed, we will have the right, as they will be defined as medium works, to continue to inquire into those particular matters. But the fact is that, in real terms, a figure of $15 million for construction is less than the $6 million that was introduced in the mid-eighties. So you could say that in real terms we are reducing the threshold.

The reason we have had to do this is that the committee is—leaving me aside—one of the hardest-working committees in the parliament. It is not a sexy committee—it is not the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade—and it is not a committee that members are always clamouring to be members of, but it is one of the hardest-working committees. I include in that not only the members but also the secretariat and others who assist the committee, because it is a constant effort to keep on top of the workload. There were 22 projects last year and 22 occasions on which the chair tabled reports to the parliament for works undertaken by the Commonwealth. That workload has been increasing as the threshold in real terms has been falling—to the point where it has been almost impossible for the committee to continue its work, putting great strain upon the secretariat and, indeed, committee members, to ensure that they have sufficient members to inquire into these matters.

The strain on the committee is not just because of the number of committee hearings; it is also because of the travel required. Again, I know that some might think it a benefit to travel to what they think are exotic places across this great country to inquire into expenditure, but because our job is one where we are very time-poor in terms of allocating our responsibilities across the year, the requirement on members to give up so much time to travel means that as the workload grows there have been occasions when we have been unable to find the requisite number of members.

I understand that, on the face of it, people may have concerns about the proposition in the amendment before us, because there is clearly an increase in the nominal value of the threshold. But I want to assure members that the amendment arose from the committee’s own concerns. Indeed, the committee had a unanimous view that it had to be changed in order for us to effectively examine whether the Commonwealth was in fact getting value for money when expending the taxpayer’s dollar. It became obvious to us that we should not be spending so much time on small works when there were such large projects spending enormous amounts of the Commonwealth’s capital. I think this amendment will help us properly balance such needs in providing important scrutiny of expenditure from the Commonwealth purse.

While we should also support the other amendment that goes to allowing us to consider certain expenditures under lease arrangements, I should say that we did not go far enough with it. This is the area where I would disagree with the executive government. I am not sug-
gesting that members of the committee do not agree with what I am about to say, but unfortunately we were not able to secure an amendment that would allow us to look at the entire arrangements of these extraordinarily expensive leases.

The day of Commonwealth building, the day of bricks and mortar expenditure, is really over, so we are talking about lease arrangements. We are talking about public-private partnerships in which we can examine only such things as fit-outs, not the actual worth of the leases. So we could have a lease that has a $300 million or $400 million cost to the Commonwealth but we are not in a position to examine—in the same way that we would examine the construction or the fit-out of a particular building—whether that is value for money. I am not sure if there is any committee that properly does so. I am sure Public Accounts would have some capacity to inquire. Indeed, Senate estimates might be able to discuss expenditure that has occurred on a particular lease and examine that, but that is post the signing of the lease; that is after we have entered into a contract that may be for 10 years.

Our predecessors established the Public Works Committee in 1913, as the member for Mallee indicated, when the Commonwealth was building its own buildings. Given that era is over—as it has really been in the last 15 or 20 years that we have been entering into more lease arrangements—it seems important that the executive government allow a joint standing committee like Public Works to examine properly the lease arrangements in their entirety, not just the fit-outs that are involved in the lease arrangements. That would be an important thing for the executive government to consider. I know that the committee itself certainly raised our concerns about our inability to examine the large contracts that the Commonwealth enters into to lease accommodation, and I think there is some work to be done to ensure that those large contracts are properly examined by the parliament and not entered into only by the executive government. To that extent I think we still have some way to go.

To that extent I also support the sentiments if not the actual reasoning of Senator Murray, who spoke about the amendments in the other place. I do not agree with some of the points he raised but I think his sentiments were correct when he warned the parliament not to allow executive governments not to provide proper opportunities for the parliament to scrutinise the expenditure of the executive.

So there is some way to go and I think the government should seriously consider what we are to do with these lease arrangement contracts that are not being examined. It is not just for the parliament; it is also for the executive government. One thing about the Joint Standing Committee on Public Works is that, once Public Works approves a work because of an inquiry, we have given some protection to the minister or the department. Effectively, the minister can now say: ‘This matter was referred. The department did refer the matter to the Joint Standing Committee on Public Works. Public Works has inquired, has examined, has called for witnesses, has met on the location, has taken evidence under oath and has reported to the parliament.’ That provides protection to the executive government. So the executive government should not feel threatened about scrutiny. Indeed, they should feel that there is some benefit not only for the public at large, who want us to ensure that Commonwealth expenditure is being spent properly, but also for them.

That is the one caveat I have in relation to the amendments: they are not broad enough. They do go to the fit-outs of large leases, and that is an improvement; however, they have not gone as far as they should.
I also concur with the comments made by the member for Mallee in relation to the way in which the Public Works Committee operates. In fact, as a former member, Mr Deputy Speaker Hatton, I am sure you know that the committee is consensual by nature. I do not know when that began. I do not know whether, in fact, it has been partisan for periods of time and then on occasions consensual. It does not mean there are not times when people get a little nervous about particular matters and, of course, I do not want people to feel that any opposition member wants to play rubber-stamp to executive government.

One of the reasons why there is a consensual attitude on the committee is that it is easy for the opposition members of the committee to stand up to decisions of the executive government if they think those decisions are bad. It is harder for government members to do that, and I think the only reason why there is a consensual approach is that the government members—and I am sure that would have been the case when Labor was in government—are willing to stand up to decisions they think are wrong or do not fulfil the objectives of the Public Works Committee Act. Without the government members doing that, the opposition members would probably be less likely to work in such a cohesive and consensual way.

For whatever reason, it seems to me that the committee works together and has done some very important things, even in recent times. For example, the committee unanimously opposed the work of the extension of the Maribyrnong detention centre. It was a very controversial topic. The brief by the department was that the extension was to make the accommodation more humane. It was the unanimous view of the committee that the department’s own objectives would not be fulfilled. It would not make the Maribyrnong detention centre more humane, for example, it was going to increase the detainees accommodated in each room. I applaud, in particular, the chair and the member for Mallee, and all government members who felt strongly enough about it to make that decision to unanimously reject the proposition made by the department.

Whilst we did not end up with a perfect solution—with the committee refusing to accept the recommendation or the position of the department—there is no doubt that that construction was improved because the Public Works Committee members were willing to look at the objects of the project and realised that they were not consistent with the provisions of the act. That has ensured that detainees, if they were to be held in Maribyrnong detention centre, would be better off. That was exactly the department’s objective, but it was not coming through in the project itself.

One former member of the Public Works Committee has followed another into the chair. Mr Deputy Speaker Lindsay, you are a former member—it is a big club, the members and former members of the Public Works Committee—so you would be well aware that the committee works cohesively. In fact, I was recently in your electorate in relation to a project, and you spoke to the committee about that project. The committee travels a lot. As I said earlier, it is a very busy committee. We do tend to work together and that is important. In the end, though, we had to lift the threshold because, as I said earlier, the works were becoming unmanageable. It was important to adjust the $6 million threshold to take into account inflation. Along the way, we also ensured that fit-outs of lease contracts would also be under the purview of the Public Works Committee—and that was an improvement.

I will finish by repeating that, in my view, one further amendment is required. We need to broaden the Public Works Act to ensure that we have purview over lease arrangements that
are entered into by the Commonwealth. Sometimes lease arrangements run into hundreds of millions of dollars. It is therefore important that this proposition be incorporated into the legislation so that there can be proper examination of the expenditure of that money.

Mr SLIPPER (Fisher) (11.32 am)—As the honourable member for Gorton just mentioned, a number of speakers in this debate have been members of the Public Works Committee. I have not been a member of the Public Works Committee, but I have previously been Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance and Administration and, as the results of the deliberations of the Public Works Committee are moved through the parliament in that capacity, I am acutely aware of the bipartisan nature of the committee. I am well aware that the committee takes its work very seriously. On numerous occasions, I had discussions with, and correspondence to and from, the honourable member for Pearce, who was the chair of that committee.

I think the concept of a Public Works Committee in a democracy in 2006, in the 21st century, is very positive; it works towards accountability. Overwhelmingly, in my experience, the Public Works Committee does endorse the recommendations of the departments. Others might correct me if that is not the case, but that is my perception. Sometimes, however, caveats are placed on those recommendations—with recommendations for slight variations and, maybe, improvements. As the honourable member for Gorton said in reference to the extensions to the Maribyrnong detention centre, the committee might occasionally take a point of view that is different from the point of view the responsible minister would like the committee to take. In a democracy, if you want a committee system to work, if you do not want it to be just a rubber stamp for the government of the day, you have to allow committees to take evidence and then to deliberate on the issues they have been able to ascertain from their perusal of the evidence given. The Public Works Committee is entrenched—regardless of which party is in office, we will continue to have the committee.

I see this bill as being a very positive step, particularly in the area of accountability and transparency. There has been an increase in the amount of money—from $6 million to $15 million—that can be expended on a project before it is required to be considered by the committee. That is timely, and I might even say overdue. The figure of $6 million has been in place for some 20 years: $6 million 20 years ago would certainly buy a lot more than $6 million today. Maybe it would have been even better to index the figure so that it goes up in accordance with some particular index so that we are not in a situation of having to do this again. But I think in future it will be possible to vary it by regulation. That will be a flexible move which will mean that the committee will not be required to look at projects for which the expenditure is below the figure considered from time to time to be appropriate.

It is important to make sure that taxpayers get good value for money, and the Public Works Committee is a vital tool in ensuring that this occurs. Governments are not immune to increasing building costs. Right around the country building costs constantly go up, including in the domestic sector. For instance, on the Sunshine Coast, seven or eight years ago the average price of a home was $167,038, whereas today it is $436,429—a huge increase, partly caused by inflation, partly for other reasons. Governments are not immune to these increases. Consequently it is important to increase the figure from $6 million to $15 million, because that is the appropriate level of expenditure on a project for consideration by a parliamentary commit-
and also for the reason the previous member articulated, namely, that the workload of the Public Works Committee was becoming almost unmanageable.

The Public Works Committee Amendment Bill 2006 takes into account that there are many factors that influence prices and also the reality that prices do in fact increase. The committee is governed by the Public Works Committee Act 1969, which states that all public works projects for the Commonwealth which are valued at more than $6 million must be referred to the committee for its perusal. Projects that must be referred to the committee are those sponsored by Australian government departments and major statutory bodies. The projects are referred either by His Excellency the Governor-General or by the House of the parliament. In my capacity as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance and Administration, I often used to refer projects to the Public Works Committee on behalf of the government.

As I said before, this bill increases the threshold from $6 million to $15 million, increasing that figure after a period of 20 years. This new figure was selected after referring to the increase in construction prices and the figure has been agreed by all ministers with an interest in public works. Implementing this change will help reduce the compliance cost of those projects costing between $6 million and $15 million.

I think most people in the Australian community would accept that, as these projects are constructed using public money, it is important that they be properly scrutinised. So the committee is empowered, under the act, to investigate and assess the projects in various areas, including the need for the work, its effectiveness in meeting that need and the cost-effectiveness of the project. If it is a revenue-raising venture, the committee can investigate and make a determination as to whether the project will raise the projected revenue. The committee can also investigate and assess the value of the finished work.

Mr Deputy Speaker Lindsay, you will be well aware that the bill will also help to streamline the operations of the committee and the act by amending the definition of public works to include those projects that are co-funded by a private company. In Australia, and I suspect in other jurisdictions around the world, this practice is becoming increasingly common. The bill will insert provisions into the act that will enable the threshold of the committee to be varied by regulation—and I alluded to that before—and that gives a flexibility that has not been available for the last 20 years.

The draftsmen of the bill will use its passing to correct a past oversight and to insert gender neutral language into the act. I have to say I do not necessarily agree with this modern drafting tendency whereby the thought police are out there marauding through the legislation of this nation and taking out words like ‘chairman’, which are not sexist terms, because ‘man’ comes from ‘manus’, the hand, the Latin. It is not male; it is the hand that guides the chair. I just think that it is a pity in 2006—

Mr Randall interjecting—

Mr SLIPPER—I hear the point of view of the honourable member for Canning.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Lindsay)—The honourable member for Canning will withdraw that statement.

Mr SLIPPER—I will leave that between you, Mr Deputy Speaker, and the honourable member! Having said that, I just think it is a bit unfortunate that political correctness forces us to butcher the language and we are introducing so-called gender neutral language into the act...
when the existing language, by historical definition, was gender neutral anyway. I think that is regrettable. But I suspect that is not a battle I am going to win.

Mr Randall—You digress.

Mr SLIPPER—No, I do not digress at all, because part of this bill, through changes to the act, is to insert what people consider to be gender neutral language, presumably to replace the so-called sexist language that was there before. What I am saying, and the point that I am articulating—I think rather well, Mr Deputy Speaker, if I say so myself—is that I do not see the language that is being replaced as being sexist. But, having said that, that is not a battle that I am going to win right now, so I suppose there is no point in detaining the committee any further.

This bill improves the function of one of the longest-established investigative committees in parliament. It was established way back in 1915. I suppose when it was established in 1915 that would have been seen as a very far-sighted step, because in 1915 I think the couple of levels of accountability and transparency that we would today accept as the norm certainly would not have been as well entrenched. This bill will ensure that the Public Works Committee can continue to perform its work effectively and efficiently. I am very pleased to commend the bill to the chamber.

Mr JENKINS (Scullin) (11.42 am)—Mr Deputy Speaker Lindsay, I am pleased to see you in the chair as chair of the proceedings of the Main Committee. I digress a little. I have one little postscript on my parliamentary history: I was the last Chairman of Committees of the House of Representatives.

It is a pleasure to be able to contribute to this debate on the Public Works Committee Amendment Bill 2006. As a member of the Public Works Committee in this parliament and in the last parliament, I have become aware of the good work that the committee does. I think all members would agree that there is a need for such a committee, and the fact that this is one of the longest-standing committees of the parliament indicates that. It is of particular interest to read the comments by Prime Minister Joseph Cook back in September 1913, because I think the principles about the work of the committee are still of relevance to our work now in the first decade of the 21st century. Prime Minister Cook, when debating the establishment of the Public Works Committee, said:

Huge sums are being and have been spent for years past without proper inquiries and without that information to which the House is entitled. No big public work ought to be undertaken until this House has passed judgement upon it. That is one of the prime functions of legislative assembly anywhere and always. Indeed, this proposition goes to the very root and basis of our system of responsible government and parliamentary control.

I know that the member for Mallee, who I think is the longest-standing member of the committee, or at least one of the longest, went into the history of the committee. It is interesting because it indicates the development of the national parliament. Being a committee that first met in 1915, it has a proud history of 91 years. Also, if you look at the work of the committee, it tells you something about the development of the nation. I am always amused to see the pictures of what may have only been a Senate committee that looked at the possible sites for the nation’s capital. It was the days of horse and buggy travel. It was the days of a different way of looking at one’s personal upkeep. There is a picture of the senators in a dam having their daily wash, which I think is intriguing and says something about the way that the nation...
developed and what we really confronted at the time. Those early members of the nation’s parliament were out and about inquiring into the expenditure of public funds.

The amending legislation that we debate today has some fairly simple but important purposes. It increases the threshold of works that must be referred to the committee from $6 million to $15 million. It allows, sensibly, that threshold to be changed by regulation. And it changes the definition of a public work to better reflect modern ways of delivery of those public works, especially public-private partnerships and the fact that it has been a conscious decision of government—and possibly governments—to use leasing arrangements in much greater terms. It is a fact that, within those leasing arrangements, it becomes a little unclear about the element of the public work of those leasing arrangements that should properly be something that is subject to inquiry by the Public Works Committee.

There is another thing that should be said about this legislation. As a member of the committee and as an opposition member of the committee, I think that it really is important that I acknowledge that the committee was, at every stage, consulted about the development of this piece of legislation. The history of the development is that the member for Fisher, as the then Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance and Administration, started off the discussion. Parliamentary secretary Senator Colbeck, of course a former member of the Public Works Committee, was also very diligent in the way that he made sure that at each step of the progress of this piece of legislation there was a very full and frank discussion with the committee. I would like to place on record on behalf of this side of the chamber that we appreciate that.

My partisan comment is that this has not necessarily been reflected in other aspects of the way in which government has developed committee systems in either this chamber or the other place. I should not be too churlish on this occasion but ought reflect on the true tradition of the work of the Public Works Committee. I think that is the very important thing that I have had the pleasure of noticing over the last two parliaments. From what I know of the work of the committee, this has been a committee that has gone about its work in a bipartisan way. I think that is reflected in that even some of those interests that are represented in the Senate that are not directly represented on the committee were satisfied after their inquiry and discussion informally with both sides of the chamber about the legislation, and they had no problem with its progress through the Senate. These are important aspects because often we have a view of the business of the Australian parliament that it is all about confrontation, but certainly a lot of things that are done in the parliament are done by consensus, by agreement, by people actually working together in the best interests of the nation.

Sometimes that means that the Public Works Committee, as an arm of the parliament, comes up with conclusions that run counter to the intentions of government. The other aspect of that is that, when that has been the case, in almost 100 per cent of cases, agencies that have suffered either minor or major criticism in public works reports have come back to the committee in the ongoing dialogue and discussion, and they have appreciated the opportunity of being able to do that with elected representatives.

This bill will put in place some measures concerning the way in which we look at public-private partnerships and an ongoing relationship at other stages of the committee. We have seen, on an informal basis, the first PPP that came before the committee, which the minister has a particular and special interest in. Again, the temptation is to be churlish and to be parti-
san about this project, but I will not, because the Headquarters Joint Operations Command at Bungendore was very testing—not just in a political sense for the member but testing for the Public Works Committee because it was an absolutely new form of delivery that the Public Works Committee had to get their head around. I think that the Department of Defence acknowledge that they are probably still getting their head around it. But we as a committee continue to get updates about the progress of that project.

Yesterday, one of the three reports that were tabled was on the LEAP facility, which is the on-base living quarters of defence, which will be delivered in a public-private partnership. This was a fairly detailed inquiry. Because of our experiences in the past, because of the Department of Defence’s experiences in the past, there was a detailed investigation of the proposal and, arising from that, a much better understanding about public-private partnerships—whatever one’s ideological bent about that is—once a decision was made to deliver it in that fashion.

I think that the committee is now much better placed to investigate those things. This piece of legislation will tie up the loose ends and that will make the process more akin to the way in which we have been able to investigate traditionally delivered public works. Certainly technology and management practices have changed with respect to the way in which a public work is delivered—for instance, the way in which a building is built. Previously, one could sit down very early in the investigation with definite plans. All the i’s were dotted and the t’s were crossed about what would be delivered. That has long been dismissed as a management tool in the way a building is delivered. Many of the decisions are made on an ongoing basis, so, at a very early stage in the project, the committee has a dilemma and has to make judgements based on what it has to investigate under the act. There has been this ongoing development of the way in which the committee goes about its work, and the cooperation that we have seen in the way in which the committee goes about its work has always been of great importance.

With respect to the investigations of the Public Works Committee, we identify those things that are properly in the public domain as part of the decision. Judgements are made about the stated purpose of the work and the suitability of the work. The Public Works Committee makes a decision about the necessity or the advisability of carrying out the work. The committee ensures the most effective use is made of the moneys expended in carrying out the work, and of course that has been crucial to the way in which the committee has had to develop its analysis of these projects because of the different ways of delivery. Where the work purports to be of a revenue-producing character, the committee also notes the amount of revenue that it might reasonably be expected to produce and the present and prospective public value of the work. They remain the core principles.

What this piece of legislation does is to look at the realities of the way in which, either by what is happening in the wider world in the delivery of public works or by conscious decision of the government of the day, the committee is able to do its work.

As a personal aside: what my involvement on the Public Works Committee has done is to make me appreciate the work of the defence forces. Regrettably, I cannot claim to have actually attended one of the public works being carried out in the fine electorate of Herbert but, under another committee much earlier in my life in this parliament, I did visit Laverack Barracks. I have to say I do not know why we were inspecting living quarters under the finance
and public administration committee, but we were. It was about 18 years ago. They were fairly primitive. I have been pleased to be involved in public works investigations that have been about the improvement in living conditions for the defence forces. Defence are one of our major clients, if I can use the term. They have developed a recognition of the importance of the public works processes in the delivery of their public works.

Another department that I might mention, because I think it is important because certainly the committee has been on their back, is the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs. They have most definitely of recent times indicated their understanding of their need to cooperate with us. Like a number of agencies, they understand there are a lot of informal processes about our work that are important too—the ability to come to us early in the putting together of a proposal and iron out any problems before they arise.

One of the important aspects of this piece of legislation is that it will modify the workload of the committee. One of the things is changing the threshold. The works that fall between $6 million and $15 million will be classified as medium works, where the committee looks at whether there is any requirement for our further discussion of the project. We will wait to see about the other item, because as members of the legislature we have to be vigilant to ensure that departments and agencies understand that the new definition of a public work will perhaps cast a wider net over those matters that should come before the committee. Having said that, I think that most agencies have erred on the side of caution and have brought to the committee things that might have been borderline under the previous definition and that are captured by the new definition. I think it was also reassuring that different departments and agencies saw the work of the Public Works Committee on behalf of the community as being very important.

Another thing that I think the parliament perhaps needs to look at, having now made these amendments to the Public Works Act, is making sure that there are not expenditures that fall through a gap between the work of the Public Works Committee and the work of the other committee that is probably relevant, the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit. Often there has been a point in a discussion of a public work where we have had to conclude that it might be outside the bounds of the Public Works Committee. It is often reflected that we think that that would be picked up by the operation of the public accounts committee, but I am just not sure whether anybody has ever done the work to step back and thoroughly match it up so that all forms of public expenditure, whether they be public works or other, are actually covered. That really gets back to what Prime Minister Cook said back in 1913 about the importance of proper inquiry.

I conclude with a minor comment. In the past I have had a debate about the derivatives of certain words and—through you, Mr Deputy Speaker—I indicate to the honourable member for Fisher that I will be doing some further research about what he says is the overzealous application of gender-neutral language. I have always referred to the chairman of this committee as the chair. At this stage I would like to say that the member for Pearce, as chair of this committee, does a terrific job. She is very fair in the way in which she allows the whole committee to have its say. She engenders a spirit of cooperation, and I think that has been very important in the way in which we have done our work. I have great pleasure in supporting the Public Works Committee Amendment Bill 2006.
Mr Nairn (Eden-Monaro—Special Minister of State) (12.01 pm)—in reply—I thank all members for their contributions to this debate on the Public Works Committee Amendment Bill 2006. Having listened to the member for Scullin, I am disappointed I missed some of the other contributions that also had some historical facts about the Public Works Committee. For his benefit, he will be pleased to know that the formal turning of the sod of the headquarters at Bungendore will probably be taking place next month, so that project is progressing.

Mr Jenkins—Although the turning of the sod at the intersection of the King’s Highway is a bobby dazzler!

Mr Nairn—I have never been a member of the Public Works Committee, although in my first years in parliament I would have liked to have been a member of that committee. It has always been a hotly contested committee to be on because it certainly covers a broad cross-section of Commonwealth projects. But I have appeared before that committee on a number of occasions with regard to different projects being proposed throughout my electorate.

In fact, it was the good work of the Public Works Committee that saw the sense of changing a decision—and I will add my one little partisan, churlish aspect to go with the member for Scullin’s—of the previous government on the location of the armaments complex. Rather than being in what was ultimately shown to be a silly location down in Victoria, it was established in Eden, which has proved to be an excellent location for the Navy for the storage of ammunition. It is an excellent project, just one of the many projects that have come along in the 10 years that I have been in this place and been looked at by the Public Works Committee. As he said, its members work extremely well together in looking at projects on behalf of the taxpayer, in looking, from the taxpayer’s point of view, at investment in capital works. Again I thank all members for their contribution to this debate.

The bill certainly makes a number of important amendments to the Public Works Committee Act. The amendments take into account changes in the Commonwealth public works environment since the act was last amended, in 1989, which is quite some time ago for that sort of legislation. The threshold value, as we have heard, will now go from $6 million to $15 million and the amendments will now enable the threshold to be changed by regulation.

The bill amends the definition of a public work to clarify that works funded through public-private partnerships—or PPPs—need to be referred to the committee. The amended definition of a public work also includes works funded through a lease or another similar arrangement. Taken together, these changes update and modernise the Public Works Committee Act, which governs one of the longest-standing committees of the parliament. I note that the changes have received the full support of the committee. I thank the member for Scullin in particular for his comments about the liaison between the committee and the parliamentary secretaries who have had carriage of this. I commend the bill to the House.

Question agreed to.
Bill read a second time.
Ordered that this bill be reported to the House without amendment.
Ms LIVERMORE (Capricornia) (12.06 pm)—It would be true to say that there is an air of the surreal about some of the things we debate in this House. Over my time here I can re-member things such as the Work Choices bill, which was all about taking choices away from workers and the fair dismissal bill—it was a beauty—making it easier to sack people. Now we are having a debate about the government’s skills package, which is a package of measures designed to address a skills crisis that, until very recently, the Prime Minister and the government were denying even existed. The skills package was released last week by the Prime Minister in the context of a skills crisis that the Prime Minister denies has been a problem for the country.

The Prime Minister is alone in that opinion, because everyone else has known for quite some time that we are in the midst of a skills shortage or a skills crisis—whatever you want to call it. Labor has known about it. Over a year ago we put out a substantial and comprehensive policy putting forward our solutions to the skills shortage to make sure that Australia has skilled and qualified people in its workforce to take our economy forward, to secure us for the future and to give people the opportunities to get the skills they require to meet their potential and to reach their goals in life, whether that be their career goals or their personal goals. So Labor has been talking about a skills crisis.

The Reserve Bank has been warning that the skills crisis will have impacts on the economy. The OECD has raised it as being a problem. Just recently, on 25 June, BIS Shrapnel put out their economic outlook, which also warned that a chronic shortage of skilled labour is set to act as a permanent constraint on Australia’s growth. And the list goes on. So there have been plenty of warnings to the government about the shortage of skills and how it is threatening our economy, how it is putting pressure on inflation and, correspondingly, how it is putting upward pressure on interest rates. We have seen three interest rate rises since the last election, when the government promised us just the opposite.

Labor has been warning about the skills crisis and we know very well where the skills crisis has come from. It has come from this government’s failure to invest in training and education. OECD figures have shown that Australia is the only developed country in the world that has actually cut spending and public investment in training and education. While the rest of our competitors—the rest of the developed world—have been upping investment in their people, upping investment in training and education to make sure they have highly qualified workers in their economy, Australia has been completely dropping the ball on that and dropping funding as well. Last week the government announced an $837 million package, but when you look at figures for VET funding for the last 10 years you see that it is really just putting back money that the government has denied the VET sector in their 10-year term in office.

You really see the government’s true colours when it comes to skills and training. First of all, they denied that a skills shortage exists. Now they are putting just over $800 million back into fixing a problem that they themselves created by the cuts to VET funding under their
watch since 1996. So this is really about fixing a political problem that the government created rather than any serious commitment to the training that Australia needs.

The government of course has had some policies on skills in this period of time. We had, at the last election, the Australian technical colleges. They seem to have completely dropped off the radar. As I was preparing for this speech, I had to ask myself whether any have even been opened yet. Has anyone actually enrolled in one? I think the technical college in Gladstone, not far from my electorate, has one student enrolled. Of course, even if that policy had worked to its full extent, we were not going to see any qualified tradespeople coming out of those colleges until about 2010, so it was hardly ever a serious response to the skills crisis. The other beauty was Minister Hardgrave’s proposal to build TAFEs in Africa as a way of providing skilled workers in Australia. So, really, the government is not serious about this.

The government’s real policy on the skills shortage in Australia has been to open the doors for thousands and thousands of overseas workers on 457 visas, and of course we have seen that used extensively in the meat industry, including in my own electorate. Some 270,000 foreign workers have been introduced into Australia on 457 visas at the same time as we have seen 300,000 Australians turned away from TAFE, thanks to the cuts to VET funding that I spoke about earlier.

In the time that I have left, I actually want to turn to a local matter. There is some very good news in this local story and some not so good news. The good news is that Moranbah State High School was last week named a winner in the Queensland government’s Showcase Awards for Excellence In Schools for this year. These are the state government’s highest accolades for state schools. Moranbah State High School, which is led by Principal James Sloman, won for their program called Different Pathways for Different Futures. It is just a fantastic program that the school has put in place. It is focused on years 11 and 12 and it is all about enabling young people to get to where they want to go. They identify in year 10 where they might want to go career-wise at the end of their schooling and the school then tailors an education program to meet their needs and aspirations. The school’s goal is for every student to leave with a certificate II or an OP of 1 to 15. Last year 82 per cent of students reached that goal.

There are three main parts to the program. There is a pathway for kids with academic goals in mind; there is a pathway with a focus on vocational education outcomes; and there is a pathway for those kids who are at risk of not having their needs met through the traditional schooling system. The academic program offers an alliance with the University of Queensland. There are seven students currently undertaking undergraduate courses, while they are still at school, through the University of Queensland—and teachers at the school volunteer their time to coach and tutor students doing those university courses. The second arm of the program is vocational education, and James Sloman, the principal, tells me that this is where the school really kicked some goals for kids. The school works very hard to align what they are doing at the school with what industry wants. Of course, when we talk about industry in Moranbah, it is largely the mining sector and associated industries that support the mining sector—heavy engineering and manufacturing businesses that are also set up in Moranbah.

The school works with industry to find out what specific skills industry wants. So it is not about very nebulous general work skills; the school really drills down to find out: what can we give you that you need in your business? A classic example that the principal mentioned to...
me was that the mining industry often wants people with competency in both metric and imperial measurements. That is something that you are not going to get in the traditional school program, but by working with industry they can really provide industry with students who have the specific skills they want. There is a real focus on school based apprenticeships and traineeships, which of course is a big part of Labor’s policy under our skills blueprint, and one in three senior students now do a school based apprenticeship or traineeship.

The school assigns study coaches to help students through the self-paced modules that are required under their apprenticeships and traineeships, and it also gives backup help with literacy and numeracy. The principal tells me he believes, on the information that he has been given, that the school based apprentices and trainees at Moranbah High School have one of the best completion rates of modules in Queensland because they have that support as they are working through the self-paced learning.

At the end of that, when they graduate from high school, these students are entering the workforce as second- and third-year apprentices. The school is working very closely with companies like Macarthur Coal, Anglo Coal, Rio Tinto and other smaller firms around Moranbah to give these students a real chance at getting a start in their apprenticeships and traineeships. It is the small manufacturers that have been taking it up, and the mining companies are now starting to realise that, if they want the best people, they have to start looking for these students when they are in grade 10 so they can get them started and on their way.

The other group is at-risk students. These are the students who have had high truancy rates or have been excluded from school. The school is offering a certificate I in work readiness for these students and working closely with a local registered training organisation to develop programs. It is also working with the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union, which has a very strong presence in Moranbah, to get these kids started in truck-driving courses or other work experience programs to make sure these kids see a pathway for themselves through training and education.

Congratulations to the school. I am looking forward to attending their speech night on Tuesday night. That will be my chance—but I also do it here in the Australian parliament—to congratulate the school on winning that very prestigious state-wide award for what they are doing for the students in Moranbah. The school now has a very low dropout rate. The school is very proud of the program that it is delivering and also of the outcomes that these students are achieving. I want to congratulate the staff at the school for their commitment to making that happen.

I now come to the not-so-good part of this story: the fact that the school has been trying for some years now to build a skills centre. It is a partnership between industry, state government and the Commonwealth government. This skills centre has been approved by DEST, but the school has had to go back to the Commonwealth government with an additional application for a greater amount of funding because of the rise in construction costs since their original application. Construction costs right across Australia have been blowing out because of the skills shortage—we come back to that—and nowhere is that more the case than in Central Queensland, where the resources boom is at its strongest.

The school has applied to DEST for additional funding to get this skills centre off the ground—a skills centre that, I might say, has already been approved by the Commonwealth government. I understand that there has been some delay in getting this final tick-off on the

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MAIN COMMITTEE
additional funding, and I am calling for the minister, Gary Hardgrave, to get onto this. Please, tick off this project: you have a school here that has just won a state-wide award for what it is doing in the area of vocational education pathways for students, with school based apprenticeships and traineeships. It has a program ready to go next year, working with students from right across the central highlands—places like Dysart, Clermont, Middlemount and Glenden, which are all in my electorate as well. It all rests on getting a skills centre built. The project manager is ready to go. The school has done what it needs to do. The state government has done what it needs to do. We are just waiting for the Commonwealth government to tick off on this money. I understand it is with the minister at the moment for that decision to be made, and there is some technical issue about where the delegation authority lies or some technical bureaucratic problem within DEST.

Minister, there is a skills shortage. There is a school that could be opening up fantastic opportunities for the young people of the central highlands and the mining towns. We need the skills centre. Let us get started on this: tick off the program and give the school the certainty it needs to start this project so it can be up and running in 2007. The minister talks about building TAFEs in Africa; all we want is a skills centre in Moranbah. It cannot be that hard.

But if we cannot get action from the minister he will certainly be hearing a lot more from me about it and a lot more from the people of Moranbah. They are very proud of what their school is achieving for their students and they do not want the Commonwealth government, which has presided over a skills shortage for the last 10 years, making the skills shortage in their part of Australia any worse than it already is. In closing, congratulations once again to James Sloman and his staff. I look forward to offering them my sentiments of congratulation when I see them at their speech night on Tuesday.

Mr MARTIN FERGUSON (Batman) (12.20 pm)—I appreciate the cooperation of the House in enabling me to make my full statement this afternoon by moving the adjournment debate out by five minutes or so. I say that because I think this debate on skills is exceptionally important. As the member for Capricornia has indicated, all around Australia, in our capital cities and our major regional cities and towns, we have a major skills crisis. It is about time we accepted that we do have a major skills crisis which is now a barrier to investment in Australia. Our real problem is that once you start losing investment it goes to other countries and it is then harder to attract it back to Australia in the future.

I therefore want to make a few remarks about the Prime Minister’s Skills for the Future package of last week. The Australian Labor Party has been banging on about the issue of skills for some years now. It is not a new issue to us. We have been championing for a long time the requirement for national leadership and action on the issue of skills.

Australia’s skills crisis is widely recognised as the largest problem facing the nation’s future sustainability on the economic front and its growth possibilities. Time and time again, the Reserve Bank of Australia has sung in tune with the nation’s top banks, which have identified the difficulty for business in finding suitable labour as the key constraint on output. It is across the whole economy—in the mining and resource sector, the energy sector and the service sector, for instance in hospitality. It is not confined to one sector of Australian industry or one state or territory or region of Australia. It is a national problem.

It is obvious to me from my shadow ministerial responsibilities that this is a problem that is prevalent in the mining and resource sector. I do not need to remind anyone in these sectors of
that. Just look at the wages on offer because of the skills crisis—the wages this sector now has
to pay to try to attract and retain people. It is actually adding to the cost of running a business
in Australia.

It is also an issue on the tourism radar and it has been there for some time. In tourism and
hospitality, it goes to the ability to service growth in the inbound sector, which is under ques-
tion due to labour shortages. It was only last week that the Australian Tourism Export Council
came out and said:

Tours are being cancelled—not for want of tourists but for a lack of drivers and tour guides.

Rooms in hotels and motels are being shut and investment plans are being put off. Hotels are being built
but the owners are facing the prospect of being unable to staff them ...

That says it all. We are losing business because we cannot get the workers to actually perform
the services required by tourists.

We also have problems in some of our major resource and civil engineering projects in get-
ting the skilled workers to undertake the work, with investment decisions having been made.
This is, unfortunately, at a time when industry has been enjoying reasonable prospects. But
now we have the prospect of not being able to fulfil our potential capacity, and that is the last
thing industries such as the tourism industry—which is struggling, domestically—need at this
point in time.

It is a nationwide issue that the government should have fronted up to long ago. I am
pleased that, in trying to at least partly confront this problem, the government has chosen to
turn to the Labor Party for some policy ideas. I believe it is a welcome U-turn from the Prime
Minister—a late convert to the need for skills upgrades—that they have actually decided to do
something about this crisis.

But it would be an even more welcome outcome if it were a serious package. It is typical of
the Howard government that when there is a problem they shove a few dollars on the table
and hope that the problem disappears. You now need a long-term strategy to overcome the
skills shortage that exists.

What the government has proposed is a start, but there is a hell of a lot more to be done.
That is part of the government’s approach when there is a problem: they spend a few dollars,
brush it under the carpet and move on to some other problem, if one arises; or, otherwise, they
go back to sleep at the wheel. That lack of government attention goes across a whole range of
sectors in Australia at the moment.

It is fair to say that some aspects of the package are comprehensive in their design, but it is
going to be hard to implement them in time to overcome the problems in the foreseeable fu-
ture. At the last election, we had the new techs. Based on enrolments today, we will not get a
tradesperson for another 3½ years. The cost per apprentice is $63,000 and we will not get any
results for about four years. That is the real cost of the Australian government’s tech schools
initiative so far—and there is a skills crisis!

Let us go to some of the issues. The package is obviously designed to sway the minds of
voters, not to actually solve the skills problems. The government is trying to look as if it is
doing something on the skills front when actually it is not doing anything. The government is
not doing the hard yards, getting its hands dirty and trying to work out, for example, how to
streamline the apprenticeship system in Australia. Do you do it trade by trade? Do you do it
on a competency basis? The government should investigate how to reduce the period of the apprentice, like the Victorian government did in the automotive repair industry in Melbourne. If you do your pre-vocational period of three months in years 11 and 12, you go into a shortened apprenticeship of three years with higher rates of pay—higher apprentice wages. The rates for each of those years are the second, third and fourth year rates. That is an encouragement for kids, some of whom live in a poverty-stricken way because of the lower wages historically paid to apprentices, to stay in their apprenticeship and complete it. One of the biggest problems is young people not completing their apprenticeships.

This is a start, but it is disappointing that the government has not done enough. There is $800 million, almost half of which will go into the training voucher, which is the government’s centrepiece. But the money allocated is spread over five years. That is $160 million a year. Not only has government got to do more; business itself has got to do more. All too often in the past, business has regarded training as a cost. I think it is about time they adopted a culture that training is an investment in their future. They should not have closed apprenticeship centres in the major mining towns, as they have done in the last 10 to 15 years. Now they are paying the price because of a lack of attention to detail by both government and business itself.

In announcing the package, the Prime Minister suggested that there is not a crisis. I find that an exaggerated and breathless statement. It is outrageous for the Prime Minister to assert, as he did in this parliament last week, that ‘some level of skills shortage was part of the healthy and dynamic labour market’. I simply say that we did not need to have this skills shortage. If the government had been attending to the detail of running this economy and investing in our future—and investing in our infrastructure and our skills base is what it is all about—we would not be confronting this skills problem at the moment and having to rely on section 457 visas to bring people from overseas whilst we fail to train our own. I am not just talking about our young people. Obviously, there is also the question of adult apprenticeships.

We have $800 million spread over five years in the lead-up to an election. I simply say, in terms of my shadow responsibilities, that I cannot see this producing the outcomes that we need. The package will, I think, be rushed in its implementation, because the government has failed to admit that there is a skills problem.

Let us go to the issue of the voucher system that is due to commence at the beginning of 2007. When you think about the detail of implementing the system, this does not leave much time for those implementing it—and, given the seriousness of the issue at hand, there is no room for error. It is reasonable to ask whether the package can be delivered as promised.

We also have to be careful in developing this package that we avoid some of the fly-by-nighters who always come in when there is government money on the table. All of a sudden there will be growth in the number of training consultants. If there is a voucher, we have to have a serious look at the quality of the training that might be delivered as a result of some of these initiatives. If we are going to spend taxpayers’ hard-earned dollars, we have to make sure that a quality product is delivered. This is not just about throwing a few dollars on the table 18 months from the election. This has to be a serious investment in overcoming our skills problems.

I am seriously worried about the potential quality of some of the providers that will be chasing these vouchers and trying to induce unsuspecting people who are desperate to get
some skills to enrol in courses that are not properly competency based and will not make them even more employable and advance their career prospects.

It is appropriate that the government does something, because the skills crisis is of its own making. In 1998 the government abolished the national skills shortage strategy. That strategy and that move coincided with the number of traditional apprentices in training falling to its lowest since 1972—a move that reflected the government’s attitude to education throughout its 10 years in government.

This poor track record was highlighted in a recent OECD report entitled Education at a glance. The report showed that Australia is the only advanced economy in the world that has reduced its public sector investment in education since 1995. The average investment level across the OECD was a 48 per cent increase, yet Australia’s investment was a cut of seven per cent. I simply ask: why is the government leading the nation in the wrong direction with respect to the issue of skills?

I turn to the opportunities for an additional 30,000 mature age trainees. This is a figure, however, that reflects only 10 per cent of the number of students who have been turned away from TAFE under the Howard government because of its cuts. These 300,000 students included some mature age workers as well as young Australians, all of whom want to make a contribution to our nation and improve their life opportunities. The package last week included nothing to help youth access apprenticeships, yet almost two-thirds of Australian apprentices are under the age of 25. There were no financial incentives for them to complete their training or courses. A report released into Australia’s TAFE system found that cost is a major deterrent to some people accessing TAFE courses. It then referred to the drop-out rate of 40 per cent because of those associated issues.

Alternatively, the opposition’s blueprint goes a long way to addressing the skills crisis. It refers to the proper creation of a skills account. It refers to completion payments and trying to assist apprentices—where some employers do not assist—with the cost of TAFE. Traditional trades underpin the Australian economy. Both domestic and international visitors in the tourism industry, for example, depend on a quality service delivered by well-trained people. Basic qualifications have to be the order of the day, as are experience, attitude and a willingness to decasualise industries such as tourism and hospitality to actually bring a greater sense of permanency back to the workforce.

It is about time the government did something serious about reviewing, industry by industry, the periods of apprenticeship training on a competency basis and addressing the problems that some apprentices face trying to live on the low apprenticeship rates that exist in Australia.

The tourism industry, as I have said, is an example of serious skill shortages, especially in small business and regional and rural based operations that are suffering—and those businesses are very important to the Australian community. I refer to a submission by Tourism Alliance Victoria to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Workplace Relations and Workforce Participation inquiry into workforce challenges in the Australian tourism sector. It highlighted a case study that focused on a small tourism business in the west Victorian town of Pomonal, near the Grampians. It detailed that the single biggest block to business expansion was staffing—another example of where we are losing business because we do not have skilled workers.
Today, the number of vacancies on Australian Job Search stands at 71,036; the food, hospitality and tourism sector accounted for nearly 13 per cent of those vacancies. A shortage of labour is the last thing the local industry needs, after five years of external shocks such as September 11, Bali, the threat of terrorism and the SARS crisis in Asia.

So the opposition simply say: it is about time the Australian government, led by the Prime Minister, John Howard, actually did more on the trades front. We need a productive Australia. We need a nation that is prepared to invest in education and skills training rather than regarding them as a cost. The budget process for the last decade has actually been very easy. There has been money available for these decisions. You have not had to find the savings. It was a question of choice. Cuts in TAFE expenditure and a failure to do something seriously on the apprenticeship front are now seriously hampering Australia’s economic future.

I say in conclusion that the skills package is a start. It is long overdue, it is not enough and it lacks real commitment to some of the other serious work that is required, such as shortening apprenticeship periods of training, based on a proper accreditation process, to guarantee that sooner rather than later we get the tradespeople in the field. We can therefore secure investment and guarantee Australia’s economic future. I commend to the House the opposition’s blueprint on skills training, because it is a more focused, practical endeavour to do something about the skills crisis. (Time expired)

Debated adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr NEVILLE (Hinkler) (12.36 pm)—I move:

That the Main Committee do now adjourn.

Adelaide Airport

Mr GEORGANAS (Hindmarsh) (12.36 pm)—I again rise to speak on behalf of the thousands of stakeholders living and working within the electorate of Hindmarsh. That includes the Netley residents group; the Southern Lockleys residents group; the Adelaide Airport Action Group, within Brooklyn Park, Cowandilla, Mile End and those areas; the residents association of West Beach; the Glenelg Residents Association; and the Henley and Grange Residents Association. Their purpose is the introduction of a mechanism by which people can have their complaints regarding airport development and noise heard by a person or body separate from the airports themselves and the federal Minister for Transport and Regional Services.

I have been campaigning with fellow residents on Adelaide Airport issues within Adelaide’s western suburbs for many years now, since way before I was elected. In fact, I was chair of the Adelaide Airport Action Group back in the early nineties through to the late nineties. At this point in our ongoing campaign, may I again say how grateful I am to the electors of Hindmarsh for entrusting me with the role of introducing our private member’s bill in the House of Representatives—something they have been advocating for a long time. The bill was to establish an airport development and aviation noise ombudsman. I was pleased to present that bill earlier on this year.

The nature of the private member’s bill is accountability. The bill’s purpose is to provide a power for complaints concerning federal airports and flights to be referred to and investigated by a totally independent umpire. These complaints comprise all manner of concerns of resi-
students and workers within the proximity of large metropolitan regional airports to do with flight paths, noise development, the use of airport land and caps on hourly movements and curfews.

We have in Australia an ombudsman for banking and financial services. We have an ombudsman for insurance. We have an ombudsman for telecommunications and others concerned with federal operations. We also have many ombudsmen operating at a state level, such as the Energy Industry Ombudsman of South Australia.

Australians now expect there to be an office detached from both industry players and the official machinery of state to which they can take their negative experiences, their complaints, within almost any given area of activity, and have them assessed fairly and impartially by a totally independent body. It is a system that people obviously have faith in, as shown by their preparedness to engage it. So should it be with this area of federal responsibility.

Adelaide Airport is smack bang in the middle of the federal division of Hindmarsh. It is like an island detached from the rest of the electorate. It is floating above and separate from the local and state government laws that apply to the rest of us. In this respect, it is separated from each and every person that lives in its vicinity and whose lives are affected by it on a daily—should I say hourly—basis, if not minute by minute, as planes fly over. Beyond the corporation which runs the airport, it is the federal Minister for Transport and Regional Services who guides what happens on airport land through the signing off of a five-year master plan. This determines what takes place at the airport in terms of development.

With this system, locals, including local councillors and state political representatives, are quite powerless, as the pen used to tick off any draft master plan is in the hands of the federal transport minister. Residents expect more than this. If you do not like what is proposed on a neighbour’s property, for example, you can object to your local council. If the decision does not satisfy you, you can then appeal it. There are mechanisms where you can appeal these decisions within local government and state planning areas. You can also object, as I said, through the state planning bodies. But that is not so with the airport and development on airport land. This is an inconsistency that needs to be addressed.

The best way I can help my constituents is to promote the introduction of a system for the resolution of complaints that the residents of Hindmarsh will find sympathetic, helpful and, most importantly, impartial and above reproach. A little fairness goes a long way and most Australians do not have a problem with it. Even Adelaide Airport Ltd have spoken in favour of the proposed airport ombudsman’s bill. So I call on the Minister for Transport and Regional Services to be upfront on this issue and to be seen to do the right thing for the people it affects most—constituents around the country in very similar circumstances to those in Hindmarsh. We need to keep the Adelaide curfew intact, ensure it is honoured and give residents a voice and some muscle within the system through an airport ombudsman’s office. Ultimately, whether or not the bill I introduced in this place earlier this year is prioritised by the government and irrespective of whether another private member’s bill is advanced in my bill’s place, even if the government does what may be the smartest thing and gets the Department of Transport and Regional Services to put their expertise behind the creation of an independent position, I call on the minister to support the— (Time expired)
Mr FAWCETT (Wakefield) (12.41 pm)—I rise today to draw the attention of the House to the small regional communities in the electorate of Wakefield. Like all communities, they have points that are celebrations; they also have points that are struggles. This week communities such as Farrell Flat in the northern part of the electorate of Wakefield are highlighted in the paper in South Australia. I was up there recently visiting the combined school of Farrell Flat and Mintaro, speaking with them about some of the programs they have and some of the reductions they have to have in how that school is running because of the changes in the community. I draw the attention of the House to the fact that these communities form part of the backbone of our economy in Australia, being regional communities that support agriculture. We need to look at every way that we can support not only the farmers but also, importantly, the small businesses that rely on the income from farms and the community infrastructure around that. These small communities are part of what makes Australia tick.

Wakefield is probably a good example of what is happening in the rest of Australia in that we have some pockets that are doing things very hard at the moment and some pockets that are not as badly affected by the drought. I think it is important to note also that there have been very effective partnerships between all three levels of government and private industry to support some of these communities. Some of the work, for example, is in places like Saddleworth, where we have put in the Rural Transaction Centre. We are also looking at online post offices in places like Auburn and Roseworthy. Roseworthy is another good example of where the three levels of government—Light Regional Council, the state government, the Australian government through regional partnerships—have worked together with private industry. Companies such as Amcor have worked with the community of Roseworthy to make sure that the facilities in that town not only cater for the expanding residential areas around the town but actually bring some character and focus back to the town.

Roseworthy Tennis Club, Roseworthy Netball Club and Roseworthy Primary School, as well as residents, have come together to work with the levels of government to bring about a new community facility opposite the post office and near the school. It has seen a significant investment—some $150,000 from the Australian government, $50,000 from Amcor, $50,000 from the state government and $20,000 from Lightons—go into transforming an area that was wasteland into an area that has playgrounds for children and tennis and netball courts, all lit and built to a high standard. That investment has also provided drainage and guttering and turned what was almost a hazardous area, low-lying, near the old railway station, into a very useable and functional focus for that community.

The Country Fire Service has commenced expanding and renewing its facilities, but I am disappointed to report that the CFS shed, although basically erected, is not complete: it has no floor, no office and no operational facilities. As they are coming into potentially one of the worst fire seasons we have had for a number of years, I call on the state government to expedite the finance that is required and to put the focus on the project management to complete that facility so that that community has the operational facilities it requires to effectively put country fire services into the region where they are needed to combat fires.

I want this House to be aware that country communities are still strong and resilient. As the example at Roseworthy shows, with the cooperation of all three levels of government we can help them survive. But many of them are doing it tough at the moment, and we need to look
collectively at the ways in which we can support them. I invite the state government to work with us, particularly as we look at the provision of rural financial counsellors in the electorate of Wakefield, where they have recently seen a drop in the number of those counsellors.

**Childhood Obesity**

Mr HAYES (Werriwa) (12.46 pm)—Childhood obesity has reached critical levels, with recent reports indicating that the prevalence of obesity has trebled amongst young Australians, and the number continues to rise. It is estimated that one in five Australian children are overweight or obese. The figures in New South Wales indicate that it could be as many as one in four. Alarmingly, one in 10 boys in year 10 has liver damage and one in five suffers from high blood pressure as a result of being overweight. Some experts predict that the current generation of children might be the first to die at an earlier age than their parents as a consequence of obesity.

This issue needs to be addressed. Childhood obesity is a public policy problem. Not addressing childhood obesity has public policy implications for our health budgets, implications for the Australian economy and potential long-term effects for the future. In many circumstances childhood obesity results in obesity in adults and, as such, places those adults at risk of serious medical conditions such as diabetes and heart disease.

Obesity is reported to have caused more than 100,000 Australians to suffer from type 2 diabetes, almost 380,000 to suffer from cardiovascular disease and 225,000 to suffer from osteoarthritis. Such conditions place considerable pressures on our health system and this, in turn, places pressure on our future budgets. Access Economics has estimated that the cost of obesity in Australia reached $21 billion last year, including a direct financial cost of $3.767 billion. Therefore, the public policy imperative of this matter is undeniable.

The Minister for Health and Ageing continues to neglect his duty to us and to future generations by persistently denying that childhood obesity is a real or significant problem. He has tried to tell the Australian public that it is ultimately a problem for parents. That is clearly wrong. In question time yesterday the minister was quizzed on his response to obesity in a series of questions from both sides of the House. We heard him wax lyrical about the government’s efforts to tell us about how much money has been dedicated to research. Research is fine, but, as the head of paediatrics at Campbelltown Hospital, Dr Andrew McDonald, has advised me, this matter should be brought to the attention of all policymakers. He says that, in the minds of medical practitioners, there is no doubt that there is a socioeconomic dimension to this problem.

Children from poorer families are more likely to be obese, because fatty food is cheaper. Accordingly, outer metropolitan areas of Sydney are disproportionately affected due to their relative socioeconomic standing. I am not critical of local parents; it is the nature of the problem. But, when family budgets are under pressure from rising mortgage costs, rising petrol costs and cuts to take-home pay, parents look to where spending cuts can occur. Unfortunately, food and the quality of food is one such area.

Having identified and understood the breadth of the problem, I concede that there is no simple answer. Much as with addressing a road toll, a suite of measures is required. Banning the television advertising of junk food is certainly a good start but, as the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported, the cleverest marketers will find their way around that. Other measures that
address the contribution of our lifestyle need to be encouraged. The proper resourcing of abstention programs at schools and, particularly, things such as Active After-School Communities programs is certainly also to be encouraged. Such programs should be properly resourced to encourage more kids to participate in healthy activity. *(Time expired)*

**In-Vitro Fertilisation**

**Miss Jackie Kelly** (Lindsay) (12.51 pm)—Every mother in Australia today has had an ultrasound at 18 weeks. It is a very much anticipated event, and we keep these little heat-sensitive photos in our wallets and show them to our family and friends. Science has determined that late-term abortions occur after 12 weeks, because a different and more difficult procedure than a curettage is required to terminate a pregnancy after 12 weeks. If a girlfriend has an ectopic pregnancy or a miscarriage at six weeks, we commiserate with her, we share her pain and we help her to grieve for her lost child.

Women do not grieve every month for each egg that passes unfertilised. Our husbands may think we do, or at least that we behave in a very strange manner, but let’s put that down to PMS and move on. Women do not usually check for a pregnancy until they have missed a period, which is usually about two weeks after ovulation or fertilisation. A woman who has undergone in-vitro fertilisation treatment may indeed experience grief at the first sign of a period, but normally somewhere between two weeks and six weeks our awareness of life, and hence our potential for grief at the loss of that life, is born.

So I am inherently suspicious of legislation that says fertilised eggs can be the subject of experimentation up to 14 days but not later than two weeks. It coincides with that two weeks when women are usually unaware of life and not at all likely to grieve for loss. There will be numerous scientific reasons why they say 14 days is best—and I am pretty sure that people will be back in four years saying, ‘What about four weeks?’ or ‘What about six weeks?’ and so on. In any event, somewhere between two weeks and six weeks a woman’s attachment to the life we have formed is created.

Unlike fathers, mothers are emotionally connected to their eggs and their eggs’ future. To collect IVF eggs is a very complicated procedure involving day hospitalisation. Most women I know who have undergone the procedure are hampered in the following days and at the very, very best are really restrained in their care for their children. In some cases they are bedridden. It is not like spending five minutes—or in some men’s cases 30 seconds—with a dirty magazine and a cup and then collecting $50 for the pleasure. In a more serious tone, it is really surprising actually the dramatic reduction in men’s sperm donations now that identification of biological fathers is a possibility, which shows how easily the mechanics of things can ignore the long-term feelings and emotions of us mere mortals—and I know that doctors think they are God. But those legal battles that these things create for custody and the like and that have occurred in the sperm area will likely follow in this area.

It will be the same, in this matter, if we go down the path of the legal loopholes created by the science of experimentation on female eggs. Can I demand, in my very best Jerry Maguire impersonation, ‘Show me the eggs’? I would expect that, when approaching a female patient for the very complicated and painful procedure of extracting eggs, every doctor’s proper counsel would be, ‘Do not undergo this dangerous procedure when there is no benefit to you.’ I know women who are desperate to have children and who have walked away from IVF.
when the complications and possible side effects of the drugs and procedures have been explained to them. So show me the eggs.

Will we have to make it an offence for a doctor to give a woman improper advice in this area—or will we have to mandate female doctors? How many offences do we have to create to go down this path? A number of offences have been proposed. These include placing a human embryo clone in the body of an animal, importing a human embryo clone and exporting a human embryo clone. Thank goodness those offences have been considered! But there is nothing about importing eggs harvested from women in the Third World. By creating a market for women’s eggs, won’t we see the exploitation of women in the Third World? Won’t we create a market? Exploitation will surely follow and the offences will keep piling up. (Time expired)

Health: General Practitioners

Ms KATE ELLIS (Adelaide) (12.56 pm)—I have raised the issue of GP shortages in Adelaide’s inner metropolitan areas in this parliament before, but there are now indications that the situation is rapidly worsening and becoming a critical problem in Adelaide’s inner north. Since September this year, the inner metropolitan suburb of Kilburn, which has a population of around 4,500 residents, has lost every one of its local GPs. The final doctor moved out of the area last month, resulting in every one of his patients having to register elsewhere—and some are still reporting to me today that they have been unable to find an alternative local GP to take them on.

My constituents in this suburb, many of whom are not wealthy, now have to walk or catch a bus out of Kilburn to visit a GP. For those with poor mobility, the elderly and those with long-term critical health conditions, this situation is extremely difficult to bear. Compounding this problem, last week I was made aware that the surgery in the next suburb over, Prospect, will be winding-up operations by Christmas, taking three more GPs from the broader area. Make no mistake: this will be a significant blow for the people of Kilburn and the inner north.

Seeing through the government’s spin on the GP crisis can be difficult, but people who live in these suburbs confront the reality daily. I have previously raised in the House the issue of Nailsworth surgery, in a nearby suburb, which could not attract a local GP to join the practice. The practice had approached an overseas-trained doctor who was ready, keen and willing to work, but the government, in what was revealed to be an unofficial policy, refused to provide the GP with a Medicare provider number simply because the area was inner metropolitan and therefore could not be an area of workforce shortage.

I advise the House that, as a result of this government’s conviction that the inner northern suburbs are adequately supplied with doctors, Nailsworth has now had to reduce the number of consultation hours it can provide each week because the doctors simply cannot cope with the demand without an additional GP. This is the reality.

The government was told about this situation—a doctor was ready and willing to work at the practice. But the Howard government knows that, if it were to admit that there is a serious
problem in the inner north of Adelaide, it would be admitting that the ill-informed policies it has implemented since coming to government have brought about a crisis in GP numbers that is crippling not just our regions and outer metropolitan areas but also the very hearts of our capital cities.

What is most appalling is that the crisis we face, which is now being denied and neglected by this government, was created by the Howard government in the first place. The government’s ill-conceived policies of cutting the number of GP training places has left Australia with a significant doctor shortage that worsens each year.

The situation in Adelaide’s inner north needs to be urgently addressed. We must not let what has happened at Nailsworth be repeated across the district. The remaining GPs in these suburbs are doing it tough and they need support in order to remain viable. This government must not stand in their way. I call on them to look seriously at the situation in Kilburn and the inner northern suburbs of Adelaide and to urgently declare the area a district of workforce shortage so that, to avert a crisis, we can ensure that the surgeries that do remain in the area can operate effectively—with access to overseas trained doctors when there are no local GPs to fill the vacancies. These are the measures that must be implemented now. But more needs to be done to prepare for the future.

The Australian Labor Party are committed to investing in more doctors and nurses. We are committed to working together with our state and territory governments to address these crucial issues. At the last election Labor promised to invest $1.5 billion to build Australia’s healthcare workforce. These are the sorts of progressive measures that we need to take into Australia’s future to ensure that this fundamental issue is addressed. We need the Howard government to get its head out of the sand and to act now to support the local residents in my community, and local residents in communities all across Australia, who are constantly struggling with this crippling doctor shortage.

Hinkler Electorate: Roads

Mr NEVILLE (Hinkler) (1.01 pm)—I would like to speak today for a short time on roads and to open my contribution by saying how happy and satisfied I am with the Commonwealth government and state governments’ equal contributions of $3 million to a road known as the Callemondah overpass in Gladstone in my electorate. Gladstone is a bustling industrial city and one of its bigger problems—and it is unfair to try to burden a rate base of 28,000 people with this problem—is to keep up with arterial roads. Gladstone exports 12 per cent of Australia’s exports by volume, and forcing the city to carry that infrastructure burden is quite unfair.

This road, which goes from Red Rover Road to Don Young Drive, goes across three train lines. It is an 850-metre bridge. One of those three train lines is the main north-coast line. Also we have there the Moura line and the Callemondah marshalling yard line. Before these works, heavy vehicles could wait up to 20 minutes to get across this triple crossing and at times some B-doubles practised the very dangerous stunt of weaving in and out of the boom gates. Of course that was okay if you had slow freight trains coming, but if the tilt train came racing around the corner at 100 kilometres an hour then you were in big trouble. So it took a great load off my mind to see this bridge opened recently by the then transport minister, the member for Wide Bay, the Hon. Warren Truss.
This comes as part of the Commonwealth’s concentration on very important roads in Gladstone. One of them is the port access road, known as route D, which was funded with $7½ million by the Commonwealth. We have also seen the widening of Landing Road and the work on another road to bring fuels and chemicals into the city by another route called the Calliope River road. We also have under consideration at present yet another one called Kirkwood Road. These are all important in the facilitation of industry and good traffic movement in Gladstone. I support all of them. I think they are all about safety and the civic amenity for people who live in the Gladstone area.

I also want to highlight today the need for another one of these roads. Over recent times I have concentrated a lot on getting the entry points into cities and towns along highways brought up to scratch. It is often in that 80 kilometre area as you come into a city that you have a lot of accidents. We have recently opened at Apple Tree Creek where the Isis and Bruce highways meet an $8 million overpass totally funded by the Commonwealth. That overpass separates the traffic on those two highways and will make that a much safer intersection. People who have travelled the Bruce Highway would remember that. There were a lot of near misses on the old intersection of that one. We have also improved the entry into the town of Miriam Vale, which is halfway between Bundaberg and Gladstone on the Bruce Highway. That was a $2 million job. It too made a much safer and better cambered road into the main street of Miriam Vale.

I would like to make a plea in this speech today that the Commonwealth, under its AusLink and national highway responsibilities, look at a new southern entry into the town of Gin Gin, also in my electorate. In this particular instance, the trucks come over a hill, go down the hill and then do a hard left or right turn into the main street of Gin Gin. Only recently two men were tragically killed there. On another occasion a bus overturned there, killing one of the passengers. This is another dangerous one. It does not come under the black spots program because it is on the Bruce Highway. I am meeting today with the minister on this particular issue. I think it is important to highlight in the parliament the need for us to be ever-vigilant, especially on the national highways, in making sure that the entries to these cities, where perhaps the attention factor of drivers has been reduced, remains the focus of our safety concerns.

Question agreed to.

Main Committee adjourned at 1.06 pm
Lender Mortgage Insurance
(Question No. 3428)

Mr Martin Ferguson asked the Treasurer, in writing, on 9 May 2006:

(1) Why has APRA ceased publishing statistics and profit/loss ratios on Lender Mortgage Insurance (LMI).

(2) How are profit/loss ratios for LMI calculated.

(3) What were the profit/loss ratios for LMI providers for (a) 1991-1995, (b) 1996-2000, and (c) 2001-2005.

(4) What was the value of (a) premiums and (b) claims collected by LMI providers for (i) 1991-1995, (ii) 1996-2000, and (iii) 2001-2005.

(5) What proportion of first home buyers used the first home owners grant as a deposit to satisfy the requirements of LMI providers.

(6) How many claims have LMI providers met in the past 5 years.

(7) How will APRA’s most recent changes to the capital adequacy ratio affect LMI providers.

(8) What is the expected impact of the removal of mono-line restrictions on LMI providers.

(9) How many LMI providers are currently operating in Australia.

(10) Which institutions provide LMI in Australia.

(11) Have there been any applications from intending new entrants; if so, how many.

(12) What is the Government doing about increasing competition in the industry.

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

(1) APRA has advised that within its Insight publication, it has ceased publishing separate statistics for Lenders Mortgage Insurers (LMIs) as a sector within Direct Insurers to avoid possible breaches of APRA’s confidentiality obligations. LMI data is included in the “other” category for assets, liabilities and the performance measure tables. However, mortgage insurance is still reported as a separate class of business in the revenue and expense tables.

(2) There are four profit measures published in Insight, calculated using figures reported in the APRA returns as follows:

(a) Profit from general insurance (underwriting result + investment income + other operating revenue – operating expenses) as a percentage of net premium revenue (premium revenue – outwards reinsurance expense)

(b) Operating profit (profit from general insurance – goodwill amortisation – income tax) as a percentage of total revenue (premium revenue + investment income + other operating revenue)

(c) Operating profit as a percentage of shareholders equity (average of opening and closing balances)

(d) Operating profit as a percentage of total assets (average of opening and closing balances)

(3) and (4) Current profit/loss ratios for LMI are not comparable to periods prior to 1 July 2002. At that time, APRA changed its reporting regime to a prospective basis which removed the unearned premium and deferred acquisition cost components of AASB1023 and replaced those with a requirement to provide for premium liabilities (PL). PL recognises claims that have not yet been incurred but are expected to be incurred over the remaining period of the current book of business. Premium income figures also changed as a result of APRA’s new reporting regime. Premium in-
come from that date needed to be fully recognised when written on a prospective basis from the date of acceptance of the contract rather than on an earned basis as required by AASB1023. This change increased premium income in comparison to prior years. The below enables calculations for each of the profit measures on a year-by-year basis to facilitate comparison. Data has not been provided for the 2002 and 2003 years as these figures are distorted by the one-off effects of change in reporting requirements.

Given the change referred to above, caution should be exercised when making direct comparisons between periods after and before 1 July 2002. There is a large negative incurred claims figure for the 2004 year which resulted from revaluation of the reserves created in 2002 and 2003 and which is not necessarily indicative of normal claims activity.

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<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gross Premium revenuea</td>
<td>65,023</td>
<td>62,831</td>
<td>54,101</td>
<td>27,327</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Premium revenuea</td>
<td>49,967</td>
<td>42,907</td>
<td>38,307</td>
<td>24,056</td>
<td>31,550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross Claims incurred</td>
<td>21,765</td>
<td>9,584</td>
<td>40,262</td>
<td>84,314</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net claims incurred</td>
<td>15,142</td>
<td>11,160</td>
<td>23,772</td>
<td>37,332</td>
<td>19,721</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(ii)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item (S’000)</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>1998</th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>1996</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gross Premium revenuea</td>
<td>170,762</td>
<td>108,222</td>
<td>81,261</td>
<td>38,879</td>
<td>68,106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Premium revenuea</td>
<td>120,885</td>
<td>82,010</td>
<td>60,102</td>
<td>29,740</td>
<td>56,880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross Claims incurred</td>
<td>29,087</td>
<td>17,021</td>
<td>20,261</td>
<td>14,567</td>
<td>50,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net claims incurred</td>
<td>21,928</td>
<td>12,451</td>
<td>14,225</td>
<td>9,098</td>
<td>40,566</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(iii)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item (S’000)</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2001</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gross Premium revenuea</td>
<td>716,549</td>
<td>565,848</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>224,710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Premium revenuea</td>
<td>584,767</td>
<td>464,404</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>167,128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross Claims incurred</td>
<td>110,547</td>
<td>-103,792</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>49,405</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net claims incurred</td>
<td>143,275</td>
<td>-87,337</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>43,121</td>
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</table>

*Premium figures prior to July 2002 are given on an earned basis.
<table>
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<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Profit from general Insurance</td>
<td>540,474</td>
<td>605,938</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>185,351</td>
<td>174,728</td>
<td>58,322</td>
<td>67,992</td>
<td>34,190</td>
<td>28,380</td>
<td>55,409</td>
<td>13,308</td>
<td>15,819</td>
<td>17,724</td>
<td>-8,909</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating profit</td>
<td>383,644</td>
<td>444,998</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>131,105</td>
<td>128,534</td>
<td>45,977</td>
<td>51,403</td>
<td>21,800</td>
<td>19,007</td>
<td>36,197</td>
<td>11,187</td>
<td>12,891</td>
<td>16,062</td>
<td>-12,204</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net premium revenue</td>
<td>584,767</td>
<td>464,404</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>167,871</td>
<td>145,313</td>
<td>93,776</td>
<td>62,666</td>
<td>29,740</td>
<td>56,880</td>
<td>49,967</td>
<td>42,907</td>
<td>38,307</td>
<td>24,056</td>
<td>31,550</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total revenue</td>
<td>783,441</td>
<td>616,223</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>250,296</td>
<td>245,013</td>
<td>109,972</td>
<td>114,853</td>
<td>58,415</td>
<td>95,661</td>
<td>95,306</td>
<td>43,831</td>
<td>61,578</td>
<td>40,896</td>
<td>49,465</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shareholders equity</td>
<td>2,862,433</td>
<td>2,153,160</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>921,354</td>
<td>667,097</td>
<td>522,529</td>
<td>417,795</td>
<td>346,200</td>
<td>288,470</td>
<td>218,189</td>
<td>157,943</td>
<td>177,532</td>
<td>144,825</td>
<td>88,830</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assets</td>
<td>3,960,309</td>
<td>3,306,354</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>1,828,267</td>
<td>1,370,215</td>
<td>1,055,092</td>
<td>750,199</td>
<td>584,268</td>
<td>532,260</td>
<td>440,399</td>
<td>404,213</td>
<td>376,158</td>
<td>262,497</td>
<td>190,503</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(5) This is not collected by APRA.

(6) This is not collected. APRA collects the number of open claims at balance date and does not indicate the level of claims met during the financial year.

(7) One of the main impacts of APRA’s improved capital framework for LMIs, which came into effect from 1 January 2006, is that LMI capital requirements are more appropriately aligned to risk. This will afford increased protection to policyholders. The framework also reduces inconsistencies in the prudential regulation of LMIs and authorised deposit-taking institutions, ensuring that similar risks are treated in a similar manner.

(8) The mono-line restriction has not been removed.

(9) There are currently nine LMIs authorised to carry on business and a further four in “run-off.”

(10) Those LMIs authorised to carry on business are:
- Permanent LMI Pty Limited
- PMI Mortgage Insurance Ltd
- Western Lenders Mortgage Insurance Company Limited
- ANZ Lenders Mortgage Insurance Pty Limited
- Westpac Lenders Mortgage Insurance Limited
- The Mortgage Insurance Company Pty Limited
- Mortgage Risk Management Pty Ltd
- Sunstate Lenders Mortgage Insurance Pty Ltd
- Genworth Financial Mortgage Insurance Pty Limited

The LMIs in “run-off” are:
- PMI Indemnity Limited
- Vero Lenders Mortgage Insurance Limited
- AMPG (1992) Limited
- Colonial Protection Insurance Pty Limited

(11) To date there have been no formal applications lodged by any intending new entrants.

(12) The Government aims to provide a competitively neutral regulatory environment which supports competition in the industry and between industries in the financial sector. Any new entrant would have to meet the same prudential requirements that apply to LMIs currently operating in the Australian market. These requirements provide for financial stability and consumer protection in the insurance sector.

Australia’s prudential framework aims to treat the same risks in the same way regardless of the institution or industry sector. Regulation should not artificially favour or disadvantage any particular section of the market—the same risks should be regulated in the same way regardless of the institution holding that risk or the type of instrument being used. As outlined in the answer to Question 7, under new arrangements, prudential requirements for LMIs are more appropriately aligned with the risks that they face and with other institutions with the same risks.
Connect Australia Expenditure Program
(Question No. 3479)

Mr Tanner asked the Minister representing the Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, in writing, on 9 May 2006:

(1) In respect of the $147.4 million allocated in 2005-06 to Connect Australia – Broadband Connect, what sum (a) has been spent, (b) has been committed, and (c) is expected to be unspent at 30 June 2006.

(2) What sum is committed or otherwise obligated for (a) 2006-07, (b) 2007-08, and (c) 2008-09 in respect of the Connect Australia expenditure program (i) Backing Indigenous Ability, (ii) Broadband Connect, (iii) Clever Networks, and (iv) the consumer information campaign.

Mr McGauran—The Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

(1) In respect of the $147.4 million allocated in 2005-06 to Connect Australia – Broadband Connect, $20 million has been rephased into 2006-07. The remaining $124.7 million was all expensed by 30 June 2006.

(2) The administered funding allocated for expenditure in (a) 2006-07, (b) 2007-08, and (c) 2008-09 in respect of the Connect Australia program is:


(iii) Clever Networks: 2006-07: $20 million, 2007-08: $32.5 million and 2008-09: $35 million; and

(iv) for the consumer information campaign, allocated as departmental funding: 2006-07: $4.053 million, 2007-08: $1.815 million and 2008-09: nil.

No 2006-07 funds had been formally committed or otherwise obligated by 30 June 2006 for Backing Indigenous Ability, Broadband Connect and Clever Networks. For 2006-07, $36,102 had been committed by 30 June 2006 for the consumer information campaign.

Australian Broadcasting Corporation
(Question No. 3488)

Mr Georganas asked the Minister representing the Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, in writing, on 10 May 2006:

(1) Will the Minister rule out the Government introducing changes to legislation that will allow the ABC to broadcast advertising.

(2) Will the Minister publicly release the report it commissioned from KPMG in late 2005 concerning efficiency and funding of the ABC; if so, when; if not, why not.

(3) For each financial year since 1996-1997, what sum has the Government allocated to the ABC.

(4) Is the Minister able to say how funding for the ABC compares to the public funding that public broadcasters in other OECD countries receive.

Mr McGauran—The Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

(1) The Minister has previously said that Government is not considering advertising on the ABC.

(2) The review was considered by government in the context of the 2006-07 Budget and contains information which is commercial-in-confidence to the ABC.
The Minister will consider releasing an appropriate version of the review’s findings, but no decision has been made about this.

(3) The total appropriations for the ABC for the years from 1996-97 are shown below. These figures include equity injections and grant funding for the ABC Asia Pacific TV service but exclude repayable loans.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996-97</td>
<td>$531.212m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997-98</td>
<td>$468.496m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998-99</td>
<td>$485.578m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999-00</td>
<td>$632.362m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-01</td>
<td>$664.230m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-02</td>
<td>$743.675m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-03</td>
<td>$794.113m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-04</td>
<td>$744.665m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>$775.712m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>$792.854m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>$822.677m (not including ABC AP TV grants which are still under negotiation).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(4) A report commissioned by the ABC in 2002 concluded that Australian public broadcasters ranked 9th of 17 OECD countries in terms of public funding per capita. A report by McKinsey & Co in 2004 found that Australia ranked 7th out of 12 OECD countries in terms of public funding for public broadcasting per capita.

Australia Council
(Question No. 3525)

Mr Jenkins asked the Minister representing the Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, in writing, on 22 May 2006:

What projects did the Australia Council fund in the Melbourne metropolitan area in 2005-2006 and, in respect of each project, what was (a) the expenditure on, (b) its location, and (iii) its purpose.

Mr McGauran—The Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

The Australia Council funded 365 projects with grants totalling $30,482,440 in 83 locations for a variety of purposes in the Melbourne Metropolitan area in 2005-2006.

A list of the expenditure, location and purpose of these programs has been provided separately to the honourable member.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding Board Or Section</th>
<th>Funding Program Or Grant Category</th>
<th>Location (b)</th>
<th>Purpose (iii)</th>
<th>Expenditure (a)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board</td>
<td>Out of Time - New Work - 2005/6</td>
<td>Footscray</td>
<td>Exhibition.</td>
<td>$13,370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board</td>
<td>New Work - 2005/6</td>
<td>Richmond</td>
<td>wurrburj’.</td>
<td>$18,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board</td>
<td>Presentation &amp; Promotion - 2005/6</td>
<td>Camberwell</td>
<td>To record, master, produce and promote CD.</td>
<td>$9,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board</td>
<td>New Work - 2005/6</td>
<td>North Melbourne</td>
<td>Creation of a new comedy show to be part of the Melbourne International Comedy festival, 2006.</td>
<td>$35,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding Board Or Section</td>
<td>Funding Program Or Grant Category</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Purpose (iii)</td>
<td>Expenditure (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board</td>
<td>Presentation and Promotion - Out of Time</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Vanessa Fisher and Jimmy Smith to travel to New York and present their work at Endangered Languages Initiative of the People’s Poetry Gathering, 2006.</td>
<td>$10,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arts Development Directorate</td>
<td>Industry Development - Multicultural Arts Professional Development</td>
<td>Carlton</td>
<td>Multicultural Arts Development Program 2006 and 2007.</td>
<td>$152,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arts Development Directorate</td>
<td>Kultour Multicultural Arts Promotion / Development</td>
<td>Fitzroy</td>
<td>Wang Zheng-Ting/ Mark Elliott - Tour to Hobart, Brisbane and Sydney - kultour 2006.</td>
<td>$17,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts Development Directorate</td>
<td>Kultour Multicultural Arts Promotion / Development</td>
<td>Fitzroy</td>
<td>Ajak Kawi - Tour to Perth and Darwin - kultour 2006.</td>
<td>$32,534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts Development Directorate</td>
<td>Kultour Multicultural Arts Promotion / Development</td>
<td>Fitzroy</td>
<td>INITIATIVES - POLICY - AMA - Core Support for Management and Administration of kultour.</td>
<td>$79,750</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arts Development Directorate</td>
<td>Kultour Multicultural Arts Promotion / Development</td>
<td>Fitzroy</td>
<td>Ajak Kawi Band and Drum Drum - kultour partnership with the Brisbane Festival 2006.</td>
<td>$27,213</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arts Development Directorate</td>
<td>Kultour Multicultural Arts Promotion / Development</td>
<td>Fitzroy</td>
<td>Opposite My House is a Funeral Parlour - Tour to Lismore, Sydney and Perth.</td>
<td>$25,400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Cultural Development Board</td>
<td>Key Organisations Triennial</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Key Organisations - a program promoting ideas, relationships, activities and policies, to further develop the CCD sector in Victoria.</td>
<td>$184,140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Cultural Development Board</td>
<td>Camden Head Pilot Station Residency</td>
<td>St Kilda</td>
<td>Camera operating and editing.</td>
<td>$14,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Cultural Development Board</td>
<td>Skills And Arts Development</td>
<td>Reservoir</td>
<td>A program of professional development that explores the uses of emerging technologies for the creation of new work for community celebrations.</td>
<td>$7,210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Cultural Development Board</td>
<td>Skills And Arts Development</td>
<td>Albert Park</td>
<td>‘The Art of Difference Creative Conference’ a series of professional development forums, presentations, workshops, performances and exhibitions by and for people with disabilities.</td>
<td>$36,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Cultural Development Board</td>
<td>Key Organisations Program</td>
<td>Collingwood</td>
<td>Arts program for at risk young people.</td>
<td>$91,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Cultural Development Board</td>
<td>Skills &amp; Arts Development First Timers</td>
<td>Cheltenham</td>
<td>Workshops and street theatre projects with disadvantaged young people.</td>
<td>$12,772</td>
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<td>Community Cultural Development Board</td>
<td>Presentation And Promotion</td>
<td>Collingwood</td>
<td>‘Human Momentum’ Commonwealth Games Cultural Program.</td>
<td>$23,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Cultural Development Board</td>
<td>New Work</td>
<td>North Melbourne</td>
<td>‘We Built This City’ - a major community theatre work.</td>
<td>$40,066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding Board Or Section</td>
<td>Funding Program Or Grant Category</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Purpose (iii)</td>
<td>Expenditure (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Cultural</td>
<td>Skills And Arts Development</td>
<td>Fitzroy</td>
<td>‘Emerge and Visible’ - a mentor skills development program.</td>
<td>$31,690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Board</td>
<td>Skills And Arts Development</td>
<td>Albert Park</td>
<td>To design, develop and distribute ‘Arts 4U’, an accessible and interactive advocacy and education package.</td>
<td>$31,562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Cultural</td>
<td>Skills And Arts Development</td>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>Training in theatre administration and production skills designed by and for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.</td>
<td>$17,270</td>
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<tr>
<td>Development Board</td>
<td>New Work</td>
<td>Prahran</td>
<td>‘Body of Knowledge’ - a photographic/text/installation work.</td>
<td>$44,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Cultural</td>
<td>Skills And Arts Development</td>
<td>Collingwood</td>
<td>A multi arts project through which the young participants will develop skills in writing, design, video and photography.</td>
<td>$49,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Board</td>
<td>Key Organisations Program</td>
<td>Lara</td>
<td>Program of training, workshops, performance events and community building with people with disabilities.</td>
<td>$60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Cultural</td>
<td>Skills And Arts Development</td>
<td>Brunswick</td>
<td>Storytelling and musical skills development of culturally and linguistically diverse communities.</td>
<td>$31,080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Board</td>
<td>Key Organisations Triennial</td>
<td>Fitzroy</td>
<td>2006 Program of Activities including work with Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities to create innovative artistic and cultural activities.</td>
<td>$80,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Cultural</td>
<td>Skills And Arts Development</td>
<td>Richmond</td>
<td>A-LURE™ - a project in which young people develop a range of creative, organisational and practical skills while creating an interactive video game and DVD artwork.”</td>
<td>$40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Board</td>
<td>Presentation And Promotion</td>
<td>Richmond</td>
<td>The design, production and promotion of a publication and DVD that showcase seven years of Visionary Images’ artwork and methodology.</td>
<td>$37,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Partnerships</td>
<td>Community Partnerships</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>for an arts-led civic engagement projects in five local communities - Generations 2006.</td>
<td>$230,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>and Market Development</td>
<td>International Visual Art Fairs</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>for Anna Schwartz Gallery to Attend Frieze Art Fair, London - 21-24 October 2005.</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division</td>
<td>International Performing Arts</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>Australian Art Orchestra to Kutchan Jazz Festival, Sapporo, Japan 30 July 2006.</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division</td>
<td>Touring Association Of Performing Arts Presenters (Apap)</td>
<td>Southbank</td>
<td>To support attendance at the Association of Performing Arts Presenters Conference, New York, 21-24 January 2006.</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding Board Or Section and Market Development Division</td>
<td>Funding Program Or Grant Category</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>Expenditure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
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<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Partnerships and Market Development Division</td>
<td>International Performing Arts Touring Association Of Performing Arts Presenters (Apap) INTERNATIONAL BOOK FAIRS</td>
<td>Southbank</td>
<td>To support airfare costs and freight costs.</td>
<td>$28,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Partnerships and Market Development Division</td>
<td>Association Of Performing Arts Presenters (Apap)</td>
<td>Southbank</td>
<td>For on the ground costs.</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Partnerships and Market Development Division</td>
<td>Southbank</td>
<td>Fitzroy</td>
<td>For attendance at International Reading Association Conference, Canada, 2007 and extension trip to New York; attendance at Bologna Children’s Book Fair 2007.</td>
<td>$4,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Partnerships and Market Development Division</td>
<td>International Performing Arts Touring</td>
<td>Southbank</td>
<td>Chunky Move - Joyce Theatre, New York, July 2006.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Partnerships and Market Development Division</td>
<td>Association Of Performing Arts Presenters (Apap)</td>
<td>Prahran</td>
<td>To support attendance at the Association of Performing Arts Presenters Conference, New York, 21-24 January 2006.</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Partnerships and Market Development Division</td>
<td>Marketing Skills &amp; Resources</td>
<td>South Melbourne</td>
<td>National capability-building program for small to medium contemporary Australian dance companies and independent dance-artists.</td>
<td>$56,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Partnerships and Market Development Division</td>
<td>Visiting International Publishers/ Presenters/ Producers</td>
<td>North Melbourne</td>
<td>Wesley Enoch to attend ITEM Annual Plenary Meeting, Utrecht, the Netherlands, 24-27 Nov 2005.</td>
<td>$3,048</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Partnerships and Market Development Division</td>
<td>Uk Strategy</td>
<td>Port Melbourne</td>
<td>Undergrowth Australian Arts UK 2006 - Helen Herbertson participation in Dance Encounters Event - Someplace, Wales, 2-9 July 2006.</td>
<td>$3,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Partnerships and Market Development Division</td>
<td>International Performing Arts Touring</td>
<td>Port Melbourne</td>
<td>15-minute showcase of Strike 1 Arts Presenters' Conference in New York 2006.</td>
<td>$7,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Partnerships and Market Development Division</td>
<td>International Performing Arts Touring</td>
<td>South Yarra</td>
<td>Post Australian International Music Market (AIMM) 2005 Touring: Kay Jamieson to Western Arts Alliance USA, 6-10 September 2005.</td>
<td>$5,451</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Partnerships and Market Development Division</td>
<td>International Book Fairs</td>
<td>Toorak</td>
<td>Jenny Darling and Associates - Attendance at Frankfurt Book Fair 2005.</td>
<td>$5,800</td>
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<tr>
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<td>International Book Fairs</td>
<td>Toorak</td>
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<td>$4,500</td>
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<td>Funding Board Or Section</td>
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<td>Location</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Partnerships and Market Development Division</td>
<td>Association Of Performing Arts Presenters (Apap)</td>
<td>North Melbourne</td>
<td>Coordination of Council’s presence at APAP 2006, 21 - 24 January 2006.</td>
<td>$85,860</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Partnerships and Market Development Division</td>
<td>International Craft Fairs</td>
<td>Springvale</td>
<td>Funding for Kirra Galleries to attend SOFA Chicago 2005.</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Partnerships and Market Development Division</td>
<td>International Visual Art Fairs</td>
<td>Caulfield North</td>
<td>As part of the IVACF Program, Lauraine Diggins to attend Art Paris in March 2006.</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Partnerships and Market Development Division</td>
<td>Association Of Performing Arts Presenters (Apap)</td>
<td>Southbank</td>
<td>Support attendance at the Association of Performing Arts Presenters Conference, New York, 21-24 January 2006.</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Partnerships and Market Development Division</td>
<td>Uk Strategy</td>
<td>Southbank</td>
<td>Tour of Lucy Guerin Inc’s to the UK.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
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<td>Community Partnerships and Market Development Division</td>
<td>Visiting International Publishers/ Presenters/ Producers</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Support to co-host welcome reception and seminar and project management fees.</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
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<td>Community Partnerships and Market Development Division</td>
<td>Major Festivals Initiative</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Major Festivals Initiative (MFI) 05-06: Melbourne Festival for Ngapartji Ngaparti for Melbourne International Arts Festival 2006 and Perth International Arts Festival 2007.</td>
<td>$368,869</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Partnerships and Market Development Division</td>
<td>International Book Fairs</td>
<td>Carlton</td>
<td>For attendance at Frankfurt Book Fair 2006 and London Book Fair 2007.</td>
<td>$5,150</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Partnerships and Market Development Division</td>
<td>Association Of Performing Arts Presenters (Apap)</td>
<td>South Melbourne</td>
<td>Support attendance at the Association of Performing Arts Presenters Conference, New York, 21-24 January 2006.</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Partnerships and Market Development Division</td>
<td>International Book Fairs</td>
<td>Camberwell</td>
<td>Attendance at Frankfurt Book Fair 2006 and Bologna Children’s Book Fair 2007.</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
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<td>Community Partnerships and Market Development Division</td>
<td>Uk Strategy</td>
<td>Balaclava</td>
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<td>$6,465</td>
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**QUESTIONS IN WRITING**
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding Board Or Section and Market Development Division</th>
<th>Funding Program Or Grant Category</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Purpose (iii)</th>
<th>Expenditure (a)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Community Partnerships and Market Development Division</td>
<td>International Book Fairs</td>
<td>North Melbourne</td>
<td>Spinifex Press - Attendance at Frankfurt Book Fair 2005 with extension visit to the York Festival and International Women’s Health Conference in Delhi.</td>
<td>$5,640</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Partnerships and Market Development Division</td>
<td>Strategic International Market Development</td>
<td>University Of Melbourne</td>
<td>Asialink Australia-Japan Visual Arts Exhibition Program 2006-2008.</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
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<td>Community Partnerships and Market Development Division</td>
<td>Uk Strategy</td>
<td>Balaclava</td>
<td>Undergrowth - Australian Arts UK 2006: Lynette Wallworth at In-between Time Festival, Arnolfini, Bristol, 1-12 February 2006.</td>
<td>$7,870</td>
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<td>Corporate Affairs Division</td>
<td>Council Events</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Sponsorship of the 2005 Helpmann Awards.</td>
<td>$22,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dance Board</td>
<td>Skills And Arts Artform Development</td>
<td>Fitzroy</td>
<td>Ausdance VIC presentation of 5th Australian Youth Dance Festival in Horsham 2006.</td>
<td>$13,655</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dance Board</td>
<td>New Work Production</td>
<td>Southbank</td>
<td>Balletlab, VIC, Space 28, Victorian College of the Arts Drama Theatre, Drama Theatre, Sydney Opera House.</td>
<td>$65,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dance Board</td>
<td>Key Organisations Triennial</td>
<td>Southbank</td>
<td>Chunky Move</td>
<td>$495,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dance Board</td>
<td>Young And Emerging Artist Initiative</td>
<td>Kingsville</td>
<td>A dramaturgical mentorship for the development of three original works.</td>
<td>$10,550</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dance Board</td>
<td>Key Organisations Triennial</td>
<td>Carlton North</td>
<td>2006 Program: curated performance residencies including The Dance Card and Joker programs; research and development and independent access to Dance house facilities and expertise.</td>
<td>$383,625</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dance Board</td>
<td>Program</td>
<td>North Melbourne</td>
<td>Kage’s 2006 program including HEADLOCK in Melbourne, INK in Japan and Australia, further development of MOMENTARY MYTH, the FOOT IN MOUTH/TONGUE IN CHEEK solos, the presentation of THE DAY THE WORLD TURNED UPSIDE DOWN at the Awesome Festival and the reworking of NOWHERE MAN.</td>
<td>$65,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Funding Board Or Section</td>
<td>Funding Program Or Grant Category</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>Expenditure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dance Board</td>
<td>Young And Emerging Artist Initiative</td>
<td>St Kilda East</td>
<td>A cross-artform partnership to create new work.</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance Board</td>
<td>Key Organisations Triennial</td>
<td>Southbank</td>
<td>Lucy Guerin Inc program for 2006 including: a major full-length work Explode to be presented as part of the Melbourne International Arts Festival; re-instigation of the Small Spaces program begun in 2005 to give selected choreographers the opportunity to make short pieces to be presented at the Lucy Guerin Inc. Studio and Lucy Geurin’s involvement in two external commissions.</td>
<td>$306,900</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dance Board</td>
<td>Skills And Arts Development Skills</td>
<td>Elwood</td>
<td>Katy Macdonald, VIC, will participate in three workshops in Europe with Frey Faust, Julyen Hamilton and David Zambrano with the aim to combine formal technique and improvisation.</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dance Board</td>
<td>Skills And Arts Development Young And Emerging</td>
<td>Elwood</td>
<td>To work as Tracie Mitchell’s assistant on her next film project ‘Under the Weather’</td>
<td>$8,588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance Board</td>
<td>New Work Creative Development</td>
<td>East St Kilda</td>
<td>Hellen Sky, VIC, will be undertaking the creative development of a new work entitled Liquid Time.</td>
<td>$12,050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance Board</td>
<td>New Work Production</td>
<td>St Kilda</td>
<td>Roslyn Warby, VIC, will premier a new solo dance work entitled Monumental at 2006 Melbourne International Festival of the Arts. Weave Movement Theatre to collaborate with members of the Adelaide-based Restless Dance Company.</td>
<td>$59,156</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dance Board</td>
<td>New Work Development Only</td>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>MHUL - Indigenous Media Workshops.</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
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<td>Inter-Arts Office</td>
<td>Indigenous New Media Arts Development Initiatives</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>In the First Person: International Digital Storytelling Conference 2006.</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inter-Arts Office</td>
<td>Abc Radiophonic Residency</td>
<td>Brunswick West</td>
<td>Sound art work.</td>
<td>$35,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inter-Arts Office</td>
<td>New Work- General</td>
<td>St Kilda</td>
<td>Commissioning and promotion of new works by emerging and established artists.</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inter-Arts Office</td>
<td>New Work- General</td>
<td>St Kilda</td>
<td>Research &amp; development of a non-linear new media artwork titled ‘Jardskalltan’ (Earthquakes).</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding Board Or Section</td>
<td>Funding Program Or Grant Category</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inter-Arts Office</td>
<td>Run_Way</td>
<td>Kew</td>
<td>Participation at Time, Place, Space &amp; the Double Dialogues ‘on space’ Conference.</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inter-Arts Office</td>
<td>Synapse Art/Science Initiative</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>International exhibition of Australian art science works in Shanghai, China in June 2006.</td>
<td>$18,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inter-Arts Office</td>
<td>Run_Way</td>
<td>Nunawading</td>
<td>Attendance at the ‘Performance Studies International: Performing Rights’ conference, London UK.</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inter-Arts Office</td>
<td>Banff International Residency</td>
<td>Kew</td>
<td>Production of a series of video works &amp; produce a conceptual work documenting the residency itself</td>
<td>$4,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inter-Arts Office</td>
<td>Run_Way</td>
<td>East Brunswick</td>
<td>Travel to Japan to attend The World Forum for Acoustic Ecology Symposium 06</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inter-Arts Office</td>
<td>New Work - R &amp; D</td>
<td>Fitzroy</td>
<td>Investigating methods of creating holographic landscapes from video</td>
<td>$8,000</td>
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<td>Inter-Arts Office</td>
<td>Vital Signs Conference</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Vital Signs: National conference on new media and hybrid art at ACMI in Melbourne</td>
<td>$60,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inter-Arts Office</td>
<td>Synapse Art/Science Initiative</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Collaboration with Metaform: r&amp;d of virtual environment to assist recovery of brain injury patients</td>
<td>$60,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inter-Arts Office</td>
<td>Run_Way</td>
<td>East Brunswick</td>
<td>to study the cross over between new media and CCD art practices</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inter-Arts Office</td>
<td>Run_Way</td>
<td>Richmond</td>
<td>Attendance at 7 new media and sound based festivals across Europe, America &amp; Canada</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Key Organisations</td>
<td>Company Development Fund</td>
<td>Southbank</td>
<td>To bring financial management and basic marketing services in house, with purchase of associated software and training</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literature Board</td>
<td>Program Grants</td>
<td>Richmond</td>
<td>Publication of ten issues of Australian Book Review in 2006</td>
<td>$95,000</td>
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<td>Literature Board</td>
<td>Presentation And Promotion</td>
<td>North Melbourne</td>
<td>Publishing Grant 2006-2007: Publication of new titles by Colin Batrouney, Felix Calvino, Dianne Fahey and Anthony Lynch</td>
<td>$16,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literature Board</td>
<td>New Work - Developing Writers</td>
<td>Ormond</td>
<td>To research and write Love at Second Sight&quot;</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literature Board</td>
<td>New Work - Established Writers</td>
<td>Brunswick</td>
<td>To write a fourth collection of poetry.</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
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<td>Literature Board</td>
<td>New Work - Emerging Writers</td>
<td>Brunswick West</td>
<td>To research and write a sequence of essays.</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literature Board</td>
<td>Presentation And Promotion</td>
<td>Port Melbourne</td>
<td>Book Publishing Grant 2006-2007</td>
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<td>Literature Board</td>
<td>New Work - Established Writers</td>
<td>Brunswick East</td>
<td>To write ‘The Time We Have Taken”</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Funding Board Or Section</td>
<td>Funding Program Or Grant Category</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Purpose</td>
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<td>New Work - Established Writers</td>
<td>Malvern</td>
<td>To write Druid Boy™.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>New Work - Emerging Writers</td>
<td>Camberwell</td>
<td>To research and write the first draft of a radio play.</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
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<td>Literature Board</td>
<td>Presentation And Promotion (Presentation)</td>
<td>Fitzroy</td>
<td>Publication of online poetry journal.</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literature Board</td>
<td>New Work - Developing Writers</td>
<td>Fitzroy</td>
<td>To research and write Serendip.</td>
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<td>Literature Board</td>
<td>Presentation And Promotion (Promotion)</td>
<td>North Melbourne</td>
<td>Expenses for Australian writers to participate in the third annual Emerging Writers' Festival in Melbourne, 7-9 April 2006.</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
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<td>Literature Board</td>
<td>Program Grants</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Publication and promotion of Voiceworks in 2006</td>
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<td>Literature Board</td>
<td>Young And Emerging Artists</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>National Young Writers’ Mentorship Program (06-07)</td>
<td>$10,500</td>
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<td>Literature Board</td>
<td>New Work - Developing Writers</td>
<td>St Kilda East</td>
<td>To write a collection of sonnets and poems.</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literature Board</td>
<td>Skills And Arts Development - Organisations</td>
<td>Parkville</td>
<td>New Poets Publishing Program Series 12 and the Wollongong Poetry Workshop.</td>
<td>$14,200</td>
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<td>Parkville</td>
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<td>Presentation And Promotion (Presentation)</td>
<td>St Kilda</td>
<td>Publication of literary magazine.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literature Board</td>
<td>New Work - Developing Writers</td>
<td>Mordialloc</td>
<td>To research and write a play.</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literature Board</td>
<td>New Work - Developing Writers</td>
<td>Northfield</td>
<td>To write four autobiographical, stories.</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
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<td>Literature Board</td>
<td>New Work - Established Writers</td>
<td>Northcote</td>
<td>To write a novel.</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literature Board</td>
<td>New Work - Emerging Writers</td>
<td>Heidelberg Heights</td>
<td>To research and draft a novel.</td>
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<td>Literature Board</td>
<td>Presentation And Promotion (Promotion)</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Towards costs for Australian writers participating in 2006 program of the Centre for Youth Literature</td>
<td>$32,000</td>
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<td>Literature Board</td>
<td>New Work - Emerging Writers</td>
<td>Flemington</td>
<td>To develop and complete a collection of poems.</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literature Board</td>
<td>Established Writers</td>
<td>Clifton Hill</td>
<td>To write a book.</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
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<td>Literature Board</td>
<td>Program Grants</td>
<td>Carlton</td>
<td>Publication of four issues of Meanjin in 2006</td>
<td>$35,000</td>
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<td>Presentation And Promotion (Presentation)</td>
<td>Carlton</td>
<td>Book Publishing Grant 2006-2007</td>
<td>$24,000</td>
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<td>Literature Board</td>
<td>Presentation And Promotion (Promotion)</td>
<td>Southbank</td>
<td>Expenses for Australian writers to participate in the Age Melbourne Writers Festival, 25 August - 3 September 2006</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Funding Board Or Section</td>
<td>Funding Program Or Grant Category</td>
<td>Location</td>
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<td>Literature Board</td>
<td>New Work - Developing Writers</td>
<td>East Melbourne</td>
<td>To complete Mews’ third novel.</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
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<td>Literature Board</td>
<td>Presentation And Promotion</td>
<td>Abbotsford</td>
<td>Towards expenses for Australian poets to participate in the fifth annual Overload Poetry Festival in Melbourne, 4-19 August 2006</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
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<td>Literature Board</td>
<td>New Work - Developing Writers</td>
<td>Brunswick</td>
<td>To write a novel.</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literature Board</td>
<td>Presentation And Promotion</td>
<td>North Melbourne</td>
<td>Book Publishing Grant 2006-2007.</td>
<td>$8,000</td>
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<td>Literature Board</td>
<td>Presentation And Promotion</td>
<td>University Of Melbourne</td>
<td>Publication of Blue Dog in 2006</td>
<td>$9,600</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literature Board</td>
<td>Fellowships</td>
<td>North Melbourne</td>
<td>To write two books.</td>
<td>$80,000</td>
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<td>Presentation And Promotion</td>
<td>North Melbourne</td>
<td>Book Publishing Grant 2006-2007.</td>
<td>$12,000</td>
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<td>Literature Board</td>
<td>Write In Your Face</td>
<td>Brunswick</td>
<td>Towards the development of ‘The Man with the September Face’. Consultancy: Management of Asher Award</td>
<td>$17,200</td>
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<td>Literature Board</td>
<td>Asher Bequest Grants</td>
<td>University Of Melbourne</td>
<td>To complete a full-length collection of poems.</td>
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<td>Literature Board</td>
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<td>St Kilda East</td>
<td>To write a novel.</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
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<td>Major Performing Arts Board</td>
<td>International Payments</td>
<td>Port Melbourne</td>
<td>2nd Year Triennial Funding</td>
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<td>Annual Base Grants</td>
<td>Port Melbourne</td>
<td>2006 Base Grant</td>
<td>$656,241</td>
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<td>Major Performing Arts Board</td>
<td>2006 Upgrade Staff Skills</td>
<td>Port Melbourne</td>
<td>Strategic Management - Circus Oz Philanthropy Initiative 2005</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
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<td>Major Performing Arts Board</td>
<td>Strategic Arts Marketing Seminar</td>
<td>Prahran</td>
<td>Brisbane seminar - speaker</td>
<td>$8,000</td>
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<td>Major Performing Arts Board</td>
<td>MELBA FOUNDATION</td>
<td>Elwood</td>
<td>2005-2006 Base Grant</td>
<td>$1,000,000</td>
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<td>Major Performing Arts Board</td>
<td>Annual Base Grants</td>
<td>Southbank</td>
<td>2006 Base Grant</td>
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<td>Major Performing Arts Board</td>
<td>Emerging Artists</td>
<td>Southbank</td>
<td>Olivia Allen, Director</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Major Performing Arts Board</td>
<td>Annual Base Grants</td>
<td>Southbank</td>
<td>2006 Base Grant</td>
<td>$1,275,516</td>
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<td>Major Performing Arts Board</td>
<td>Orchestra Review Operational</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Superannuation evaluation upon divestment from the ABC</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
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<td>Major Performing Arts Board</td>
<td>Annual Base Grants</td>
<td>Albert Park</td>
<td>2006 Base Grant</td>
<td>$3,773,677</td>
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<td>Major Performing Arts Board</td>
<td>International Payments</td>
<td>Southbank</td>
<td>International Airfare Support for Stanford Scholarship attendance by Stephen Armstrong Alex Ben Mayor</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
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<td>Major Performing Arts Board</td>
<td>Emerging Artists</td>
<td>Southbank</td>
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<td>$12,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Funding Board Or Section</td>
<td>Funding Program Or Grant Category</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Purpose (iii)</td>
<td>Expenditure (a)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Major Performing Arts</td>
<td>Annual Base Grants</td>
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<td>2006 Base Grant</td>
<td>$695,936</td>
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<td>Major Performing Arts</td>
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<td>Southbank</td>
<td>China Tour of Swan Lake</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
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<td>Major Performing Arts</td>
<td>Annual Base Grants</td>
<td>Southbank</td>
<td>2006 Base Grant</td>
<td>$4,113,591</td>
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<td>Orchestra Review</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Project Management, Orchestral Review Implementation</td>
<td>$710,000</td>
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<td>Major Performing Arts</td>
<td>New Strategic Initiatives</td>
<td>St Kilda</td>
<td>Sydney Dance Company Consultancy</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
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<td>Music Board</td>
<td>P&amp;P Recording Projects</td>
<td>Gardenvale</td>
<td>Track album.</td>
<td>$7,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>Buzz-Young Artists Initiative</td>
<td>Fitzroy</td>
<td>Production CD.</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
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<td>Music Board</td>
<td>P&amp;P Recording Projects</td>
<td>South Yarra</td>
<td>Recording of a new album.</td>
<td>$7,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>Program Grants</td>
<td>Hawthorn East</td>
<td>Contribution towards the 2006 program of weekly performances by Victorian and interstate ensembles and jazz advocacy.</td>
<td>$40,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>Program Grants</td>
<td>North Melbourne</td>
<td>Contribution to the 2006 program of six subscription concerts and one regional concert, with scores and recordings.</td>
<td>$37,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>New Work</td>
<td>Springvale</td>
<td>Commission four short electro-acoustic pieces from Australian women composers.</td>
<td>$5,200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>Presentation &amp; Promotion</td>
<td>Glen Iris</td>
<td>Australian Pro Arte performances of series of Sunday afternoon chamber orchestral concerts.</td>
<td>$7,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>Presentation &amp; Promotion</td>
<td>Brunswick</td>
<td>Series of jazz workshops for girls and the further development of the Women’s Festival Sextet. The project will take place from 2 November 2005 to 31 January 2006 in Melbourne, VIC.</td>
<td>$4,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>Skills &amp; Arts Development Out Of Time 2005-2006</td>
<td>Mount Waverley</td>
<td>Attendance at Summer Chamber Music residency at Banff Centre, Canada</td>
<td>$3,600</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>Sounding Out</td>
<td>Fitzroy</td>
<td>Foster and expand the use of Audio Mulch.</td>
<td>$22,985</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>Buzz-Young Artists Initiative</td>
<td>Brunswick</td>
<td>Recording of a original compositions.</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>P&amp;P Recording Projects</td>
<td>Malvern</td>
<td>Recording of the Allan Browne Quintet’s.</td>
<td>$5,928</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>International Pathways 2005</td>
<td>Thornbury</td>
<td>A performance by the Christopher Hale Ensemble at the Copenhagen Jazz Festival and a tour of Denmark, 7 to 22 July 2006.</td>
<td>$7,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>Buzz-Young Artists Initiative</td>
<td>Frankston</td>
<td>Assistance towards a recording that will be made as a part of the ‘Kool Skoools’ project.</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Funding Board Or Section</td>
<td>Funding Program Or Grant Category</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>Expenditure (a)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>P&amp;P Recording Projects</td>
<td>Collingwood</td>
<td>Recording of a new CD with Adam Pinto.</td>
<td>$7,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>P&amp;P Recording Projects</td>
<td>Richmond</td>
<td>New album, by a Capella group Cocco’s Lunch.</td>
<td>$7,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>Skills &amp; Arts Development Individuals</td>
<td>Springvale</td>
<td>Skills in maintenance and modification of Vietnamese musical instruments</td>
<td>$2,200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>New Work</td>
<td>Middle Park</td>
<td>New work for solo guitarist Karin Schaupp.</td>
<td>$5,150</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>New Work</td>
<td>Glenroy</td>
<td>New work for Astra Chamber Music Society.</td>
<td>$4,104</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>P&amp;P Recording Projects</td>
<td>Parkville</td>
<td>This grant is a contribution towards the recording and manufacture of a CD of 15th and 16th century festive music.</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>Skills &amp; Arts Development Individuals</td>
<td>Kew</td>
<td>This grant is a contribution towards costs for study on the Indian Tabla in Kolkata, India.</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>Skills &amp; Arts Development Individuals</td>
<td>Elwood</td>
<td>The study of orchestral conducting with Janos Furst at the Royal Academy of Music</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>International Pathways 2005 Fellows</td>
<td>Footscray</td>
<td>Tour of Europe including three major festival appearances.</td>
<td>$2,118</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>Buzz-Young Artists Initiative</td>
<td>Elwood</td>
<td>This grant is for a two-year Fellowship to assist Dr Tony Gould create new ensemble works with an improvisatory component and texts that discuss and explore notated and improvised music.</td>
<td>$80,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>Skills &amp; Arts Development Individuals</td>
<td>Parkville</td>
<td>This grant is for costs towards an intensive residency in Paris with Yvonne Messaien studying contemporary French piano music.</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>Buzz-Young Artists Initiative</td>
<td>Brunswick</td>
<td>Assistance towards the production of a debut album.</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>Skills &amp; Arts Development Out Of Time 2004-2005</td>
<td>South Melbourne</td>
<td>Travel costs for Art Omi fellowship and other professional development, July-August 05, New York, USA</td>
<td>$4,237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>Buzz-Young Artists Initiative</td>
<td>Glen Waverley</td>
<td>Recording, editing, overdubs, mixing and production of a new album</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>Buzz-Young Artists Initiative</td>
<td>Camberwell</td>
<td>Assistance towards study at the Accademia Chigiana in Italy.</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Funding Board Or Section</td>
<td>Funding Program Or Grant Category</td>
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<td>Expenditure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>New Work</td>
<td>Collingwood</td>
<td>Attend Banff International Workshop in jazz &amp; creative music and other study in New York</td>
<td>$2,493</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>New Work</td>
<td>West Melbourne</td>
<td>This grant is for the development of a musical work for double bass and laptop computer.</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>Presentation &amp; Promotion</td>
<td>Prahran</td>
<td>Composition of an electro-acoustic work.</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>Presentation &amp; Promotion</td>
<td>Northcote</td>
<td>A contribution to present a sound arts/experimental music festival.</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>International Pathways 2006</td>
<td>Coburg North</td>
<td>A contribution to a weekly series of concerts of improvised music.</td>
<td>$6,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>International Pathways 2006</td>
<td>Coburg North</td>
<td>Performance of recent Australian works in the Netherlands, Germany and France</td>
<td>$12,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>International Pathways 2006</td>
<td>Coburg North</td>
<td>Performance of recent Australian works in the Netherlands, Germany and France</td>
<td>$3,236</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>P&amp;P Recording Projects</td>
<td>East Brunswick</td>
<td>Mastering and manufacture of a new album by Melatonin.</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>P&amp;P Recording Projects</td>
<td>East Brunswick</td>
<td>Workshop to develop the vocal skills and technique of Melbourne Chorale choristers.</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>Buzz-Young Artists Initiative</td>
<td>Clifton Hill</td>
<td>An eight-evening performance season during the Next Wave Festival in 2006</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>Buzz-Young Artists Initiative</td>
<td>Beaumaris</td>
<td>Assistance towards the recording, mixing, mastering, production and promotion of a debut EP by Jamie Oehlers Double Drummer Band.</td>
<td>$2,100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>Program Grants</td>
<td>Coburg East</td>
<td>Assistance towards the recording production and manufacture of a 2nd album.</td>
<td>$22,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>Skills &amp; Arts Development Individuals</td>
<td>Box Hill North</td>
<td>The attendance at the Banff International Workshop in Jazz and Creative Music.</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>Skills &amp; Arts Development Individuals</td>
<td>Box Hill North</td>
<td>The undertaking of piano studies with Professor Mellon in Paris.</td>
<td>$4,550</td>
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<td>Music Board</td>
<td>P&amp;P Recording Projects</td>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>Recording of a two CD set of the Jamie Oehlers Double Drummer Band.</td>
<td>$7,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>Skills &amp; Arts Development Organisations</td>
<td>Clayton</td>
<td>Contribution to costs towards 10th Anniversary Conference for parents, teachers and musicians involved in early childhood</td>
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<tr>
<td>Funding Board Or Section</td>
<td>Funding Program Or Grant Category</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>Expenditure (a)</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>Presentation &amp; Promotion</td>
<td>Glen Iris</td>
<td>Contribution towards the presentation of the 10th annual Past Echoes concert series in Melbourne, Sydney and regional NSW.</td>
<td>$11,850</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>Buzz-Young Artists Initiative</td>
<td>Fairfield</td>
<td>Assistance with production costs and artist’s fees for a sound project for Next Wave 2006</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>Buzz-Young Artists Initiative</td>
<td>Northcote</td>
<td>Assistance towards the recording of an album of original material.</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
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<td>Music Board</td>
<td>Buzz-Young Artists Initiative</td>
<td>Balwyn</td>
<td>Assistance towards the manufacture including pressing mastering and artwork of debut CD.</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>Skills &amp; Arts Development</td>
<td>Eltham</td>
<td>The further development of specialised musical training in Turkey and India</td>
<td>$3,700</td>
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<td>Music Board</td>
<td>New Work</td>
<td>Glen Waverley</td>
<td>Creation of ten new works fusing classical and contemporary Indian musical styles</td>
<td>$4,100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>International Pathways 2005</td>
<td>Brunswick</td>
<td>Contribution to a tour of the USA, Canada, Europe and the UK by Alarum.</td>
<td>$15,400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>New Work</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Contribution to a commission piece for 4-part SATB choir and orchestra.</td>
<td>$6,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>P&amp;P Recording Projects</td>
<td>Warrandyte</td>
<td>Recording of a CD album of collaborations between Jamaican and Australian musicians.</td>
<td>$6,800</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>Buzz-Young Artists Initiative</td>
<td>Strathmore</td>
<td>Assistance towards a mentorship with Pianist Fred Hersch in New York.</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>New Work</td>
<td>Fitzroy</td>
<td>Creation of a score for ‘The Art of Memory’.</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>Skills &amp; Arts Development</td>
<td>Coburg North</td>
<td>Attendance at the Dhrupad Institute with the Gundecha Brothers to study Indian classical vocals</td>
<td>$3,600</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>International Pathways 2006</td>
<td>Frankston</td>
<td>A showcase tour of the UK by SPARGO</td>
<td>$16,384</td>
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<td>Music Board</td>
<td>Buzz-Young Artists Initiative</td>
<td>East Brunswick</td>
<td>Mastering and manufacture of an album of experimental electro-acoustic compositions</td>
<td>$2,280</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>P&amp;P Recording Projects</td>
<td>South Yarra</td>
<td>Recording of a CD of chamber music composed by Roger Smalley.</td>
<td>$7,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>P&amp;P Recording Projects</td>
<td>Coburg</td>
<td>Contribution to the recording and mastering of the third CD album by The Anyones.</td>
<td>$4,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>International Pathways 2006</td>
<td>Northcote</td>
<td>A seven week tour of Europe</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>Program Grants</td>
<td>Fitzroy</td>
<td>2006 program</td>
<td>$28,000</td>
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<td>Music Board</td>
<td>International Pathways 2006</td>
<td>East Brunswick</td>
<td>A tour of Europe and the UK.</td>
<td>$19,355</td>
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QUESTIONS IN WRITING
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<tr>
<th>Funding Board Or Section</th>
<th>Funding Program Or Grant Category</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Purpose (iii)</th>
<th>Expenditure (a)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>New Work</td>
<td>Northcote</td>
<td>Composition and arrangement of songs.</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
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<td>Music Board</td>
<td>International Pathways 2006</td>
<td>St Kilda</td>
<td>An international showcase tour of the USA and Europe by Konqista-dor</td>
<td>$17,200</td>
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<td>Music Board</td>
<td>Buzz-Young Artists Initiative</td>
<td>Heidelberg</td>
<td>Assistance towards the costs a three-month mentorship in West African percussion in Guinea</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>P&amp;P Recording Projects</td>
<td>Ivanhoe</td>
<td>Recording of three CDs of Australian works for piano.</td>
<td>$7,500</td>
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<td>Music Board</td>
<td>Presentation &amp; Promotion</td>
<td>Ormond</td>
<td>Providing choral music performance and education opportunities for young singers and choral training to conductors around Australia</td>
<td>$8,000</td>
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<td>Music Board</td>
<td>P&amp;P Recording Projects</td>
<td>Warrandyte</td>
<td>Recording and release of a CD of recent original works by The Lisa Young Quartet.</td>
<td>$7,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Board</td>
<td>International Pathways 2005</td>
<td>Ivanhoe</td>
<td>Tour of Germany, Austria, Hungary, Serbia, Switzerland and Russia.</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
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<td>New Media Arts Board</td>
<td>New Work General</td>
<td>Clifton Hill</td>
<td>Development of a large scale multi-user interactive interface from a screen-based working prototype</td>
<td>$35,000</td>
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<td>New Media Arts Board</td>
<td>Key Organisations Special Program Grants</td>
<td>St Kilda</td>
<td>Infrastructure support in 2006.</td>
<td>$40,000</td>
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<td>New Media Arts Board</td>
<td>New Work General</td>
<td>Brunswick</td>
<td>Digital interactive 3 dimensional representation of 10 dimensional space.</td>
<td>$14,000</td>
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<td>New Media Arts Board</td>
<td>New Work R&amp;D</td>
<td>Caulfield South</td>
<td>Research for ‘Hybroid[s]’ which blends sculpture, installation, public art, locative media and visual communication in a hybrid arts practice.</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Media Arts Board</td>
<td>New Work General</td>
<td>Fitzroy</td>
<td>Creation of a collaborative body of work for 3 artificial gardens as part of ‘Lost Garden Found’, a project to be featured at the Next Wave festival 2006.</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
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<td>New Media Arts Board</td>
<td>New Work General</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Six new media and/pr hybrid artworks that will form part of the 2006 Next Wave Festival programme.</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theatre Board</td>
<td>Developing Independent Producers</td>
<td>Fitzroy North</td>
<td>New opportunities for Australian theatre artists to create or present innovative, high quality theatre work.</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theatre Board</td>
<td>New Work - Creative Development</td>
<td>Southbank</td>
<td>‘The Seal’s Child’.</td>
<td>$13,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theatre Board</td>
<td>New Work - Production</td>
<td>North Melbourne</td>
<td>‘Corruption’.</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Funding Board Or Section</td>
<td>Funding Program Or Grant Category</td>
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<td>Purpose</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theatre Board</td>
<td>Playing The World</td>
<td>Brunswick East</td>
<td>To perform <em>A Fistful of New Tunes</em> at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival (4-27 August) followed by a tour of 16 theatres in The Netherlands and Belgium.</td>
<td>$28,865</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theatre Board</td>
<td>New Work - Production</td>
<td>Carlton North</td>
<td>‘The Session’ is a new music performance work by The Ennio Morricone Experience.</td>
<td>$62,300</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theatre Board</td>
<td>Skills And Arts Development - Skills Development</td>
<td>Elwood</td>
<td>Travel to the Netherlands and England to examine community participation and outdoor performance collaboration.</td>
<td>$11,850</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theatre Board</td>
<td>New Work - Creative Development - Skills Development</td>
<td>Northcote</td>
<td>‘The Shambles’ a new visual and physical theatre work.</td>
<td>$16,764</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatre Board</td>
<td>New Work - Creative Development - Fellowships</td>
<td>Clifton Hill</td>
<td>Robert Draffin fellowship.</td>
<td>$80,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatre Board</td>
<td>New Work - Production</td>
<td>Reservoir</td>
<td>Peter Eckersall will work on the Seoul International Festival of Arts.</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatre Board</td>
<td>North 10-minute acts that form part of the ‘Mirka Mora Tent of Art’.</td>
<td>Fitzroy North</td>
<td>$17,700</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatre Board</td>
<td>New Work - Young Artists Initiative</td>
<td>St Kilda East</td>
<td>‘The Cube Project’.</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatre Board</td>
<td>New Work - Production</td>
<td>Reservoir</td>
<td>‘The Nature of Things’.</td>
<td>$45,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatre Board</td>
<td>Developing Independent Producers</td>
<td>North Melbourne</td>
<td>New opportunities for Australian theatre artists to create or present innovative, high quality theatre work.</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatre Board</td>
<td>New Work - Production</td>
<td>North Fitzroy</td>
<td>The Damask Drum</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatre Board</td>
<td>Skills And Arts Development - Skills Development</td>
<td>North Melbourne</td>
<td>“Urban Retreat”, at Young Playwrights Inc. in New York in July 2006.</td>
<td>$3,860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatre Board</td>
<td>Key Organisations Triennial</td>
<td>North Melbourne</td>
<td>2006 program including a major community site-based work, ‘We Built this City’.</td>
<td>$436,534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatre Board</td>
<td>New Work - Creative Development</td>
<td>Coburg</td>
<td>‘A Fig For All Your Ancestors’ an adaptation of Italo Calvino’s ‘Baron in the Trees’.</td>
<td>$28,415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatre Board</td>
<td>New Work - Young Artists Initiative</td>
<td>Fitzroy</td>
<td>‘Autobiography of Red’ to be staged at the Malthouse’s Tower Theatre as part of the Next Wave Festival 2006.</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatre Board</td>
<td>Program</td>
<td>Balaclava</td>
<td>Contribution towards the company’s 2006 activities.</td>
<td>$75,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatre Board</td>
<td>New Work - Creative Development</td>
<td>St Kilda</td>
<td>Development of a new music theatre/opera work inspired from Tim Winton’s novel ‘That Eye The Sky’.</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatre Board</td>
<td>Program Youth</td>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>Contribution towards the company’s 2006 activities.</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding Board or Section</td>
<td>Funding Program Or Grant Category</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>Expenditure</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Theatre Board</td>
<td>New Work - Creative Development</td>
<td>St Kilda</td>
<td>‘The Leisure Project’.</td>
<td>$16,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatre Board</td>
<td>New Work - Creative Development</td>
<td>St Kilda</td>
<td>‘Intelligence’ a new play.</td>
<td>$8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatre Board</td>
<td>Program Youth</td>
<td>South Yarra</td>
<td>St Martins Youth Arts Centre.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatre Board</td>
<td>Young And Emerging Artist Initiative</td>
<td>South Yarra</td>
<td>Professional mentorship</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatre Board</td>
<td>Theatre Board Initiatives</td>
<td>Collingwood</td>
<td>Part-time bookkeeper and training.</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatre Board</td>
<td>Program</td>
<td>Collingwood</td>
<td>Contribution towards the company’s 2006 activities.</td>
<td>$70,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theatre Board</td>
<td>New Work - Creative Development</td>
<td>Carlton North</td>
<td>Three-week residency in New York.</td>
<td>$30,034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatre Board</td>
<td>New Work - Production</td>
<td>Carlton North</td>
<td>‘Lally Katz and the Terrible Mysteries of the Volcano’</td>
<td>$38,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatre Board</td>
<td>New Work - Young Artists Initiative</td>
<td>Mckinnon</td>
<td>‘The Ghosts of Rickets Hill’.</td>
<td>$13,950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatre Board</td>
<td>New Work - Production</td>
<td>Southbank</td>
<td>Black’.</td>
<td>$28,732</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theatre Board</td>
<td>New Work - Production</td>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>‘DasSHOKU Hora’.</td>
<td>$19,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatre Board</td>
<td>Theatre Board Initiatives</td>
<td>Southbank</td>
<td>Trina Parker Scholarship Fund</td>
<td>$79,841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatre Board</td>
<td>New Work - Creative Development</td>
<td>Collingwood</td>
<td>‘The Boy and Tiger’.</td>
<td>$3,316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>Vacs Initiatives</td>
<td>Southbank</td>
<td>Three Key Partnership Projects</td>
<td>$200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>New Work Established</td>
<td>Fitzroy</td>
<td>A series of small and medium sized works and two major paintings.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>New Work Established</td>
<td>Coburg</td>
<td>Roseanne Bartley - jewellery.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>New Work Established</td>
<td>South Yarra</td>
<td>Lauren Berkowitz - sculptures.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>New Work Established</td>
<td>South Melbourne</td>
<td>Mande Bijelic - paintings.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>2006 Young &amp; Emerging Artists Initiative - ARI’s</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Jon Cattapan - paintings, drawings and digital prints.</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>Presentation And Promotion</td>
<td>Fitzroy</td>
<td>Centre for Contemporary Photography - photography of Anna Zahalka.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>Skills And Arts Development</td>
<td>Northcote</td>
<td>Barcelona Studio Residency</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding Board Or Section</td>
<td>Funding Program Or Grant Category</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>Expenditure (a)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>New Work Established</td>
<td>Carlton North</td>
<td>Sadie Chandler - multi-media work.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>St Kilda West</td>
<td>2006 Young &amp; Emerging Artists Initiative - ARI’s</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>Fellowships</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Create jewellery/objects for touring exhibition &amp; consolidation of int-</td>
<td>$90,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ernational projects</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>New Work Established</td>
<td>South Yarra</td>
<td>Edward Colless - a book on contemporary Australian art.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Clifton Hill</td>
<td>2006 Young &amp; Emerging Artists Initiative - ARI’s</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>New Work Emerging</td>
<td>Northcote</td>
<td>Catherine Consandine - video and sculptural work.</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>Presentation And Promotion</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>The Craft Council of Victoria two exhibitions.</td>
<td>$35,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>2006 Young and emerging artists Initiative - Youth Craft Mentorship</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>Skills And Arts Development</td>
<td>Beaumaris</td>
<td>Georgina Cribb - internship.</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Richmond</td>
<td>Andrew Curtis - photographic prints.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>New Work Established</td>
<td>Collingwood</td>
<td>Tali Dalton - sculptural work.</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>DAMP, a collaborative performance and video works.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>Skills And Arts Development</td>
<td>Alphington</td>
<td>Barcelona Studio Residency .</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>St Kilda</td>
<td>Tour an exhibition of Australian new media art to the Institute of Con-</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>Visual Arts Craft Strategy</td>
<td>St Kilda</td>
<td>Visual Arts and Craft Strategy Biennial Grant.</td>
<td>$180,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>Skills And Arts Development</td>
<td>Brunswick</td>
<td>Belinda Fox - mentorship.</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Balaclava</td>
<td>Photographer Helen Frajman’s travel to New Zealand.</td>
<td>$2,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>Skills And Arts Development</td>
<td>North Fitzroy</td>
<td>Gabriella and Silvana Mangano - a performance video piece.</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>General Emerging</td>
<td>Northcote</td>
<td>Los Angeles Studio Residency</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>New Work Emerging</td>
<td>Carlton</td>
<td>Kiko Gianocco - jewellery.</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Established</td>
<td>Brunswick</td>
<td>Caz Guiney - jewellery.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>Skills And Arts Development</td>
<td>Elwood</td>
<td>Los Angeles Studio Residency</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Balwyn North</td>
<td>Michelle Hamer - tapestries.</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding Board Or Section</td>
<td>Funding Program Or Grant Category</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>Expenditure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>Skills And Arts Development Rome Studio</td>
<td>St Kilda West</td>
<td>Rome Studio Residency</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
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<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>Skills And Arts Development London Studio</td>
<td>Clifton Hill</td>
<td>London Studio Residency</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
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<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>Skills And Arts Development Tokyo Studio</td>
<td>Fitzroy</td>
<td>Tokyo Studio Residency</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>New Work Established</td>
<td>Abbotsford</td>
<td>Larissa Hjorth - photographic works.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>New Work Established</td>
<td>Northcote</td>
<td>Raafat Ishak - paintings.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>New Work Established</td>
<td>North Melbourne</td>
<td>Kieran Bolan, Jennifer Mills and Julia Powles - works on paper.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>New Work Established</td>
<td>Abbotsford</td>
<td>2006 Young &amp; Emerging Artists Initiative - ARU’s</td>
<td>$9,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>New Work Emerging</td>
<td>St Kilda East</td>
<td>Ronnie Lacham - media works.</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>New Work Emerging</td>
<td>Abbotsford</td>
<td>Simone Leamon - three-dimensional models.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>New Work Emerging</td>
<td>Murrumbeena</td>
<td>Karyn Lindner - watercolour portraits.</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>Skills And Arts Development Rome Studio</td>
<td>Hawthorn</td>
<td>Rome Studio Residency</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>New Work Established</td>
<td>Ormond</td>
<td>Simon Lloyd - ceramic, metal and felt work.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>New Work Established</td>
<td>St Kilda East</td>
<td>Victoria Lynn - monograph.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>Skills And Arts Development Emerging</td>
<td>South Melbourne</td>
<td>Simon Maidment - travel to the UK.</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>EMERITUS &amp; Contemporary Gifts Program</td>
<td>Fitzroy</td>
<td>Jeweller Commission 2005</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>Skills And Arts Development Greene Street Studio, New York</td>
<td>Carlton North</td>
<td>Greene Street, New York Studio Residency</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>New Work Emerging</td>
<td>Caulfield South</td>
<td>Marc Alperstein and Amelie Sclerico - collaborative drawing performance.</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>New Work Established</td>
<td>Brunswick East</td>
<td>Linda Marrinon - wax and bronze casting.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>New Work Established</td>
<td>Notting Hill</td>
<td>Vicki Mason: jewellery.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>New Work Established</td>
<td>St Kilda</td>
<td>Chris McAuliffe - book on the life and art of Australian artist Jon Cattapan.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding Board Or Section</td>
<td>Funding Program Or Grant Category</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>Expenditure</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>Skills And Arts Development</td>
<td>South Ya</td>
<td>Digital printmaker Danny McDonald - attend a conference at the University of Wisconsin, USA, in April 2006.</td>
<td>$4,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>General</td>
<td>rra</td>
<td>VCA Gallery manager Vikki Jane Mc Innes will research the potential of the art school gallery in Australia by investigating international models.</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Emily McIntosh will travel to Japan to research art and architecture for the purpose of creating a new body of glass work, which she will exhibit in early 2007.</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Visual Arts Craft Strategy</td>
<td>Fitzroy</td>
<td>Visual Arts and Craft Strategy Biennial Grant Penelope Metcalf - landscape paintings.</td>
<td>$200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New Work Emerging</td>
<td>Clifton H</td>
<td>Robert McKenzie - write a book. Paris Studio Residency</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New Work Established</td>
<td>Fitzroy</td>
<td>Vivienn Miller - paintings, drawings and a DVD. Create actual and virtual reconfigurations of urban spaces</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>East St Kilda</td>
<td>Armatad</td>
<td>Arlo Mountford - video work.</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New Work Established</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>Ian Mowbray - glasswork.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>East St Kilda</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Jan Nelson - sculptures.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New Work Emerging</td>
<td>Port</td>
<td>Simone Nelson - sculptural and installation work.</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Anna-Maria O’Keeffe - sculptural works and installations for exhibition.</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New Work Established</td>
<td>Fitzroy</td>
<td>Selina Ou: photographic portraits.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parkville</td>
<td>Spiros Panigirakis - pedestals and sculptures.</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fitzroy</td>
<td>Polixeni Papapetrou – photographic works.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ISCP, New York Studio Residency</td>
<td>ISCP, New York Studio Residency</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>East St Kilda</td>
<td>East St Kilda</td>
<td>David Pottinger - ceramic techniques.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reservoir</td>
<td>Spiros Panigirakis - pedestals and sculptures.</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brunswick East</td>
<td>Dominic Redfern - large-scale installation.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Funding Board Or Section</td>
<td>Funding Program Or Grant Category</td>
<td>Location (b)</td>
<td>Purpose (iii)</td>
<td>Expenditure (a)</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>New Work Established</td>
<td>West Preston</td>
<td>Stuart Ringholt - sculptures.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>New Work Established</td>
<td>Brunswick</td>
<td>David Rosetzky - video installation and interactive multi-media sculptures.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>New Work Emerging</td>
<td>West Preston</td>
<td>Robert Rowlands - sculptural works.</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>Skills And Arts Development General</td>
<td>Balwyn</td>
<td>Sangeeta Sandrasegar - sculptures and wall relief constructions.</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>New Work Emerging</td>
<td>Northcote</td>
<td>Tracy Sarroff - object-based artworks.</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>New Work Emerging</td>
<td>Surrey Hills</td>
<td>Rohan Singh - large-scale work.</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>Skills And Arts Development</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Kunstlerhaus Studio Residency</td>
<td>$35,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>Skills And Arts Development</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Milan Studio Residency</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>Skills And Arts Development Out Of Time</td>
<td>Fitzroy</td>
<td>For Christian Thompson to attend L’art urbain du Pacifique at the Castle of Saint- Auvent, France from 6/8/05 to 10/8/05.</td>
<td>$7,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>Visual Arts Craft Strategy</td>
<td>University Of Melbourne</td>
<td>Visual Arts and Craft Strategy Biennial Grant</td>
<td>$260,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>New Work Emerging</td>
<td>Carlton</td>
<td>Emma Van Leest - paper cutting works.</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>Presentation And Promotion</td>
<td>Southbank</td>
<td>Exhibition of commissioned new work.</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>New Work Established</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Nine artists working in a variety of media will produce new work in response to the natural environment of south-west Victoria.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>Presentation And Promotion</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Exhibition of selected works.</td>
<td>$6,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>2006 Young &amp; Emerging Artists Initiative - ARI’s</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>New Work Established</td>
<td>St Kilda</td>
<td>Maureen Williams - painting, wheel cutting and blown glass.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>New Work Established</td>
<td>Richmond</td>
<td>Malgorzata Wlodarczak-Sarnecka - drawing installation.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>New Work Emerging</td>
<td>Ivanhoe</td>
<td>Paul Wood - landscape installation.</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts Board</td>
<td>New Work Established</td>
<td>Thornbury</td>
<td>Ongoing collaborative project between artists Leslie Eastman and Natasha Johns-Messenger.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Defence Health Service: Staffing**  
*(Question No. 3860)*

**Mr Laurie Ferguson** asked the Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence, in writing, on 9 August 2006:

1. Given that the Defence Health Service has been provided with funding by the Defence People Committee for continued engagement of two senior contract alcohol and drug professional staff until 2008-09, and given that the most senior roles of National Coordinator and Training Coordinator within the Australian Defence Force Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs Service (ADF ATODS) have been vacant for more than 12 months, when does the ADF intend to fill these contract roles.

2. Will he advise the circumstances or decisions that have led the ADF to allow these key positions within the ADF ATODS to remain vacant for such a lengthy period of time, given that the ADF has no internal high-level specialist alcohol and drug professional expertise.

3. Will he assure ADF members and the Australian public that an appropriately experienced and qualified alcohol and drug professional will be engaged to take primary responsibility for ADF ATODS strategic direction, planning, central coordination and specialist input into policy, clinical upskilling and health education.

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

1. Due to delays in preparing and finalising contract/tender documentation the positions will be advertised in October 2006.

2. Funding for these two positions was initially only guaranteed until 30 June 2006. Further funding through to 2008-09 is now confirmed and the positions will be advertised. Defence Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs Service specialist advice has been provided by the ATODS Clinical Coordinator (a nurse practitioner with post-graduate Alcohol and Other Drugs qualifications), a part-time specialist Alcohol and Other Drugs consultant (through until the end of financial year 2005-06) and a specialist psychiatrist.

3. The contracts that are being developed will ensure that appropriately experienced and qualified ATODS professionals are contracted to the National Coordinator and Training Coordinator positions. The Australian Defence Force will thus have a highly experienced and qualified core of ATODS professionals to provide best practice ATODS policy, training and service to all Australian Defence Force personnel.

**Foreign Fishing Vessels**  
*(Question No. 3984)*

**Mr Price** asked the Minister for Defence, in writing, on 4 September 2006:

Further to the Minister’s reply to question No. 3446 *(Hansard, 9 August 2006, page 171)*, what detection assets are deployed to detect wooden illegal fishing vessels at night.

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

The Joint Offshore Protection Command uses the technology inherent in its surveillance assets to detect vessels, including wooden vessels, which pose a threat in Australia’s maritime domains. This technology includes radar that has been optimised to detect small wooden targets and, for night flying, infra-red devices that are used to identify targets and for the purposes of obtaining imagery, which can be transferred to the National Surveillance Centre.
KPMG Contracts
(Question No. 4055)

Mr Kelvin Thomson asked the Attorney-General, in writing, on 4 September 2006:

(1) What contracts have been awarded to KPMG by departments or agencies within the Minister’s portfolio for the financial years (a) 2004-05, (b) 2005-06 and (c) 2006-07. (2) What is the cost of each contract identified in Part (1).

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

(1) (a) In 2004-05, the only contracts awarded to KPMG during this period by agencies within my portfolio were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Details of Contract awarded to KPMG</th>
<th>Cost $</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AGD</td>
<td>Review of the Native Title System on behalf of the Attorney-General’s Department and a number of other non-Attorney-General’s Departments</td>
<td>*61,104.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFP</td>
<td>Professional services in relation to Police Citizens Youth Club (PCYC) site</td>
<td>31,240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFP</td>
<td>Performance Audit of AFP Protective Service</td>
<td>28,050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFP</td>
<td>Performance Audit of Accounts Payable</td>
<td>62,650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFP</td>
<td>Performance Audit of Stationery Contractual Arrangements</td>
<td>8,910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFP</td>
<td>Provision of professional services in relation to the Joint Commonwealth/ACT Government study on Community Policing Services for the ACT</td>
<td>440,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Full contract cost was $172,150 of which the AGD component was only $61,104.54.

(b) (2) In 2005-06, the only contracts awarded to KPMG during this period by agencies within my portfolio were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Details of Contract awarded to KPMG</th>
<th>Cost $</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AGD</td>
<td>Assistance with end-of-year financial statements preparation</td>
<td>61,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGD</td>
<td>Financial viability assessment of tenderers for the Family Relationships Centre</td>
<td>36,966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFP</td>
<td>Computer Assisted Audit Techniques regarding Assets and Contracts</td>
<td>7,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFP</td>
<td>Preliminary Study of Financial Processes and Systems</td>
<td>10,450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFP</td>
<td>Travel Compliance Audit of Information Services</td>
<td>11,550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFP</td>
<td>Travel Compliance Audit of International Deployment Group</td>
<td>11,550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFP</td>
<td>Performance Audit of AFP Protective Service Accounts Receivable</td>
<td>35,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFP</td>
<td>Provide Professional Development to Visiting Chinese Internal Auditors</td>
<td>2,310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFP</td>
<td>Taxation Advisory Services</td>
<td>368,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFP</td>
<td>Performance Audit of AFP Travel Procedures</td>
<td>46,750</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(2) In 2006-07, the only contracts awarded to KPMG for this period to-date by agencies within my portfolio are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Details of Contract awarded to KPMG</th>
<th>Cost $</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AGD</td>
<td>Financial viability assessment of tenderers for the Family Relationships Centres</td>
<td>*50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGD</td>
<td>Conduct an effectiveness evaluation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Community Legal Services (Townsville-N.Q.) Limited</td>
<td>*57,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFP</td>
<td>Audit of Asset Policies and Procedures</td>
<td>27,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFP</td>
<td>Taxation Advisory Services</td>
<td>33,609</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Contracts are currently in progress.
Mr Mark Steyn (Question No. 4079)

Mr Tanner asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs, in writing, on 5 September 2006:

In respect of the recent visit to Australia by Canadian columnist Mark Steyn:

(1) Did Mr Steyn receive any financial assistance from the Commonwealth in respect of this trip; if so (a) what sum and (b) under which program;

(2) if Mr Steyn received funding under a Commonwealth program, (a) what are the criteria for funding under the program, (b) who approves the applications and (c) who else has received funding under the program in (i) 2004-05, (ii) 2005-06 and (iii) 2006-07;

(3) Did Mr Steyn receive payment from any other sources for appearances or contributions made during his visit; if so, from whom; and

(4) if Mr Steyn was in receipt of Commonwealth funding, do the funding guidelines permit the recipient to receive payment from other sources for the activities which are being subsidised by the Commonwealth under the program.

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

(1) (a) Yes. $12 023. (b) The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) International Media Visits (IMV) program.

(2) (a) The IMV program targets senior foreign journalists and editorial staff with the capacity to influence editorial content and/or generate informed international media coverage of Australia. IMV nominees are considered on an individual or group basis. Visits are sometimes associated with major events, high level visits, or the release of important studies or reports. (b) Assistant Secretary, Images of Australia Branch, in consultation with relevant areas of the department and other agencies as appropriate. (c) See Attachment A for details of visits under the program for 2004-05, 2005-06 and 2006-07.

(3) The visit was co-sponsored by DFAT, the Centre for Independent Studies and the Institute of Public Affairs.

(4) Yes. The IMV program provides for three categories of funding support: fully funded IMVs, partially funded IMVs and ad hoc assistance.

Attachment A – Participants of DFAT International Media Visits Program

2006-07 (to date)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visitor(s)</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr Toru Igarashi</td>
<td>6-13 Aug 2006</td>
<td>Sankei Shimbun</td>
<td>Senior Editorial Writer</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Keisuke Fukuda</td>
<td>6-13 Aug 2006</td>
<td>Toyo-Keizai</td>
<td>Senior Writer</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Yasuhiko Ota</td>
<td>6-13 Aug 2006</td>
<td>Nihon Keizai Shim bun (Nikkei)</td>
<td>Senior Writer</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Tsuyoshi Nojima</td>
<td>6-13 Aug 2006</td>
<td>Asahi Shimbun</td>
<td>Staff Writer</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Mark Steyn</td>
<td>13-17 Aug 2006</td>
<td>‘Steyn Online’</td>
<td>Columnist</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Pramit Pal Chaudhuri</td>
<td>14-16 Aug 2006</td>
<td>Hindustan Times</td>
<td>Foreign Editor</td>
<td>India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Tom Mann</td>
<td>23 Aug 2006</td>
<td>W Averell Harriman Senior Fellow</td>
<td>The Brookings Institution</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitor(s)</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Ali A Hasan</td>
<td>14-19 Aug 2005</td>
<td>Iraq Television</td>
<td>Senior News / Current Affairs Correspondent</td>
<td>Iraq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Ali Mohammed</td>
<td>14-19 Aug 2005</td>
<td>Iraq Television</td>
<td>Senior Assistant</td>
<td>Iraq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Ali Sehel</td>
<td>14-19 Aug 2005</td>
<td>Iraq Television</td>
<td>Cameraman</td>
<td>Iraq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Barney Orere</td>
<td>3-10 Oct 2005</td>
<td>Post Courier Newspaper</td>
<td>Senior Features and Supplements Writer</td>
<td>PNG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Zhang Yijun</td>
<td>16-23 Oct 2005</td>
<td>International Business Daily</td>
<td>Deputy Chief Editor</td>
<td>China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Teng Xiaomen</td>
<td>16-23 Oct 2005</td>
<td>21st Century Business Herald</td>
<td>Correspondent</td>
<td>China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Zhang Fan</td>
<td>16-23 Oct 2005</td>
<td>Caijing Magazine</td>
<td>Correspondent</td>
<td>China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Li Shuzhi</td>
<td>16-23 Oct 2005</td>
<td>China Reform News</td>
<td>Senior Reporter</td>
<td>China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Zhang Weixun</td>
<td>16-23 Oct 2005</td>
<td>China Trade News</td>
<td>Editor</td>
<td>China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Vu Manh Cuong</td>
<td>27 Nov-4 Dec 2005</td>
<td>Lao Dong Newspaper</td>
<td>Deputy Chief Editor</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Veera Manickam</td>
<td>27 Nov-4 Dec 2005</td>
<td>The Star Newspaper</td>
<td>Deputy News Editor</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Myrna Ratna</td>
<td>27 Nov-4 Dec 2005</td>
<td>Kompas Newspaper</td>
<td>International Editor</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Kumar Ramakrishna</td>
<td>6-10 Feb 2006</td>
<td>Singapore Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies</td>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Klaus-Dieter Frankenberger</td>
<td>20-24 Feb 2006</td>
<td>Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung</td>
<td>Foreign Editor</td>
<td>Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Marc van den Broek</td>
<td>20-24 Feb 2006</td>
<td>de Volkskrant Newspaper</td>
<td>Australian Correspondent</td>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr K Venugopal</td>
<td>27 Feb-3 Mar 2006</td>
<td>The Hindu Newspaper and Hindu Business Line</td>
<td>Joint Editor</td>
<td>India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr George Skaria</td>
<td>27 Feb-3 Mar 2006</td>
<td>The Business Standard</td>
<td>Associate Editor</td>
<td>India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Wiwat Panuwutiyanon</td>
<td>5-6 Apr 2006</td>
<td>Sarakadee Magazine</td>
<td>Senior Journalist</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Nisha Devi Sabanayagam</td>
<td>5-6 Apr 2006</td>
<td>New Straits Times</td>
<td>Senior Journalist</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Wisnu Dewabrata</td>
<td>5-6 Apr 2006</td>
<td>Kompas Newspaper</td>
<td>Senior Journalist</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Pen Samitthy</td>
<td>5-6 Apr 2006</td>
<td>Rasmei Kampuchea</td>
<td>Senior Journalist</td>
<td>Cambodia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Michael Brooks</td>
<td>26 April – 3 May 2006</td>
<td>New Scientist Magazine</td>
<td>Senior Features Editor</td>
<td>UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Vithal Nadkarni</td>
<td>26 April – 3 May 2006</td>
<td>The Economic Times</td>
<td>Science Editor</td>
<td>India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Hasnaa Mokhtar</td>
<td>1-19 May 2006</td>
<td>Arab News Newspaper</td>
<td>Senior Journalist</td>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Saleh Al Hamamy</td>
<td>1-19 May 2006</td>
<td>Arab News Newspaper</td>
<td>Senior Journalist</td>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QUESTIONS IN WRITING
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visitor(s)</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms Kim Kyung Hee</td>
<td>14-26 May 2006</td>
<td>Seoul Broadcasting Service</td>
<td>News Reporter</td>
<td>Korea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Marietón Pacheco</td>
<td>14-26 May 2006</td>
<td>ABS-SBN Broadcasting</td>
<td>Senior Reporter (Host/Anchor)</td>
<td>The Philippines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Balazs Pocs</td>
<td>21-28 May 2006</td>
<td>Nepszabadsag Newspaper</td>
<td>Foreign Desk Editor</td>
<td>Hungary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Jerzy Haszczyński</td>
<td>21-28 May 2006</td>
<td>Rzeczpospolita Daily</td>
<td>Foreign Editor</td>
<td>Poland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Milan Fridřich</td>
<td>21-28 May 2006</td>
<td>Czech TV</td>
<td>Deputy Chief Editor</td>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Adam Cerny</td>
<td>21-28 May 2006</td>
<td>Hospodarske Noviny Daily</td>
<td>Editor / Noviny Daily</td>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Pablo Maas</td>
<td>12-20 Jun 2006</td>
<td>The Clarin Newspaper</td>
<td>Chief Editor</td>
<td>Argentina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Sergio Malbergier</td>
<td>12-20 Jun 2006</td>
<td>Folha e Sao Paulo</td>
<td>Business News Editor</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Tomas Uribe Mosquera</td>
<td>12-20 Jun 2006</td>
<td>Portafolio</td>
<td>Senior Trade Contributor</td>
<td>Colombia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Armando Rivarola</td>
<td>12-20 Jun 2006</td>
<td>ABC Color</td>
<td>Deputy Chief Editor</td>
<td>Paraguay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Marcela Corvalan</td>
<td>12-20 Jun 2006</td>
<td>El Diario Fianciero</td>
<td>Editor</td>
<td>Chile</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**2004-05**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visitor(s)</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms Alison O'totalau</td>
<td>22-27 Jul 2004</td>
<td>Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corp.</td>
<td>Senior Journalist</td>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Gorethy Kenneth</td>
<td>22-27 Jul 2004</td>
<td>Post Courier Newspaper</td>
<td>Deputy Chief of Staff</td>
<td>PNG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Tipi Fausia</td>
<td>22-27 Jul 2004</td>
<td>Samoa Observer Newspaper</td>
<td>Senior Journalist</td>
<td>Samoa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr George Herming</td>
<td>22-27 Jul 2004</td>
<td>Solomon Star Newspaper</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Akamisi Motufaga</td>
<td>22-27 Jul 2004</td>
<td>The Fiji Times</td>
<td>Deputy Editor</td>
<td>Fiji</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Limny Folau</td>
<td>22-27 Jul 2004</td>
<td>Vava'u Press</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>Tonga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Abdul Jalil</td>
<td>28 Aug-4 Sep 2004</td>
<td>TVRI</td>
<td>Senior Journalist</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Abdul Jalil</td>
<td>28 Aug-4 Sep 2004</td>
<td>TVRI</td>
<td>Crew member</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Suryadi Supriatna</td>
<td>28 Aug-4 Sep 2004</td>
<td>TVRI</td>
<td>Crew member</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Shigeru Kuriyashii</td>
<td>2-10 Oct 2004</td>
<td>Chūnichi Shimbun</td>
<td>Deputy Editor</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Mizuho Suzuki</td>
<td>2-10 Oct 2004</td>
<td>CBC-TV</td>
<td>Aichi Expo Reporter</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Atsushi Ojīro</td>
<td>2-10 Oct 2004</td>
<td>CBC-TV</td>
<td>Camera Person</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Danny Gittings</td>
<td>22-27 Nov 2004</td>
<td>Asian Wall Street Journal</td>
<td>Senior Journalist</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Waren Fernandez</td>
<td>22-27 Nov 2004</td>
<td>Strait Times</td>
<td>Senior Journalist</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Jeerawat na Thanlang</td>
<td>22-27 Nov 2004</td>
<td>The Nation</td>
<td>Senior Journalist</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
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<td>Mr Ho Kay Tat</td>
<td>22-27 Nov 2004</td>
<td>The Edge</td>
<td>Senior Journalist</td>
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</table>
Apprentices
(Question No. 4113)

Ms Macklin asked the Minister for Vocational and Technical Education, in writing, on 6 September 2006:

1. How many apprentices have received a toolkit under the Tools for Your Trade initiative?
2. How many apprentices does the department expect will receive a toolkit in (a) 2006, (b) 2007, (c) 2008, (d) 2009 and (e) 2010.
3. For the current Budget year, and for each year across the forward estimates period, what are the (a) administered and (b) departmental budget expenses for this initiative?

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

1. Since the Tools For Your Trade initiative commenced on 1 July 2005, 44,086 Australian Apprentices have received a voucher for use in purchasing tool kits under the initiative.
2. The Department expects the following numbers of Australian Apprentices will receive a tool kit in each financial year. Estimates are based on financial years, projected for the life of the programme to 30 June 2009.
   (a) 2006-07 - 35,029 Australian Apprentices
   (b) 2007-08 - 38,751 Australian Apprentices
   (c) 2008-09 - 40,084 Australian Apprentices
(3) The Department can provide the following forward estimates to 30 June 2009:

(a) Administered expenses
   2006-07 - $28.023m
   2007-08 - $28.782m
   2008-09 - $29.542m

(b) Departmental expenses
   2006-07 - $1.529m
   2007-08 - $1.589m
   2008-09 - $1.622m

New Apprenticeship Workforce Skills Development
(Question No. 4115)

Ms Macklin asked the Minister for Vocational and Technical Education, in writing, on 6 September 2006:

(1) What programs are funded under the ‘New Apprenticeship Workforce Skills Development’ line of Output 2.2 in the Education Science and Training portfolio budget.

(2) For each of the programs identified in Part (1), what is its budget for (a) the current Budget year and (b) for the forward estimates period.

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

(1) The following programmes are funded under the New Apprenticeship Workforce Skills Development (now the Australian Apprenticeship Workforce Skills Development) line of Output 2.2 in the Education, Science and Training portfolio budget:

- Group Training Australian Apprenticeships Targeted Initiatives (TIP);
- Training in the Trades;
- Tools for your Trade;
- Institute for Trade Skills Excellence;
- Industry Training Strategies;
- Strategic Intervention;
- COAG Skills Package – Regional Initiatives;
- COAG Skills Package – Mutual Recognition of Skills Qualifications;
- COAG Skills Package – Recognition of Prior Learning;
- COAG Skills Package – Skills Specialisation Development and Certification; and
- Australian Surf Lifesaver Training Academy.

(2) (a) and (b)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>2006-07 Budget $'000</th>
<th>2007-08 Budget $'000</th>
<th>2008-09 Budget $'000</th>
<th>2009-10 Budget $'000</th>
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<td>Group Training Australian Apprenticeships Targeted Initiatives</td>
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<td>5,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>5,333</td>
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<td>Training in the Trades</td>
<td>8,339</td>
<td>13,872</td>
<td>16,352</td>
<td>16,664</td>
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<td>Tools for your Trade</td>
<td>28,023</td>
<td>29,763</td>
<td>32,494</td>
<td>34,619</td>
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QUESTIONS IN WRITING
Ms Macklin asked the Minister for Vocational and Technical Education, in writing, on 6 September 2006:

(1) What programs are funded under the New Apprenticeship Access Program line of Output 2.2 in the Education Science and Training portfolio budget.

(2) For each of the programs identified in Part (1), what is its budget for (a) the current Budget year and (b) for the forward estimates period.

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

(1) The only programme funded under the New Apprenticeship Access Program (now the Australian Apprenticeships Access Programme) line of Output 2.2 is the Australian Apprenticeships Access Programme (The Access Programme). This programme offers disadvantaged jobseekers a pathway to an Australian Apprenticeship or employment or further education and training. The Access Programme provides pre-vocational training, job search assistance and post-placement support in the workplace. The pre-vocational training must be drawn from a qualification that leads to an Australian Apprenticeship pathway.

The Australian Government contracts brokers to provide the Access Programme services, who may then sub-contract providers. Brokers and providers run training courses in a number of industry areas, including the traditional trades, aged care, retail, child care, hospitality and business administration. Brokers are contracted to a specific value of commencements and outcomes to be achieved within the contract period, usually two to three years. Brokers are only paid for the commencements and outcomes they achieve within the contract period and they are expected to run at least one course in each designated site in each region for which they have contracted places. However, funding is not related to the specific courses, but rather overall contracted commencements and outcomes.

Funding has been provided for 9,500 commencements annually in the programme. Over 6,000 commencements have been achieved in the programme in the current calendar year and over 8,000 in the last financial year. It has delivered over 7,000 apprenticeship, employment or further training outcomes since the beginning of the 2002/03 financial year.
Media Monitoring and Clipping Services
(Question No. 4140)

Mr Bowen asked the Minister for Local Government, Territories and Roads, in writing, on 7 September 2006:

(1) What sum was spent on media monitoring and clipping services engaged by the Minister’s office in 2005-06.

(2) What was the name and postal address of each media monitoring company engaged by the Minister’s office.

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

(1) $61,330.69

(2) Media Monitors Australia Pty Ltd
   PO Box 2110
   STRAWBERRY HILLS NSW 2012

   Rehame Australia Monitoring
   PO Box 537
   PORT MELBOURNE VIC 3207

Energy Initiatives
(Question No. 4166)

Mr Bowen asked the Minister for Industry, Tourism and Resources, in writing, on 7 September 2006:

In respect of the Government’s LPG Vehicle Scheme, which was announced by the Prime Minister on 14 August 2006: (a) what sum has been spent on advertising the scheme; (b) in which newspapers have advertisements appeared and on what dates; (c) has the Government advertised the scheme on television or radio; if so, (i) on which commercial stations, (ii) on what dates, and (iii) at what time; and (d) which department or agency has oversight of the advertising campaign.

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

(a) As at 19 September 2006, $2,603,389 (ext GST) has been spent on advertising for the LPG Vehicle Scheme.

Attachment A (copy is available from the House of Representatives Table Office) answers question (b) in which newspapers have advertisements appeared and on what dates.

Attachment B (copy is available from the House of Representatives Table Office) answers question (c) has the Government advertised the scheme on television or radio; if so, (i) on which commercial stations, (ii) on what dates, and (iii) at what time.

(c) Please note that there was no television advertising undertaken for the LPG Vehicle Scheme.

(d) The Department of Industry Tourism and Resources has oversight of the LPG Vehicle Scheme advertising campaign.
Depleted Uranium  
(Question No. 4296)

Mr Martin Ferguson asked the Minister for Defence, in writing, on 12 September 2006: Does Australia have any depleted uranium munitions stored in Australian territory.

Dr Nelson—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:
No, and there has not been for over a decade.

Child Care  
(Question No. 4330)

Ms Plibersek asked the Attorney-General, in writing, on 12 September 2006:

(1) In respect of employees who salary-sacrifice income to pay for childcare: (a) does the agency know whether all such employees use childcare that is on Commonwealth business premises; (b) how many salary-sacrifice arrangements made by employees relating to childcare is for care not conducted on Commonwealth business premises; (c) how much fringe benefit tax did the agency pay in financial year (i) 2004-05 and (ii) 2005-06 sacrificed by employees for childcare that was not on Commonwealth business premises.

(2) Is fee assistance given by the agency for childcare in school holidays an allowance and reported on employees’ group certificates; if not, what is the tax-status of the assistance, and has the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) given advice that confirms its status.

(3) How much reimbursement is given by the agency for additional costs incurred by employees in meeting childcare fees needed by the employee because of travel or extra duties.

(4) Is the reimbursement referred to in Part (3) for approved care only, or can it be paid for any carer paid by the employee.

(5) Is the reimbursement referred to in Part (3) reported as an allowance on employees’ group certificates; if not, what is the tax-status of the reimbursed amount.

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

(1) (a) The employees used childcare facilities which were on Commonwealth business premises.  
(b) None  
(c) (i) No FBT paid (ii) Not applicable (no childcare on non-Commonwealth business premises).

(2) No fee assistance is given for school holiday childcare.

(3) If an employee is directed to perform additional hours of duty and is given less than 24 hours before the duty is to be performed and the employee must arrange for the care of dependent family members in order to perform the additional duty, the Secretary may approve the reimbursement of expenses reasonably incurred in making the arrangements for the care of dependent family members in order to perform the additional duty.

(4) Reimbursement can be paid for any carer paid by the employee.

(5) No; Reimbursements attract FBT for payments exceeding $100 (Section 58P of the FBTAA).

Superannuation  
(Question No. 4545)

Mr Kelvin Thomson asked the Treasurer, in writing, on 14 September 2006:
In respect of any communication campaign(s) that will be funded from the $0.5 billion allocated over four years for administration of A Plan to Simplify and Streamline Superannuation, (a) what are the cost
Mr Costello—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:


(a) to (e): The Government announced that additional funding of $500 million over four years is being provided to the ATO and other relevant departments and agencies to administer the proposed changes. The additional funding includes support for a public education campaign to explain the main features of the new arrangements.

Precise details associated with the development, duration, purpose and funding of a public education process are still being determined and will be subject to approval by the Ministerial Committee on Government Communications. It is expected that the public education campaign will commence prior to 1 July 2007.

(f): The Ministerial Committee on Government Communications scrutinises the formal evaluation of each Government funded public information campaign.