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SITTING DAYS—2007

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RADIO BROADCASTS
Broadcasts of proceedings of the Parliament can be heard on the following Parliamentary and News Network radio stations, in the areas identified.

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FORTY-FIRST PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION—NINTH 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, Ms Ann Kathleen Corcoran, Mr Barry Wayne Haase, Mr Michael John Hatton, the Hon. Duncan James Colquhoun Kerr SC, Mr Harry Vernon Quick, the Hon. Bruce Craig Scott, Mr Patrick Damien Secker, 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—Mr Anthony Norman Albanese MP
Deputy Manager of Opposition Business—Mr Robert Francis McMullan 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—Mr Kevin Michael Rudd MP
Deputy Leader—Ms Julia Eileen Gillard 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
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<td>Turnbull, Hon. Malcolm Bligh</td>
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**PARTY ABBREVIATIONS**

ALP—Australian Labor Party; LP—Liberal Party of Australia; Nats—The Nationals; Ind—Independent; CLP—Country Liberal Party; AG—Australian Greens

**Heads of Parliamentary Departments**

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

Prime Minister
Minister for Transport and Regional Services and Deputy Prime Minister
The Hon. John Winston Howard MP
The Hon. Mark Anthony James Vaile MP

Treasurer
Minister for Trade
Minister for Defence
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Minister for Health and Ageing and Leader of the House
The Hon. Peter Howard Costello MP
The Hon. Warren Errol Truss MP
The Hon. Dr Brendan John Nelson MP
The Hon. Alexander John Gosse Downer MP
The Hon. Anthony John Abbott MP

Attorney-General
Minister for Finance and Administration, Leader of the Government in the Senate and Vice-President of the Executive Council
The Hon. Philip Maxwell Ruddock MP
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 Citizenship
The Hon. Kevin James Andrews MP

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. Joseph Benedict Hockey 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 Water Resources
The Hon. Malcolm Bligh Turnbull MP

Minister for Human Services
Senator the Hon. Christopher Martin Ellison

(The above ministers constitute the cabinet)
Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation and Manager of Government Business in the Senate
Senator the Hon. Eric Abetz

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

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

Minister for Revenue and Assistant Treasurer
The Hon. Peter Craig Dutton MP

Minister for Workforce Participation
The Hon. Dr Sharman Nancy Stone MP

Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence
The Hon. Bruce Frederick Billson MP

Special Minister of State
The Hon. Gary Roy Nairn MP

Minister for Ageing
The Hon. Christopher Maurice Pyne MP

Minister for Vocational and Further Education
The Hon. Andrew John Robb MP

Minister for the Arts and Sport
Senator the Hon. George Henry Brandis SC

Minister for Community Services
Senator the Hon. Nigel Gregory Scullion

Minister for Justice and Customs
Senator the Hon. David Albert Lloyd Johnston

Assistant Minister for Immigration and Citizenship
The Hon. Teresa Gambaro MP

Assistant Minister for the Environment and Water Resources
The Hon. John Kenneth Cobb MP

Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister
The Hon. Anthony David Hawthorn Smith MP

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Transport and Regional Services
The Hon. De-Anne Margaret Kelly MP

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

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance and Administration
Senator the Hon. Richard Mansell Colbeck

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Industry, Tourism and Resources
The Hon. Robert Charles Baldwin MP

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Foreign Affairs
The Hon. Gregory Andrew Hunt MP

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
The Hon. Sussan Penelope Ley MP

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

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence
The Hon. Peter John Lindsay MP

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Ageing
Senator the Hon. Brett John Mason
SHADOW MINISTRY

Leader of the Opposition
Kevin Michael Rudd MP

Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Shadow Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Shadow Minister for Social Inclusion
Julia Eileen Gillard MP

Leader of the Opposition in the Senate and Shadow Minister for National Development, Resources and Energy
Senator Christopher Vaughan Evans

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

Shadow Minister for Infrastructure and Water and Manager of Opposition Business in the House
Anthony Norman Albanese MP

Shadow Minister for Homeland Security, Shadow Minister for Justice and Customs and Shadow Minister for Territories
The Hon. Archibald Ronald Bevis MP

Shadow Assistant Treasurer and Shadow Minister for Revenue and Competition Policy
Christopher Eyles Bowen MP

Shadow Minister for Immigration, Integration and Citizenship
Anthony Stephen Burke MP

Shadow Minister for Industry and Shadow Minister for Innovation, Science and Research
Senator Kim John Carr

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

Shadow Minister for Service Economy, Small Business and Independent Contractors
Craig Anthony Emerson MP

Shadow Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Shadow Minister for Urban Development and Shadow Minister for Consumer Affairs
Laurence Donald Thomas Ferguson MP

Shadow Minister for Transport, Roads and Tourism
Martin John Ferguson MP

Shadow Minister for Defence
Joel Andrew Fitzgibbon MP

Shadow Minister for Climate Change, Environment and Heritage and Shadow Minister for the Arts
Peter Robert Garrett MP

Shadow Minister for Veterans’ Affairs, Shadow Minister for Defence Science and Personnel and Shadow Special Minister of State
Alan Peter Griffin MP

Shadow Attorney-General and Manager of Opposition Business in the Senate
Senator Joseph William Ludwig

Shadow Minister for Sport and Recreation, Shadow Minister for Health Promotion and Shadow Minister for Local Government
Senator Kate Alexandra Lundy

Shadow Minister for Families and Community Services and Shadow Minister for Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation
Jennifer Louise Macklin MP

Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs
Robert Bruce McClelland MP

Shadow Minister for Ageing, Disabilities and Careers
Senator Jan Elizabeth McLucas
Shadow Minister for Federal/State Relations, Shadow Minister for International Development Assistance and Deputy Manager of Opposition Business in the House
Robert Francis McMullan MP

Shadow Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Forestry
Senator Kerry Williams Kelso O’Brien

Shadow Minister for Human Services, Shadow Minister for Housing, Shadow Minister for Youth and Shadow Minister for Women
Tanya Joan Plibersek MP

Shadow Minister for Health
Nicola Louise Roxon MP

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

Shadow Minister for Education and Training
Stephen Francis Smith MP

Shadow Treasurer
Wayne Maxwell Swan MP

Shadow Minister for Finance
Lindsay James Tanner MP

Shadow Minister for Public Administration and Accountability, Shadow Minister for Corporate Governance and Responsibility and Shadow Minister for Workforce Participation
Senator Penelope Ying Yen Wong

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs
Anthony Michael Byrne MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Defence and Veterans’ Affairs
The Hon. Graham John Edwards MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Environment and Heritage
Jennie George MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Treasury
Catherine Fiona King MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Education
Kirsten Fiona Livermore MP

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

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Industrial Relations
Brendan Patrick John O’Connor MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Industry and Innovation
Bernard Fernando Ripoll MP

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

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Opposition (Social and Community Affairs)
Senator Ursula Mary Stephens
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Tuesday, 8 May 2007

The SPEAKER (Hon. David Hawker) took the chair at 2 pm and read prayers.

CONDOLENCES

Senator Jeannie Margaret Ferris

Mr HOWARD (Bennelong—Prime Minister) (2.01 pm)—I move:

That the House record its deep regret at the death on 2 April 2007 of Senator Jeannie Margaret Ferris, Senator for South Australia, and place on record its appreciation of her long and meritorious public service and tender its profound sympathy to her family in their bereavement.

The death of one of our serving colleagues always touches us in a particular way. Jeannie Ferris’s death on 2 April this year, after a long and heroic struggle against ovarian cancer, touched all of us in this parliament, particularly her many friends and colleagues within the Liberal Party in South Australia and elsewhere and also the rural community of Australia.

Jeannie fought her illness with great tenacity. She was candid and open about the likely outcome but she never gave up hope. I will always remember one night ringing her in Canberra after she had received what could only be called a terrible prognosis. She was surrounded by her family and friends. She was frank about the daunting task ahead, but absolutely determined to do her best to fight the illness and to be an inspiration to others suffering like cancers. I know that the Deputy Prime Minister in his remarks will have something to say about the great courage she displayed in accompanying him on a trip to Baghdad in order to do good things for the wheat industry of Australia. The outcome of that was an arrangement with the Iraqi government that saved a wheat shipment that otherwise would have been lost, as it had been caught up in concerns flowing from the inquiry into the activities of AWB.

She was a person who had a rich and varied life. The memorial service held in the Great Hall was not only in a fitting location to say farewell to a loved friend and colleague but also an opportunity in the national parliament to honour somebody who was the genuine article.

Jeannie was born in Auckland, New Zealand, in March 1941. She came to Australia in the early 1960s to continue her education at Monash University. There she graduated in agricultural economics. She first worked on the Rotorua Post in New Zealand and then continued her journalistic career here in Australia. She worked on the Canberra Times and was editor of the Yass Tribune. She took great pride in claiming that she was the first female newspaper editor for 165 years in rural Australia.

She worked in public relations and she worked in the early 1980s for CSIRO. Later she was to find her real love, which combined a passion for the bush and politics, when she became director of public relations with the National Farmers Federation. She also served for a period of time as corporate affairs director of the South Australian Farmers Federation. At the NFF she formed a close association with a former colleague of ours, Ian McLachlan, who famously led the NFF through some of its most effective years in the 1980s. Ian spoke very warmly at the memorial service of her dedication to people in rural Australia. Jeannie often spoke with great pride about that amazing gathering of 45,000 Australian farmers outside the Old Parliament House in 1985. They gathered in peaceful assembly to voice their concern about policies that they believed were hurting the farmers of this country. It was a well-mannered, well-ordered protest. There was no property damage, and no need for hordes of police to restrain people who were endeavouring to break the law.
Jeannie participated in a number of delegations representing the Senate overseas in places as diverse as Venezuela, Morocco, Latvia, Mexico and the Russian Federation. She was a dedicated parliamentarian. She served as Whip in the Senate, and her booming voice down the corridor with expressions such as 'I want to talk to you!' brought many recalcitrant coalition senators to heel.

One of her proudest moments in the Senate came only a few weeks before her death when she spoke in the Senate about her involvement in the inquiry by the Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs into gynaecological cancers. Supported by Jeannie’s hard work and advocacy, the report, titled Breaking the silence, was instrumental in drawing attention to the issues involved in dealing with this form of cancer, particularly for women in rural Australia. It is now a matter of record that the government responded to the report by providing $1 million in seed funding for a new gynaecological cancer centre. Her speech on the success of the report came, as we now know, when she was receiving treatment for this terrible disease, and it was to be her last speech in the Senate.

As I told the service in the Great Hall, I have not forgotten her last attendance at a joint party meeting. As is the wont, I guess, of both sides of politics, when members and senators arrive they tend to take a seat and hang onto it. She took a seat—I think I would put it this way—to the centre right of the desk. That was moderately appropriate—if I can mix my metaphors—to describe Jeannie’s position on many things. What struck me on that occasion was that, despite the terrible health challenge she faced, she was in there talking about issues of enormous importance to rural Australia. I know, from discussions I have had with my wife—who takes an interest in many of the matters that Jeannie was interested in—of her intense concern and passion for people struggling with cancer and struggling particularly with the form of cancer that ultimately claimed her life.

We have lost a wonderful stalwart of rural Australia. She was an intensely practical woman who believed in doing practical things to get practical outcomes for the intensely practical Australians who live in the rural part of our country. She was passionate about the things that she believed in and, although she was broadly conservative on many issues, you could not typecast her. That was one of the endearing things about her personality. She was a passionate believer—let me leave you in no doubt—in labour market deregulation. She was a great believer in the reforms that this government has enacted in that area. She was a great believer in the right of people to negotiate directly with each other, subject to decent minimum conditions. She was a great proponent of the cause of rural Australia in some of those historic industrial relations disputes and debates of the 1980s, such as at Mudginberri. When working with Ian McLachlan, when he was President of the National Farmers Federation, they represented a powerful force for change and reform in those areas.

I am very saddened by her death. I liked Jeannie immensely. She was courageous, she was very gutsy, she was very forthright, she was a lovable soul and she cared about her duties. We will miss her terribly. We extend our deep condolences to her two sons who suffered the double tragedy of losing their mother and father in the same week. It is hard to imagine how anyone could properly come to terms with this terrible tragedy. It is a sad thing when you farewell a serving colleague who has been taken long before her time and claimed by a terrible illness. But she left behind a wonderful example of courage in adversity, a determination to help other women facing this terrible illness and

CHAMBER
for all of us, her former colleagues, a memory of a lovable soul and somebody who cared deeply for her country. We offer our sympathy to Robbie and Jeremy and their extended family as we mourn and record the death of a wonderful Australian.

Mr RUDD (Griffith—Leader of the Opposition) (2.11 pm)—I rise in support of the Prime Minister’s motion of condolence. Jeannie Ferris was devoted to public service—as a journalist, as a public relations director, as a corporate affairs director, as an adviser and as a senator. Jeannie Ferris always worked in pursuit of public service. It is what drove her, it is what motivated her and it is what inspired her—to make a contribution, to serve and to make a difference. Above all, this is what each of us in this building strives to do, each in our own different way—to make a difference. For a decade in the Senate Jeannie Ferris did just that. Jeannie made a difference and delivered for her state of South Australia and for her community. Jeannie had many friends in this building from all sides of politics. Jeannie had a smile which always had a habit of bringing a smile to your own face. Jeannie was feisty, gutsy, warm and gregarious and she drew people to her. You could not help but respect her— you could not help but like her, actually—and you could not help but admire her.

It was a combination of her hard work, her energy and her quick wit which earned Jeannie her appointment as Deputy Government Whip in the Senate in 2001 and Government Whip in August 2002. This was a role to which Jeannie was well suited—that of keeping her colleagues in line and keeping the Senate running efficiently. Jeannie recounted what she told her colleagues back in 2005. She said: ‘I told them that now more than at any other time this parliament turns on the power of one’—this is a message for all whips. ‘I told them missing a vote will make them very famous and very famous very quickly. There will be no excuses. They will be slaves to the beepers and bells.’ She said: ‘When you hear the bells, don’t worry what it’s about; just start walking. If you are over there on the Reps side, walk fast. If you are upstairs in a committee room, walk doubly fast—in fact, run. Use the stairs; don’t rely on the lifts.’ If we had all taken Jeannie’s advice, we would all be much fitter today.

Over the years, one of the things which we on our side of politics always admired about Jeannie was her frankness. She was never afraid to speak her mind, even when it meant disagreeing with her colleagues. And Jeannie did so on a range of issues, such as family custody, drug law reform, abortion, IVF and stem cell research. Jeannie was also an active contributor to the Senate committee process, one often largely unseen and unheralded. There is no doubt that Senate committees play an important role in this place. They have often protected the Australian community against poorly drafted legislation or poor public policy and they have on occasions exposed neglect, administrative failures and corruption.

Jeannie was a very active participant in that committee system. She used her skill and experience not simply to advance her party’s political interests but also to pursue important policy matters. She had a particular passion for rural Australia. She loved the bush. She loved the bush with a passion. She would always be talking about the bush. If you browse through the reports from the rural and regional affairs committee, for example, you will find endless examples of Jeannie pursuing the interests of Australian farmers. You would find evidence of Jeannie criticising poor government policy and you would find her mounting a case for a change to that policy. Jeannie took the same approach to her work with the Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs and, in
particular, as the Prime Minister has just made mention of, the landmark report *Breaking the silence: a national voice for gynaecological cancers* adopted last year.

While tenaciously fighting her own battle with ovarian cancer, Jeannie did all she could to help others fighting the same battles. The late and much-loved Peter Cook did much the same. Jeannie described her own journey, like that of many other women, as ‘a largely silent journey’, which was at times, in her own words, ‘quite frightening’. Jeannie described how scores of women were simply unable to find the support they needed, how often women have feelings of—and I use her words again:

... guilt, shame and embarrassment, and as a result their gynaecological cancer journey is often made alone and in silence ...

Jeannie described her own battle with cancer as a journey. Jeannie showed tremendous courage to return to the Senate after undergoing cancer treatment last year. In bringing a new focus to this terrible and insidious disease and advocating tirelessly for more government assistance, Jeannie was an instrument in gaining support for a national centre for ovarian, cervical and other gynaecological cancers. Jeannie lost her personal battle, but leaves a legacy which anyone would be proud of.

For Jeannie’s family, again as the Prime Minister has made mention of, her loss soon became a double tragedy. Just days after Jeannie’s death came the very sad news that Jeannie’s former husband, Bob Ferris, who was a journalist here in Canberra, had died after a car accident. Life can in fact be very unkind to so very many.

On behalf of the parliamentary Labor Party, we offer our condolences especially to Jeannie’s sons, Robbie and Jeremy, her family, her friends and her colleagues. They should know that Jeannie had many, many friends in the parliamentary Labor Party, particularly among Labor women, who loved her dearly. Her life and her legacy will be warmly remembered for years to come.

**Mr VAILE** (Lyne—Deputy Prime Minister) (2.17 pm)—I join the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition in recording our sympathies to the family of Jeannie Ferris and our great sadness that the nation has lost a great contributor to public affairs in the Senate, in this parliament and in this government. Jeannie Ferris was a great friend and colleague to us all and a great advocate for all matters regarding rural Australia, notwithstanding her beginnings, coming from the Land of the Long White Cloud. Her first employment was actually with the Rotorua Daily Post in New Zealand. When she did move to Australia and started working in journalism in this area with the Canberra Times and the ABC in the press gallery, she very quickly, as we all knew, picked up her Australianness and loved this country dearly, particularly that part of Australia that we lovingly refer to as the bush.

That passion about rural Australia only became much stronger when she later went on to work for the NFF as their political adviser here and in South Australia. She was, of course, as the Prime Minister indicated, a participant in many of those great struggles as far as the rural community in Australia is concerned that are now part of our folklore and our history in getting a greater understanding of the differential circumstances that confront and beset families living and working in regional Australia. She continued that fight for greater recognition of their circumstances when she entered the Senate in 1996.

It was not a smooth start, coming into the Senate in 1996, but it was certainly an indication of her tenacity that she did ultimately join the Senate. She actually had to resign
shortly after taking office because she had worked on Senator Minchin’s staff between her election to the Senate in March 1996 and the start of her term in office in July of that year. Fortunately, the parliament of South Australia then very wisely reappointed her to fill her own casual vacancy. It was an indication of the strength of commitment that she had to public service, to serving the nation and particularly that rural constituency in the nation. Once she got into the Senate, Jeannie Ferris became a strong and effective advocate for matters of rural and regional Australia right until the end of her career and the end of her wonderful life.

As the Prime Minister indicated, one of my most memorable experiences and one that is the epitome of her commitment and tenacity was in February of last year at the height of the debate about the future of the Australian wheat industry, our relationship with Iraq and that market for Australian wheat growers. Jeannie, as the chair of the government’s agriculture policy backbench committee, joined me on a trip to Iraq. In spite of her illness and going against the advice of her oncologist, she took that trip because she saw how important that was going to be to Australian wheat growers to be able to deliver a message on behalf of Australian wheat growers to the government in Iraq.

We travelled to the Middle East and flew into Baghdad in the normal manner that you can: in an RAAF C130 with helmets and flak jackets on. We should bear in mind that when Jeannie undertook this trip she had only just completed a fairly lengthy series of chemotherapy treatments that had left her quite weakened. Once we got to Baghdad we then had to transfer straight into US Air Force Black Hawk helicopters to fly from the airport into the Green Zone. Again, wearing flak jackets in the transfer and running across the tarmac it was exhausting for all of us—and I know the Prime Minister has had this experience as well. But the only thing that Jeannie was concerned about—and she declared that it was her only fear—was that her wig stayed on straight underneath the helmet whilst the cameras were on us and taking photographs of us racing across to jump into the Black Hawk helicopters and buckle up for the trip into the Green Zone. Of course, she did that with great aplomb and did it very, very well.

When we met Deputy Prime Minister Ahmed Chalabi and his ministers in the main parliamentary building, we had quite a lengthy, frank discussion about the difficult circumstances at the time and the fact that we were representing the interests of wheat growers and no other entities in between. Jeannie was able to make that crisply clear, as a member of the parliament, not necessarily as a member of the executive—and she did. She engaged very deeply in the complications of the process at the time and the processes of the wheat trade. She had a profound impact on getting agreement from Deputy Prime Minister Chalabi that they would continue to do business with Australian wheat growers. This is just one of the great memories and legacies that Jeannie Ferris has left us.

To do that trip at that time, straight after her very tiring chemotherapy treatment, was a great testament to the feisty way she undertook her commitment to the people of rural and regional Australia. It has left everlasting memories in my mind as, only months before that time, I had had a brush with another form of cancer which, fortunately, I have survived. I know that I am not the only one in this place who has had that experience. So we all feel very deeply that Jeannie was not able to beat this insidious disease. It is incumbent upon all of us to ensure that we do whatever we possibly and humanly can to find cures for this disease, to ensure that our children do not face the sorts of challenges
later in life which ultimately took Jeannie’s life.

We will all have those everlasting and very fond memories of Jeannie Ferris. She will be greatly missed. I join with the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition in expressing our sympathies and condolences, particularly to her sons, Robbie and Jeremy, and to the rest of her family and friends.

Ms GILLARD (Lalor) (2.24 pm)—Today I rise to pay my tribute to the life and parliamentary career of Senator Jeannie Ferris and, in so doing, to support the motion moved by the Prime Minister and seconded by the Leader of the Opposition, to which the Deputy Prime Minister has just made a contribution. Of course, as the earlier speakers have said, Jeannie Ferris made a strong contribution to the life of her parliamentary party, to the life of the government and to the life of rural Australians and, of course, she was a strong contributor on behalf of my state of origin, South Australia. She was a parliamentarian who contributed beyond the confines of party politics and seemed to take a great deal of delight in doing so. She was a passionate advocate of Australian friendship with America and she was, until the day she died, Chair of the US Australia Parliamentary Friendship Group.

She will be most remembered by many on this side of the House for the things she did for the betterment of women and for the stance she took in this parliament and more broadly on behalf of women. As has been indicated to the parliament today, she made an unbelievably outstanding contribution when battling cancer herself to lead the Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs, along with a number of female senators, to make sure that there was a spotlight on the plight of women with gynaecological cancer.

We should not forget that on the very day the committee reported to the Senate—after the moving and heartfelt experiences of those who made submissions to the committee were heard by the Senate—Jeannie Ferris herself marked the first year of her own battle with ovarian cancer. I am sure her colleagues in the Senate would agree that it was due to her dedication to this work that the government’s reaction to this report was timely and very responsive.

It was not the only time that Jeannie Ferris battled alongside other women in this parliament to do what she thought was right. She contributed to the stem cell debate. She had a passionate view about medical research and in making a contribution to that debate she talked about how research could in future make a difference for people who were battling cancer. She was prepared to argue strongly for that legislation in this parliament.

In a similar vein, she battled with others within her party and beyond to ensure that there was prompt funding available for the cervical cancer vaccine and that that be made available to Australian women and girls as soon as possible. In her own party room she advocated the rights of women and their families to gain access to IVF treatment on the basis of medical assessment rather than age or income. She strove constantly to make sure that women had the ability to make their own set of choices. When she made her first speech to the Senate, Jeannie paid tribute to great Australian women and recounted the great privilege she felt when, working as a press gallery journalist, she met Dame Enid Lyons in Canberra. In her maiden speech, she quoted Dame Enid’s famous remarks from her first book where she described her entry into the federal parliament as:

... like a lamb to the slaughter, like a sheep before the shearsers, I was led forth to have a go.
There was never anything lamb-like about Jeannie Ferris. She was feisty. I am sure she could be ferocious. I never saw the ferocious side of her. Some Labor colleagues in the Senate undoubtedly did and I am sure many of her party colleagues here today also saw the ferocious side of her from time to time. Along with being feisty and ferocious, she was enormously good fun. She had an inherent sense of mischief and, with her sparkling big blue eyes, she was a very stylish older woman. I would look at her as she would be making merry and I would think, ‘Gee, as a younger woman, she must have been drop-dead gorgeous and the life of every party she attended.’ She was just great good fun.

One of the great things about this parliament is that from time to time—perhaps on too few occasions—women work across party lines to support things they genuinely believe are in the interests of Australian women. I did have the opportunity to get to know Jeannie in that context. We had some great fun. We shared some jokes, mainly at the expense of our male parliamentary colleagues—they probably do not bear retelling and ought not be retold. Jeannie was also passionate about the things she believed in and had enormous political savvy. I will always remember her that way.

I want to pay tribute to the work that she did in this parliament and say that my thoughts are with her sons, Robbie and Jeremy. As people have remarked, and I believe the Prime Minister himself remarked, it is almost too much to imagine that any children could lose both their father and their mother in such a short time and in such tragic and interrelated circumstances. It was an enormous double tragedy for them to bear and our thoughts are with them as well on this day.

Mr Rudd interjecting—

Mr DOWNER—The Leader of the Opposition wants me to tell the House more. I think not. Jeannie was a wonderful person to share a house with. She would come back late at night and we would sit around, sometimes having a drink—in fact most times
having a drink—while she regaled us in a lively and feisty way with stories of what had happened during the day and her irritation with different senators and members of parliament, sometimes Labor but frankly sometimes not, and with a good deal of gossip. It is sometimes said that you should not gossip too much, and we all pretend we are a bit above gossip, but the fact is that everyone likes to hear a little bit of gossip and Jeannie was a great one for that. She always had a story about what was happening over here in Parliament House or back in South Australia which was of great interest to us.

I recall her, towards the end of last year, coming back late one night. I was sitting in the living room watching television—I guess watching *Lateline* or one of those late-night programs on the ABC—and Jeannie came in and started talking about the stem cell issue, which she was very passionate about. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has spoken of her passion on that issue. She asked me what I thought about it and I talked a bit, without any great expertise, of my feelings about it. She started harassing and cajoling me and telling me that it was enormously important for the future of humanity that I support this piece of legislation. I did not dare resist her. I did vote for the legislation. Her advocacy was very important in making up my mind on that issue. It was typical of Jeannie, really, because Jeannie was essentially a pretty conservative person; there is no doubt about that. She believed in the great verities of conservative politics in Australia. But on a range of different issues, particularly medical issues—and you find this a bit in South Australia—she was actually what you might call liberal. And stem cell research was one of those issues that she did feel very passionate about.

She was an enormous champion of rural Australia, specifically rural South Australia. I had a meeting recently with apple growers in my own electorate. They were telling me, and I pass it on to the House, how deeply they missed Jeannie Ferris, who had been such a champion of the apple industry in its controversial problems with the possible importation of New Zealand apples and the risk of fire blight. She was enormously popular amongst other rural industries in South Australia and, no doubt, more broadly around Australia.

She was a champion of many causes, a woman of enormous courage. She was not one of those people who would shy away from an argument because she did not want confrontation or thought it might not suit her preselection prospects. She was somebody who very passionately stood up for what she believed in. She was a woman whom I admired enormously and who, I know, was admired right across the spectrum of the Liberal Party in South Australia and throughout very much of the South Australian community. She is and will continue to be very sadly missed by so many of us. I join with others in passing on my deepest condolences to her sons, Robbie and Jeremy, and to her extended family.

Ms PLIBERSEK (Sydney) (2.36 pm)—I take this opportunity to add my support to the motion that has been moved by the Prime Minister and seconded by the Leader of the Opposition. In a place where, by definition, our actions are political, Senator Jeannie Ferris stood out time and again as someone prepared to put politics aside for the greater good. That is not to suggest that she was not a strong and committed activist for her own side—she clearly had a long and devoted history of supporting the Liberal Party—but she had a lot more to her than that. She was a proud South Australian by adoption if not by birth. She was a journalist, a lobbyist and a political staffer. The Minister for Foreign Affairs has described her as a conservative. I am not sure whether she would have de-
scribed herself that way but she certainly fitted my definition of a feminist. She was a strong supporter of equality between men and women and a strong supporter of women’s participation in the political decision-making process.

She was an outspoken critic of internet gambling and the dangers it holds in increasing problem gambling. She raised at various times the dangers of marijuana smoking and its link with teen suicide. She stood up for grandparents who are separated from the grandchildren they love after the parents divorce.

Jeannie Ferris covered very many topics in her years as a senator, but perhaps she was best known for her commitment to women’s health. Labor women have long known that there are allies in the coalition ranks, women and men whom we can go to when there are serious health issues at stake and say: ‘Let’s put politics aside. Let’s work together for the benefit of the people we represent.’ Women’s health issues were always on the agenda for Jeannie Ferris, and we always knew that we would get a good hearing, we would get wise advice and we would get dedicated action.

Senator Ferris was an outspoken defender of reproductive choice. She understood that no woman makes the decision lightly to terminate a pregnancy. She always opposed the periodic suggestions to make access to pregnancy termination more difficult. She was a leader in the RU486 debate. She was also a firm defender of women’s ability to access IVF treatment based on medical suitability rather than on age or on other discriminatory measures. In this she was absolutely consistent. Time and again she supported a woman’s right to choose as much as is possible when and if to have a baby.

She also supported much greater choice for women once they had had their children. She was a supporter of greater funding for child care. She was well known for her work on stem cell research, too, as the Minister for Foreign Affairs has said. Senator Ferris said, ‘Science helped save my life, so these days I listen very closely to scientists.’ I am sure that her personal experience in the later years of her life was a very strong motivating factor. As usual, Jeannie was using her personal difficulties to benefit society more broadly.

Jeannie Ferris was a brave woman. Others have spoken about her travel to Iraq, despite fears for her own safety, to urge the Iraqis to take our wheat. But perhaps her greatest act of bravery was the dignity with which she dealt with her ovarian cancer. Even when she knew she was gravely ill she wanted to use that knowledge for the benefit of others. She chaired an extremely well-received Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs inquiry into gynaecological cancers. The report was well received by the government and was responded to within what must have been record time, less than six months, with most recommendations accepted in full. I know that the Labor senators who worked with Jeannie Ferris on that report credit her leadership for the excellent results they received.

I am sure that I speak for all members of parliament when I offer my sincerest condolences to Jeannie Ferris’s family, in particular to her sons, Robbie and Jeremy, and to all of her friends. And I am sure that I speak for all of us when I say that all those who had the benefit of working with her respected her outspokenness, her sincerity, her constructive approach, her dedication and her bravery.

The SPEAKER—As a mark of respect, I invite honourable members to rise in their places.

Honourable members having stood in their places—

The SPEAKER—I thank the House.
Debate (on motion by Mr Abbott) adjourned.

MAIN COMMITTEE
Condolences: Senator Jeannie Margaret Ferris
Reference
Mr ABBOTT (Warringah—Leader of the House) (2.41 pm)—by leave—I move:
That the resumption of the debate on the Prime Minister’s motion of condolence in connection with the death of Senator Jeannie Margaret Ferris be referred to the Main Committee.
Question agreed to.

MINISTERIAL ARRANGEMENTS
Mr HOWARD (Bennelong—Prime Minister) (2.42 pm)—I inform the House that the Treasurer will be absent from question time today. He is finalising his preparation for the budget speech this evening, and in his absence, I will answer questions on his behalf.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE
Workplace Relations
Mr RUDD (2.42 pm)—My question is to the Prime Minister. I refer the Prime Minister to his $55 million advertising campaign which promised working Australians that award conditions like penalty rates and overtime would be ‘protected by law’. Given that the Prime Minister’s previous much advertised industrial relations law did not protect these award conditions as he promised, why should any Australian believe that his pre-election industrial relations law will now protect these basic award conditions?

Mr HOWARD—Unlike the Leader of the Opposition, I know what my party’s policy is. I take the opportunity of reminding this House that last Friday I announced that the government would legislate a fairness test in relation to those circumstances where any employee might agree to trade away such things as penalty rates and overtime. The purpose of the fairness test will be to ensure that fair compensation has been given in return. We have decided to introduce this fairness test because, when the legislation was put through more than a year ago, it was never the intention that it become the norm that such things as penalty rates and overtime would be traded away without proper compensation.

I also take the opportunity of reminding the parliament, and in particular reminding the Leader of the Opposition, that since the introduction of Work Choices more than 276,000 new jobs have been created, real wages have continued to rise and unemployment has hit a 32-year low, while strike action is now lower than at any time since 1913.

You may have heard me say those things before, and you will hear me say those things again in the future. But I will add another thing you will hear me say a great deal of in the future, and that is that long-term unemployment in this country, namely the measure of people who have been out of work for more than a year, is now at its lowest level since that particular statistic began to be kept. In fact, it has fallen by 22 per cent over the last year. So I conclude, in responding to the Leader of the Opposition, by saying that I think I am across the detail of our policy, and the minister is across the detail. I suggest the Leader of the Opposition bone up on his own policy.

Economy
Mr HENRY (2.45 pm)—My question is addressed to the Prime Minister. Would the Prime Minister outline to the House the government’s plans to keep the economy strong into the future? Is the Prime Minister aware of alternative plans which will put the future of the economy in jeopardy?

Mr HOWARD—I might best answer that question from the member for Hasluck by asking him to come along at half past seven
tonight to hear the Treasurer, who has been the principal architect within the government of our great economic prosperity, outline the plan on behalf of the government. But without in any way pre-empting my colleague, let me say that the sorts of policies that have brought us to a situation where we are now enjoying the longest unbroken economic expansion in Australia’s history are not things that have come by happenstance. There is a line being run by the opposition that the economy is something out there and it does not matter who runs it, it will keep going well—as if the economy were on autopilot. The truth is that the strong economy we now have is the result of decisions taken by this government over the last 11 years—difficult decisions, all of which, incidentally, have been opposed by the Australian Labor Party. The Australian Labor Party opposed us getting the budget into surplus, they opposed us paying off $96 billion of government debt, they opposed the first round of industrial relations reform, they opposed waterfront reform, they opposed taxation reform, they opposed the second round of industrial relations reform and they opposed the sale of Telstra—although they are now happy to use that as a launching pad for their own attempts to raid the Future Fund in the name of providing this country with broadband when, in reality, it is not the business of taxpayers to fund broadband; it should be a product of the proper operation of the market circumstances of our economy.

The member for Hasluck asked me if I am aware of any alternative policy. One alternative policy I am aware of—I think I am aware of it, because it keeps changing—is the industrial relations policy of the Leader of the Opposition. Isn’t it interesting? We now have a situation where the real extremists on industrial relations are the members of the Australian Labor Party. They are the people that would hand industrial relations in this country over to the union bosses. You can be certain of these things about Labor’s industrial relations policy: firstly, they will put union power ahead of workers’ jobs; secondly, they will bring back the job-destroying unfair dismissal laws; and, thirdly, they will hand over to an industrial relations system dominated by collective bargaining—a return of union power at a time when trade unions in this country are peopled by only 15 per cent of the private sector workforce. Only 15 per cent of the private sector workforce of this country now choose to belong to a trade union, yet the Labor Party want to give union power and union bosses 100 per cent control of our industrial relations system. Maybe that has got something to do with the fact that 60 to 70 per cent of the Labor Party frontbench are former union officials.

Economy

Mr RUDD (2.49 pm)—My question is again to the Prime Minister, and I refer to his previous answer on a properly informed economic policy. Was the Treasury secretary, Ken Henry, right when he said that the government’s policy outcomes in relation to water reform and climate change would have been far superior had Treasury’s views been more influential? Prime Minister, what institutional changes has the government made since this statement by Dr Henry to ensure that it is properly responding to the advice of the Department of the Treasury?

Mr HOWARD—The answer is no.

Economy

Mr BARRESI (2.50 pm)—My question is addressed to the Prime Minister. Would the Prime Minister outline to the House how flexible workplace laws help keep the economy strong? Is the Prime Minister aware of any alternative policies that would damage the economy?
Mr HOWARD—I can give an unequivocal response to the member for Deakin, who is doing a remarkable job as chairman of the government members task group on industrial relations reform, in saying that the hallmark of this government’s policies concerning workplace relations has been to produce greater stability. We have made three major changes to the industrial relations laws in the 11 years we have been in office: there were the Reith reforms of 1996, bitterly opposed by the Labor Party; there were the changes to the operation of Australia’s waterfront—we were told you could not possibly have any more than 17 or 18 crane movements of containers per hour; yet, as a result of the changes that have been introduced, we now have world’s best practice performance of something like 27 or 28 an hour; and then, of course, there have been the changes introduced by the government through the WorkChoices legislation. All of these changes have improved the flexibility of the Australian economy.

The sad thing is that the alternative government of this country want to destroy that flexibility. They talk about fairness with flexibility or ‘forward with fairness and flexibility’, but the reality is that their policy would destroy that flexibility. Their policy would create a situation where, if 51 per cent of people in a workplace voted in favour of a collective agreement, the employer—the person who invests the money to employ the people and to start the business—would have no right to have a workplace agreement with any one of the remaining 49 per cent. They would introduce a system which says that, if you had 100 employees in a firm and 99 of them wanted to negotiate as a group with the employer, one person could say, ‘I want the union to represent me in the negotiation’—nothing wrong with that, no objection to that, no objection at all. But, under the other provisions of the policy, if there were not an agreement reached with the union representing that one person, it would then go off to this body called Fair Work Australia, where an arbitrated solution or outcome would be imposed on the employer and the 99 employees. I do not call that ‘forward with fairness and flexibility’; I call that backwards with inflexibility and unfairness—and that is a feature of the policy.

What is fascinating about this policy is that the Leader of the Opposition is not across the detail of it. Time and time again he was asked questions about the policy and he brushed them off. He said, ‘I have left all of that to the deputy leader; I am not quite across all the detail of it.’ My advice, through you, Mr Speaker, to the Leader of the Opposition is: you had better get across the detail of it very quickly, because when you are in the sort of position you occupy you should be across the detail of your policy. You should understand the implications it has for workers. You should understand that what you have done is to hand back the power of trade unions’ control over Australia’s industrial relations position.

The real story of Labor’s industrial relations saga is that the Leader of the Opposition was running around the business community saying, ‘Don’t worry, it will be all right: I will not be stood over by the trade unions.’ He goes along to his national conference, he hands it over to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, she goes off and does a deal with Greg Combet and, lo and behold, the business community comes out shaking its head and saying, ‘This is the same old Labor Party, the mob that always cave in to the union bosses.’

Economy

Mr RUDD (2.54 pm)—I refer to the Prime Minister’s answer to my previous question—a question which asked, ‘Was the Treasury secretary right when he said that
the government’s policy outcomes in relation to water reform and climate change would have been far superior if the Treasury’s views had been more influential?—and the Prime Minister’s answer to that question, which was no, he did not think that the Treasury secretary was right. Will the Prime Minister inform the House whether he believes that the following remarks from the Secretary to the Department of the Treasury are right as well, when he warned Treasury officers that:

Divisions will now be under pressure to respond to the growing number of policy proposals leading up to the calling of an election and once the election is called. At this time there is a greater than usual risk of the development of policy proposals that are frankly bad.

Mr HOWARD—I can inform the House that between now and the caretaker period, whenever that may begin—and I have not the faintest idea, for the information of the Leader of the Opposition—there will be no bad policies from this government; and between the caretaker period and the election there will not be bad policies either, not from our side of politics. But I am already seeing a lot of bad policy from the other side.

To start with, we have an industrial relations policy which is an absolute dog’s breakfast for the Labor Party. I cannot believe it. They were running around telling Australians that we had an extreme industrial relations policy. They are the people with the extreme policy. It is the Australian Labor Party that wants to hand over workplaces not to workers or to employers; they want to hand over the control of workplaces to trade unions, which represent only 15 per cent of the private sector workforce.

I saw the Leader of the Opposition speaking in Brisbane. He was addressing a rally. That is fine; we all like addressing rallies—and I will not make any comment about that. But what he has to understand is that, when you have a business, somebody invests money in that business, and the somebody who invests the money actually takes the risk. I think there is something fundamentally unfair about an industrial relations policy that says that, if an employer wants to make an agreement with some of his employees of a certain kind, he will be prohibited by law from making that agreement. That is the consequence of what the Leader of the Opposition has proposed. Let me take him back again to his policy. I know he does not understand it, but let me tell him what his policy means.

Let me tell the Leader of the Opposition that, if you have a firm of 100 people and 51 per cent of those vote in favour of a collective agreement, it means that the man or the woman who started the business—who put up the capital, who took the risk, who borrowed the money and, in the case of a small business, probably mortgaged their house in order to secure the business overdraft—has no right to make an agreement with one of the other 49 people. I think that is outrageous and I think that is unfair. The fact that the Leader of the Opposition supports such a policy shows that he does not know anything about small business in this country. Not only will he support something like that; he will also support a situation where, on top of that, the employer will once again be burdened with the outrageous unfair dismissal laws, which create a situation where it becomes impossible to properly manage your business in certain circumstances. So I say to the Leader of the Opposition that if he is talking about bad policy I suggest he have a read of his own party’s policy on industrial relations.

Economy

Mr HARTSUYKER (2.58 pm)—My question is addressed to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Transport and Re-
Regional Services. Would the Deputy Prime Minister outline to the House how the coalition government’s strong economic management has provided benefits to regional and rural Australia? What policies have the government pursued to specifically assist regional areas, including my electorate of Cowper?

Mr VAILE—I thank the member for Cowper for his question. Obviously and self-evidently, the best thing that this government has done for regional Australia is that it has kept the Australian economy strong; got rid of debt; put ourselves in a position where we can continue to invest in infrastructure across Australia, particularly in regional Australia and in regional economies; and supported regional economies. A lot of the reforms that the Prime Minister mentioned earlier in question time have delivered us into a situation where the Australian economy is one of the strongest in the world, where there is downward pressure on interest rates, where unemployment is at a 30-year low and where we are experiencing the lowest level of industrial disputes on record—imagine that under a coalition government—where we continue to run budget surpluses and where we are net savers rather than net borrowers, as we used to be under previous Labor governments.

The member for Cowper asked about policies that benefit regional Australia. Of course, the coalition government has continued to work in partnership with regional communities to find answers to some of their problems and to assist them in addressing the questions they have about strengthening their economies. There have been a number of programs that we have been able to support and fund as a result of that strong economic management in Australia. We have been able to fund programs without having to borrow the money to do it, and we have been able to fund them out of surpluses. The Sustainable Regions Program is one and the Regional Partnerships Program is another. That is a great program for regional Australia, and I know that those members of the Labor Party that have been recipients of grants under Regional Partnerships in their electorates have welcomed them as well. In that program, since 2003 we have funded more than 1,266 projects worth more than $1.2 billion. Our contribution has been $278 million worth of taxpayers’ money, which has leveraged $1.2 billion worth of projects in regional Australia. That is $972 million in cash and in-kind contributions coming from those communities. Every $50,000 that we have invested in those communities has generated three new jobs. That is taxpayers’ money invested wisely in regional communities—generating new jobs in those communities.

That investment has seen a significant fall in unemployment in regional Australia. Sixty-four per cent of regional areas across Australia now have unemployment rates of less than five per cent. When Labor was last in power only 16 per cent of regional Australia had unemployment rates of less than five per cent. It is now 64 per cent under the coalition government because we have been targeting investment in those communities. We have been keeping the economy strong, investing in infrastructure in those communities and creating an environment where the private sector has been generating employment. Those targeted policies have worked.

We are watching a slow rollout of some policies from the Labor Party this year, but how are the Labor Party putting together their policies? There is one word to describe how the Labor Party are doing it: outsourcing. They are outsourcing their policy development. They have outsourced their industrial relations policy to the ACTU and we read in the paper they are going to outsource economic policy to the Democrats. They have outsourced their preselection process to
the union movement, and now they are getting a bit of a backlash from their rank and file members about the preselection process. They have outsourced the defence of their industrial relations policy to the old head-kicker, Paul Keating. We want to see more of him on the television. We want to see more of Paul Keating defending Kevin Rudd's policies in the media because that will help us a hell of a lot. The Labor Party have outsourced their policy development to the dinosaurs of the past. We will continue to develop our own policies in the interests of all Australians, in particular regional Australians, who have seen a significant improvement in their economic fortunes.

The SPEAKER—I remind the Deputy Prime Minister that he should refer to the Leader of the Opposition by his title.

Advertising Campaigns

Ms GILLARD (3.04 pm)—My question is to the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations. I refer the minister to the fact that the government has spent $55 million of taxpayers’ money advertising its industrial relations changes, with that advertising starting in 2005. How much of taxpayers’ money will the government now be spending on advertising its pre-election changes to industrial relations laws? What is the figure?

Mr HOCKEY—We will spend an appropriate amount of money to let Australians know where they stand in relation to the laws as they stand in the current system.

Workplace Relations

Mr KEENAN (3.05 pm)—My question is also addressed to the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations. Would the minister inform the House what changes the government has made to prevent the imposition of compulsory union bargaining fees on non-union members? Are there any alternative views?

Mr HOCKEY—I thank the member for Stirling for his question. I note that the unemployment rate in Western Australia is now 2.7 per cent, and by the time of the next election one in five workers in Western Australia will be on an AWA. This government has never supported compulsory union bargaining fees. Working Australians should have the right to choose whether they are members of a union or not, and working Australians should have the right to choose whether they pay fees to union bosses or not. We believe strongly in this right. Indeed, today I have announced that the prohibition on compulsory union bargaining fees will now be enshrined in legislation. Previously it was included in the regulations, but the government wants to make this a core issue in the legislation.

I was asked about alternative views. It is hard to keep up with the alternative views because the Labor Party keeps changing their alternative views. Just as I am getting across this wonderful document, Forward with fairness, it changes—in fact, it has changed five times in 10 days. When it comes to bargaining fees, I note that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has just put out quite a cute press release trying to claim it was not in their policy, but she omitted the key section. Page 14 of the policy of the Labor Party says:

Under Labor’s system, bargaining participants will be free to reach agreement on whatever matters suit them.

And when she went on Neil Mitchell’s program—and we are all intrigued about this—he asked:

… are we getting to the essence of this now then that bargaining fees are banned at the moment under your system—that is, the Labor system—they wouldn’t be banned, they’d be there for negotiations. Is that a fair comment?

And Gillard replied yes.
So, imagine: I am eating my Weeties this morning, and I picked up the Australian. On the front page of the Australian they say that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has released a new policy overnight on the internet. So I go to the internet. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition says:

Consequently, agreements containing matters like union preference clauses in hiring or promotion, bargaining fees and preference for particular, highly unionised contractors will not be lawful.

Another change! So, during the course of the night, you can imagine the Deputy Leader of the Opposition saying furiously: ‘Gee, we’re burning a bit on this bargaining issue. We’ll go and put out a press release via the internet to the Australian, changing laws.’

This is the fifth backflip in 10 days. Their policy is unravelling. Policy No. 1: they said they were going to have a one-stop shop. Within 24 hours, the Labor Party realised that they were in breach of the doctrine of the separation of powers. So now the one-stop shop is a two-stop shop.

Secondly—oops—they set down 10 minimum standards but they forgot to add in the minimum wage. The minimum wage—how could you forget that? You can imagine Greg Combet and Julia Gillard sitting there and negotiating on Greg Combet coming into parliament. They forgot to put in the minimum wage. They are so concerned about the workers out there that they forgot to put in a minimum wage! After the Australian asked the Deputy Leader of the Opposition’s office about that, it reported:

Ms Gillard’s proposed 10 legislated minimum standards also omitted a minimum wage, but her office insists there will now be 11 conditions ...

Eleven! Imagine Moses coming down from Mount Sinai. He has been carrying these tablets. He has got 10 commandments. Someone is there with a hammer and chisel, belting away at the minimum wage. Hard work!

The third reversal is on page 9 of their policy. The Australian Labor Party will:

...guarantee that Australian working families have the flexibility of up to 24 months’ unpaid leave to provide care for their child.

God bless. Where’s the member for Rankin? We need him at this moment. He says that if a small business cannot accommodate a request for an extension of parental leave, it need only write a letter giving its reasons. That does not sound like a guarantee to me. So it is not 24 months guaranteed parental leave; it is the 12 months guarantee which is already in the coalition’s legislation. This must be hurting!

The fourth issue is pattern bargaining. I quote from page 13 of the Labor Party’s policy:

Where more than one employer and their employees or unions with coverage in the workplaces voluntarily agree to collectively bargain together for a single agreement they will be free to do so.

That was from page 13 of the Labor Party policy, 10 days ago.

On The 7.30 Report, Kerry O’Brien put a question to the Leader of the Opposition: ‘Do you endorse pattern bargaining where whole industries are brought into line with an enterprise agreement model that has been imposed, coerced—whatever word you want to use—or negotiated with a single company?’ Rudd answered: ‘That is not the approach we support at all.’ So there he was, on The 7.30 Report, reversing the policy. Maybe he didn’t know. I think he doesn’t know.

The Speaker—Order! The minister might consider bringing his answer to a conclusion.

Mr Hockey—I am trying to help, Mr Speaker. So, the fifth change in 10 days: bargaining fees. You know what undoes this opposition? It does not get the policy right. The opposition does not understand its own
policy. There are some sad faces there amongst the opposition. It does not get the policy right. It introduced a policy 10 days ago. It has changed five times in 10 days. Its policy is unravelling. The Labor Party is not fit to govern this nation. And on the single biggest test the Leader of the Opposition has had, in introducing a major policy at his own national conference, an economic policy, he gets an ‘F’ for failure.

Advertising Campaigns

Ms GILLARD (3.13 pm)—My question is to the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations. In order to answer it, he just needs to get two numbers right. I refer the minister to his refusal to answer my last question. I ask again: as the minister responsible for the expenditure of these public funds, how much of taxpayers’ money will be spent in advertising the most recent industrial relations changes, and—

Mrs Bronwyn Bishop—Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order. That question has already been asked, and answered fully. I ask that you rule it out of order.

The SPEAKER—The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has not completed her question. I will listen carefully to her question.

Ms GILLARD—The whole point, Mr Speaker, was that it was not answered. I refer the minister—

The SPEAKER—The member will come to her question.

Ms GILLARD—to his refusal to answer my last question, and I ask the minister, as the minister responsible—

Mrs Bronwyn Bishop—Mr Speaker, further to my point of order: the member opposite just admitted that the minister had already answered the question. She said she did not like the answer. It was properly answered.

The SPEAKER—I am listening carefully to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. I call her to ask her question again.

Ms GILLARD—My question is to the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations. Will the minister inform the House, as the minister responsible for the expenditure of public funds in this area, how much money will be spent by the government on its advertising campaign for its new industrial relations changes? I also ask: will the minister inform the House how much money the government has spent on market research and opinion polling of community attitudes to its industrial relations laws?

The SPEAKER—Order! The second part of that question is certainly a new question. I call the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations.

Mr HOCKEY—I have nothing to add to the previous answer, but I do make two points. The first is that we believe Australians should know where they stand in relation to the current system. We make no apology for that, and that is in the face of a $100 million union and Labor Party fear campaign. The second point is: isn’t it interesting that the biggest criticism the Labor Party have of our policy today is that we are telling the Australian people about it? Do you know what? We wish the Labor Party would spend some money promoting their own IR policy.

Zimbabwe

Mrs MOYLAN (3.16 pm)—My question is to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Would the minister update the House on the current political situation in Zimbabwe and plans for the Australian cricket team to tour there?

Mr DOWNER—Can I firstly thank the member for Pearce for her question and for her interest. I know that, over in Western Australia particularly, a lot of people are interested in this issue, as are people elsewhere. Firstly, there is no doubt that Presi-
dent Mugabe is trashing democracy in Zimbabwe—the savage crackdown on opposition figures and the systematic oppression of the media clearly mean that democracy is coming to an end in Zimbabwe. Secondly, the economy has been completely crippled. Eighty per cent of Zimbabweans now have no job; life expectancy has fallen, since 1990, from 61 years to just 33 years; and inflation is now at 2,200 per cent. It is a great tragedy when you think of the hopes for Zimbabwe’s independence and the faith that was placed by Malcolm Fraser and others in Robert Mugabe as the new leader of that country and then see what has subsequently been delivered.

Our cricket team are scheduled to visit Zimbabwe in a few months time to play three one-day games. It is the view of the government that it would be better if they did not go. It is a common argument, and one I am largely sympathetic with, that you should try to separate sport from politics, but the fact is the Australian cricket team are caught in a political situation through no fault of their own—that is, if they were to go to Zimbabwe they would create great political controversy. Back here in Australia there is no doubt that, on the one hand, President Mugabe and his regime in Zimbabwe would make propaganda capital out of such a visit. On the other hand, of course, if the Australian cricket team do not go to Zimbabwe there will be a suggestion that they did not go for political reasons. But either way they are in a political situation which is not of their own making. It is certainly the view of the government that we do not want the world’s greatest cricket team to be caught up in a propaganda exercise for a wretched regime like President Mugabe’s.

The Prime Minister and I have made our views clear on this. I have spoken with the CEO of Cricket Australia and I will be meeting with them more generally towards the end of this week in Melbourne. We will have to work through the details. If the Australian cricket team do not visit Zimbabwe then a penalty will have to be paid, as there is a contract with the International Cricket Council, of at least US$2 million—$A2.4 million. That money would go to the Zimbabwe Cricket Union by way of compensation for loss of gate earnings, television and radio earnings and so on. Of course, some people will say, ‘It’s pretty unfortunate if Cricket Australia have to pay out that sort of money,’ but the government would certainly cover the costs of that for Cricket Australia. Others will say, ‘That money shouldn’t go to Zimbabwe at all. Won’t President Mugabe’s regime get hold of some of that money? Won’t they be able to use it?’ However, if the cricket team go to Zimbabwe the money will be earned in any case. So the fact that the contract exists means that, almost certainly, there will be some transfer of money to the Zimbabwe Cricket Union. We obviously hope in those circumstances that the money would be spent on cricket development, not on anything else.

The point is that it would be much better if the Australian cricket team were not allowed to go to Zimbabwe—so not enabling the Zimbabwean government to exploit a visit of that kind—and if the greats of Australian cricket were not put in a difficult, if not embarrassing, situation with the likes of President Mugabe. I hope we can find a satisfactory way through this to persuade Cricket Australia that this tour should be cancelled.

Workplace Relations

Ms GILLARD (3.21 pm)—My question is again to the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations. Minister, isn’t it a fact that the government received this taxpayer funded opinion polling and research report, which I have here, from The Open Mind Re-
search Group on 24 April 2007? Minister, isn’t it also a fact that the government announced its pre-election changes to its industrial relations laws on 4 May? Minister, isn’t it a fact that the government’s views haven’t changed—just the opinion polling?

Mr HOCKEY—I cannot comment on a document I have not seen.

Ms Gillard interjecting—

The SPEAKER—Order! The minister has the call. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has asked her question.

Mr HOCKEY—But if we are to be criticised for listening to the Australian people then we plead guilty. It is a shame the Labor Party does not listen to the Australian people. It is a shame that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition only consults with Greg Combet and not with Rod Eddington.

Ms Gillard interjecting—

Mr HOCKEY—Where is Rod Eddington in all of the Labor Party’s musings? If the Labor Party consulted people like Rod Eddington, they would know that their industrial relations policy is bad for business and bad for the economy. So I would urge the Labor Party to consult the Australian people and also to give Rod a call.

Farms

Mrs HULL (3.23 pm)—My question is addressed to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. Would the minister inform the House of the extent and effect of the current drought and the government’s measures to support farming families in my electorate of Riverina and across all drought affected areas? Is the minister aware of any alternative policies?

Mr McGAURAN—I thank the member for Riverina for her question. She well knows, as do so many other members of the House, the severe and prolonged effect of the drought—which before the recent rains seemed to be never ending. I do hasten, of course, to caution that the recent rains could well prove illusionary in that they were not uniform or heavy enough to break the drought. Nonetheless they are welcome. They have given some hope for the future, but we do need follow-up rain urgently if we are to end the curse of this long drought. A great deal of hardship has been caused to farmers, their families, farm businesses and the general community—not to mention the effect on the Australian economy. It is for this reason that the government has been unstintingly in its support of drought affected farmers, to the extent where, since we relaxed the eligibility criteria late last year, we are now spending $17 million a week on income support and interest rate subsidies for around 19,000 farming families. I would expect that number to continue to grow exponentially. In New South Wales alone, the home state of the member for Riverina, we are providing more than $1 million a day to 8,700 farming families. In Victoria, which is now 100 per cent drought declared, more than $5 million a week is being provided to 6,300 families and businesses. This is a level of support, as the wider Australian community would expect, which is unprecedented but consistent with the extent and severity of the current drought.

I was asked about alternative policies. I was interested to observe the goings-on of the Labor Party’s national conference, especially its 265-page draft national platform and constitution. Drought gets a mention once, and only in a phrase relating to its impact on our cities. Of course, we expected the agricultural section to be perfunctory and shallow in its analysis, to the extent that it existed, but we did expect drought to be mentioned more than once. It is mentioned only in the sentence which reads:

Labor believes the Commonwealth has a responsibility to support innovation in urban plan-
ning, which is critical to combating the threat of climate change and the impact of drought on our cities.

Labor have always failed to understand farming. We fully understand that. But what we do not accept for a moment is their callous disregard of the greatest problem in Australian agriculture today. It was up to the Leader of the Opposition to rescue the situation. In his 45 to 50 minute diatribe, in which he canvassed all aspects of Labor policy and world affairs, he used 5,772 words to describe his views. He mentioned drought just once. I quote:

We have faced great threats in the past—through drought, depression and the threat of invasion.

That is it. Well, I have news for the Leader of the Opposition. The threat of drought is not in the past; it is with us now. Farmers and the rural communities of Australia expect a great deal more analysis, commitment and thought from the Labor Party than you have demonstrated. The greatest threat to farming families in Australia, apart from the drought, is the Labor Party.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER (3.27 pm)—I inform the House that we have present in the gallery this afternoon the Hon. Warwick Smith, a former minister; the Hon. Ian Robinson, a former member; and the Hon. Stephen Lusher. On behalf of the House, I extend a very warm welcome to them all.

Honourable members—Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Workplace Relations

Ms GILLARD (3.27 pm)—My question is again to the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations. I refer the minister to the new so-called fairness test for workplace agreements that commenced at 12.01 am yesterday. Minister, if an employee agrees to take a job for a rate of pay that is higher than the award but the agreement is void because it does not pass the workplace authority’s so-called fairness test, is the employee still entitled to that higher rate of pay?

Mr HOCKEY—If it fails the fairness test, the two parties will have 14 days to continue to negotiate and come to an agreement. If they fail to come to an agreement then the AWA is declared void and they revert back to the award, where they will get penalty rates.

Ms Gillard interjecting—
Mr Hockey interjecting—

The SPEAKER—Order! Members are holding up question time.

Royal Flying Doctor Service

Mr HAASE (3.28 pm)—My question is addressed to the Minister for Health and Ageing. Would the minister advise the House how the government has secured the long-term future of the Royal Flying Doctor Service? How will this help to provide high-quality medical services to people living in remote areas across Australia, and specifically in my electorate of Kalgoorlie?

Mr ABBOTT—I thank the member for Kalgoorlie for his question. As the member well knows, the Royal Flying Doctor Service, operating from bases at Derby, Port Hedland, Meekatharra and Kalgoorlie-Boulder airports, is an indispensable part of the delivery of health services in that vast area of Western Australia. The Royal Flying Doctor Service is one of the most respected aeromedical services in the world and is a great Australian icon. Although it was the brainchild of the Reverend John Flynn, it only began because it received financial support from the Bruce government, which half-funded the maintenance of its original aircraft back in 1928.

In the last financial year, having developed from those times, the Royal Flying Doctor Service flew more than 20 million
kilometres. It treated some 237,000 Australians, and it carried out some 34,000 aeromedical evacuations. It did all this on a precarious donation base and with uncertain levels of support from state governments. Last month the Prime Minister committed an additional $154 million to the Royal Flying Doctor Service, bringing total federal funding for this great service to $247 million over the forward estimates period. In the spirit of avoiding the blame game, I would respectfully suggest to the state governments that they would do well to match that federal commitment. While the Leader of the Opposition has already anointed himself as a sure-fire election winner, in front of a May Day rally no less, and while the union heavies are being shoehorned into safe Labor seats in the federal parliament, the Howard government is getting on with the job of delivering ever-improving health services to the people of country Australia.

Queensland: Local Government

Mr KATTER (3.31 pm)—I direct a question to the Prime Minister. Is the Prime Minister aware that Queensland Premier Beattie has announced a statewide amalgamation of city and shire councils? His statement that 88 of Queensland’s 157 councils are ‘unsustainable’ and that many others would ‘benefit by amalgamation’ clearly indicates that two-thirds of Queensland’s local authorities will be abolished. Could the Prime Minister assure the people of Queensland that any proposed amalgamations will be subject to federal government scrutiny and oversighting and that local authorities, financed today more by the federal than the state governments, will not be largely abolished at the whim of the Premier? Would the Prime Minister not agree that the Queensland government—currently unable to provide a sustainable water supply, doctors who can speak fluent English or electricity for minerals processing—would be the least qualified authority in Australia to preach and implement efficiencies in government? In conclusion, could the Prime Minister comment on speculation that Mr Beattie—still smarting over his banishment and isolation during the Goss-Rudd years of government—will however now be ‘efficient’ in derailing Mr Rudd’s journey to the Lodge?

Mr HOWARD—Let me say in reply to the question asked by the member for Ken- nedy that I certainly agree that the least qualified government in Australia to give lectures about efficiency is the Queensland government—although it is a near-run thing with the government of the state that I come from, I have to tell you.

I am aware of a lot of concern, especially in rural Queensland, about the arbitrary and very dictatorial way in which the Queensland government has declared that certain councils are inefficient and, whether the councils like it or not, they are going to be amalgamated or abolished. I think it reminds all of us that, when it comes to exercising central power, state governments of Australia of both political persuasions are infinitely worse than federal governments. When I hear state premiers complaining about the centralist tendencies of the national government, I wonder that they have no shame. When it comes to dealing with others, I have watched the views of local residents in the state that I come from being overridden with a flick of the fingers, with the stroke of a pen by the minister for local government—or whatever title he romances under—Mr Sarto, in New South Wales. I saw it happen in Victoria under a government of my own political persuasion, and I think some of the forced amalgamations in Victoria wreaked a very heavy political price on the then Victorian government.

I should tell the House that a rally involving more than 1,000 people, many of whom
had travelled 700 kilometres, was held at Barcaldine this morning. I am told that Rugby League legend Shane Webcke led the protest march to the tree of knowledge, where the Mayor of Barcaldine, Robert Chandler, and concerned residents of Queensland laid wreaths in protest at the Queensland Labor government’s plans. There will be no right of appeal for councils or residents once the decision has been made by Premier Beattie to close the councils; his forced amalgamations have the capacity to affect some 45,000 existing jobs in Queensland—and the member for Kennedy asks me: will we take an interest in this matter? Can we do anything? Let me say that I am already taking a very big interest in this matter, because I think this is an abuse of power. I think you ought to talk to people. These premiers every day of the week are saying, ‘Canberra is running roughshod over our rights and our interests,’ but, if a local council gets in their way, they essentially rub it out—they put down a regulation; they deal with them in a most contemptuous fashion.

I think that the Premier of Queensland has misread the mood and the temper of his own state. My sense, as I move around this country, is that people, so far from developing a lesser sense of local identity, are developing a greater sense of local identity. What they are really saying is that they care about their country and they care about their local community and sometimes, if they have enough time for it, they might care about whatever occupies the middle. But the thing that they worry about most is their nation’s welfare and their community’s welfare. I think many Queenslanders will feel very angry about this, and many Queenslanders will wonder why the Leader of the Opposition, himself a Queenslander, has remained silent on the subject.

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

**BUDGET 2007-08**

The **Speaker** (3.37 pm)—I wish to make some general remarks, for the information of members, to ensure that arrangements for the chamber galleries on budget night and budget reply night run smoothly. I ask members to ensure that their guests arrive at the galleries in a timely way for the addresses. This is particularly important on budget night, when there are a large number of guests to accommodate. Guests should arrive at the galleries about 30 minutes prior to the budget speech to ensure that they can undertake the security clearance and be seated in the galleries in a timely way.

I understand that there may be applause at the conclusion of the speeches. Even though this strictly is contrary to the standing orders, the chair would give any action of this kind some leniency. However, applause or other interventions, either from members on the floor or from visitors in the galleries, will not be tolerated. If such action occurs, on the principle that any member with the call is entitled to speak without interruption, the chair will request the member addressing the House to resume his seat until order is restored. Security staff will be directed to remove from the galleries any individuals who persist in intervening in proceedings, just as they would during normal proceedings. I trust that there will be cooperation from members and their guests in the galleries and that budget night and budget reply night will proceed smoothly.

**QUESTIONS TO THE SPEAKER**

Questions in Writing

Mr **Murphy** (3.39 pm)—Mr Speaker, I seek your assistance under standing order 105(b) in relation to questions that have been on the Notice Paper for more than 60 days. I refer to questions in writing Nos 5342—5343, 5368, 5369, 5407, 5408, 5438, 5439, 5455 through to 5460, 5468.
5486 through to 5491, 5498, 5499, 5502, 5511, 5513 and 5514. I ask that you write to the ministers and seek an explanation for the delay in replying to those questions.

The SPEAKER—I thank the member for Lowe. I will follow up his request and write to the ministers asking them to answer his questions.

AUDITOR-GENERAL’S REPORTS

Report Nos 32 to 35 of 2006-07

The SPEAKER (3.40 pm)—I present the Auditor-General’s Audit reports Nos 32 to 35 of 2006-07 titled Administration of the job seeker account—Department of Employment and Workplace Relations; Centrelink’s customer charter—follow-up audit: Centrelink; High frequency communication system modernisation project—Department of Defence, Defence Materiel Organisation; and Preparations for the re-tendering of DIAC’s detention and health services contracts—Department of Immigration and Citizenship.

Ordered that the reports be made parliamentary papers.

DOCUMENTS

Mr ABBOTT (Warringah—Leader of the House) (3.41 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:
Commission of inquiry into certain Australian companies in relation to the UN Oil-for-Food Programme—Report of Commissioner, the Hon TRH Cole, AO, RFD, QC—Government response.

Debate (on motion by Mr Crean) adjourned.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Health and Productivity

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

The Government’s failure to acknowledge that the good health of Australians has a strong impact on workforce and national productivity.

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

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

Ms ROXON (Gellibrand) (3.41 pm)—It has taken 11 years but finally this week the Treasurer actually flirted with a new idea. He acknowledged for the first time that dealing with the health of the community was an economic issue. I say it was a flirtation because the reference to preventative health as an economic issue was a very tentative one. He was exploring new ground. It has only taken him 12 budgets, and of course a looming election, to even lift his eyes sufficiently to see the big health issue that is ballooning right before him. Of course, it is not surprising to us because the Minister for Health and Ageing accused me of scaremongering and making apocalyptic claims when I said that chronic disease and preventable illness were the health budget’s equivalent of climate change. In other words, we must act now if we want to stem the tide of this growing burden of disease, or future generations will pay.
The very real risk is that our children will not have the life expectancy and good health that we do, and what a devastating indictment that is of generational neglect. Is there anyone in this House who really wants to bear the burden of giving our children shorter life expectancy than we ourselves are experiencing? So with no help from the health minister, the Treasurer also has managed to completely ignore the burden of chronic disease and preventable illness in not one but two of his intergenerational reports. These intergenerational reports, after all, are supposed to focus on the financial implications of continuing current policies and trends and could not plausibly ignore the large role played by chronic and preventable disease. This is not just a careless oversight; this is negligence—pure and simple.

One of the major political debates over the last few months has been between the Leader of the Opposition, Kevin Rudd, arguing forcefully for greater investment in education and the environment, and John Howard, the Prime Minister, talking separately about a strong economy, as if these two things were not connected. Labor has made it clear that we do not think that these areas of policy can be easily segregated from each other. Investing in education and the environment is not at the expense of the economy; it is essential to the economy. That is the nature of investment—setting aside resources now for the long-term gain we know they will deliver. Similarly, in terms of investing in the nation’s good health, preventative health and health promotion have been another area where the government has been content to sit on its hands, staying still while the world moves on without it. We know so much more now about what we can do to prevent illness but the government is still just taking the same action. This is the hidden story of health economics. If we do not take steps now to tackle the growing burden of chronic disease our current health system simply will not cope and the economy will feel the results as much as the patients will.

We should, of course, invest in health—as everybody on this side of the House clearly would want to do—because we care about our friends and family and we do not want them to suffer the anguish of ill health. But, just as much, we should also invest in health because there are excellent long-term economic reasons for doing so. The Productivity Commission recently spelled this out in black and white: investing in health promotion and prevention will deliver a significant increase in national productivity. Productivity is directly tied to the health of Australians. Health is a major indicator of participation in the workforce and a major indicator of productivity for those in the workforce. Good health, like quality education, is a source of economic growth. Healthy nations are wealthy nations. But the government seems determined to ignore this.

Right now our future is insecure because we face a tsunami of chronic disease that threatens our health, our workforce and our productivity. The prevalence of type 2 diabetes—take that as one example—which is strongly tied to workforce participation, has doubled since the Howard government came to office. I do not blame the Howard government for that increase, but it is a very dramatic change that the government is not tackling, as with many other chronic diseases. Obesity alone costs Australia $21 billion including lost productivity, health and carer costs, taxation revenue forgone, and welfare and other government payments. To put that into perspective, $21 billion is what obesity alone costs Australia—that is almost double the annual cost of running the entire Medicare system.

One recent study showed that workers with five or more health risks are 18 per cent
less productive than their colleagues with fewer health risks. This is a study that is not about people who are regarded as ill. This is about knowing what the health risks and indicators are and that productivity is already being affected. It is affecting employers, it is affecting people in their workplaces and it is affecting families. Every year we have 50,000 Australians ending up in hospital with dental conditions that could have been prevented. Just six disease groups make up about 70 per cent of the total disease burden in Australia and cause 78 per cent of all deaths—cardiovascular problems, cancers, injuries, mental health problems, diabetes and asthma—and many of these are to a large extent preventable. Something that science has taught us is that we can act and intervene if we take the necessary action, whether it is health promotion or investing in better health prevention measures.

If 80 per cent of Australians died because of a preventable infection or because of a contaminated water supply that could have been avoided, you can bet your house that we would have a massive public outcry and probably a change of government on that one incident. And if the cost of Medicare suddenly tripled, you would think the government would do something about it. Despite these statistics which you would think would urge a responsible government to take some action—and let’s not forget these statistics are real people; they are our families and friends across the nation who are affected—less than two per cent of national recurrent health expenditure is on health promotion and prevention. I repeat: less than two per cent. The minister has got up in the House and answered questions about this issue before and said, ‘Oh, but we put $200 million into a program.’ That is a tiny, tiny amount. Welcome as it is, it is a tiny amount in the national health budget. It is not enough to tackle the scale of this problem.

There is of course a very good political reason—it is a very cynical reason but it is a very good political reason—for the failure of the Howard government to act. It is called the blame game. A recent report from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare delivered some of the most compelling evidence yet that the blame game between the states and the Commonwealth is hurting our health system, is hurting patients and is hurting the economy. According to the report, almost one in 10 hospital admissions—across the country in our electorates every day of the week—or, if you want to know the actual figures, around half a million Australians, are ending up in hospital, whereas they could have avoided being there if they had had better preventative care or disease management. This is not a figure that we have made up; it is not a figure that the Labor Party has hatched. This is the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare being able to directly identify preventable diseases that mean that people end up in hospital, whereas if we had given them better care earlier they would not have ended up in hospital. Surely it is fair to ask: if we know these hospitalisations are preventable and we also know how to prevent them then shouldn’t we simply invest the money in preventing them? Not only would it keep more people from the distress and discomfort of hospitalisation but, in turn, it would save us money down the track. Avoiding hospital and preventing disease is almost always less expensive than treating and managing it.

The difficulty that Australia faces is that the minister does not take this problem seriously. He knows that the states run the hospitals and the main areas in which preventative care can be implemented are effectively in primary care, the province primarily but not exclusively of the Commonwealth government. This minister knows that if he stands up and argues in his cabinet to spend more
money on preventative care his Prime Minister and everyone else around the table will say: ‘Why would we do that when the states are the ones that are going to benefit? Why do we care about who goes into hospital? Why do we care if they have to pick up the pieces?’ But of course the government should care. A Commonwealth government cannot just say that if people end up in hospital that is a problem for the states to deal with. It costs all of us. It has a huge human cost but it has an economic cost that the Commonwealth also bears.

Commonwealth failure to invest in preventative care leaves the states bearing the most immediate burden of cost. So the Commonwealth saves money but the states clean up the mess, which means that there is no obvious political incentive for the Howard government to act. Of course we know this is a superficial analysis—the one we believe is favoured by the Prime Minister and the health minister—because it fails to take into account the broader cost of hospitalisation: the cost to the community, the cost to productivity and the cost to the tax base. I would have thought, the government wanting to parade about their relationship with business, that they would be hearing from the employers that they deal with all the time about the cost that it is actually contributing to running business. It is not as if diabetics and those with other chronic illnesses are not in our workplaces all the time. It is not as if those who end up in hospital do not have to take time off work. It is not as if their families who have to care for them or their children do not have to take time off work. All of these are costs—high personal costs but high costs to the Commonwealth as well.

Simply appearing to neglect this issue because the most direct savings are to the states is really an appalling way to approach things. Maybe the minister is going to stand up today and tell me why he is not doing that. Perhaps he is going to tell me that the Treasurer’s flirtation with health as an economic issue might actually have something for us in the budget tonight. I hope that he does stand up and say that, but it would be a new-found interest in this issue, given that two intergenerational reports that are meant to be focused on dealing with long-term changes, costs to the next generation and ways we can tackle the things that cause a huge burden on our budgets did not even deal with these issues—did not deal with them at all. There was not a word about chronic disease and preventable illness. So if the Treasurer has suddenly decided to flirt with this idea, that is a good thing, but he is going to have to get quite a lot of his other ducks in a row to actually invest some serious money in this area and to make a difference.

As I say, we know that every day the government is not dealing with these issues the cost is being borne by employers through absenteeism and sick leave—let alone the lost revenue from those who cannot continue in employment. At the very least, you would expect the issue of preventable and chronic diseases and their economic impact to be on the government’s radar. But, as we have seen in so many other areas for which my colleagues are responsible, the Howard government deny climate change and are lacking in recognition of early childhood education. Not until they are dragged kicking and screaming do the Howard government deal with major changes in areas where we need to invest early to get results further down the track. Similarly, the Howard government have been trying to hose down any growing view that they have a role to play in this debate and in its solution. That is why we were surprised, frankly—and I know from my discussions, as I am sure the Minister for Health and Ageing knows, that many people in the public and private health sectors were surprised—that in the second Intergenera-
tional report released earlier this month there is no assessment of the impact of chronic or preventable disease on current or future national health expenditure, on workforce participation or productivity.

To go back, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare report which gave us those figures—one in 10 hospital admissions that could be prevented—also reported that more than one-quarter of avoidable hospitalisations were among patients aged 75 and older, and more than one-fifth were those aged between 45 and 64. From this one statistic, this one detail, we know that preventable hospitalisations are having a heavy impact on people who are older. We know that, along with chronic diseases, they are a major generational issue and deserve serious attention in any intergenerational report which really looks at the burden future governments will be facing. That is why we all got elected. The Minister for Health and Ageing, when he ran for office, must have thought that part of his job here would be to make this place a better place, to make some strategic decisions, that we would invest in the future, so that any children of those on either side of this House—his daughters—would have a better country to live in. It is not quite as dramatic as, maybe, some infectious disease that rampages across the country, which we can all see and feel and which happens in a matter of weeks or months. Of course a government would act when they saw that. Instead, this slightly more silent, creeping burden is causing much damage around the country. We now have the figures. We know how many people this affects and we know that there are preventative measures we can take, but we do not see the government taking that action.

This might be a clever political tactic. It certainly seems to be the reason the government has taken this approach. But it is hurting the community and will add to the burden of disease. It will also mean that future budgets are going to be forever hampered by an ever-growing health budget. The Minister for Health and Ageing must be acutely aware of this issue. I know that health ministers around the country are acutely aware that, if we do not invest and let health expenditure continue to grow, we are not doing ourselves any favours for what we will need to spend money on in the future.

Ignoring long-simmering issues such as climate change, early childhood education and tackling preventable disease—these are political decisions—ignores major challenges which ultimately will cost Australia. Voters will see these political judgements as increasingly misguided. They may well cost the Howard government, too, if they continue to ignore them. Eventually, of course, the tide of public opinion and political debate will catch up to the government. We see an increase in newspaper stories and television reports about obesity, diabetes and heart disease. It should be no surprise to finally see the Treasurer flirting with this idea of preventative health. We hear the rumours that the government are about to execute a spectacular backflip on dental health, after 11 years of loudly proclaiming that it simply was not their problem.

Just as the Stern report made it clear that the environment could not be separated from the economy and just as the OECD has highlighted that education cannot be separated from our future prosperity, it is also clear that tackling the nation’s preventable illnesses cannot be separated from our nation’s productivity. (Time expired)

Mr ABBOTT (Warringah—Minister for Health and Ageing) (3.57 pm)—I listened to the member for Gellibrand’s speech with some anticipation that perhaps, just for once, rather than a litany of complaints there might be some positive suggestions as to how diffi-
cult situations can be made better and I have to say that, yet again, that anticipation was dashed. I say to the member for Gellibrand that anyone can read a speech, particularly one written by someone else, but demonstrating any grasp of the difficulties and complexities of the health portfolio is much harder. I do not believe anyone who listened to that empty speech, nor indeed anyone who has listened to the windy performances of the member for Gellibrand since she assumed her current responsibilities, would regard her as having any grasp—

Ms Roxon—Tell us what you’re doing!

Mr ABBOTT—I am running the health portfolio, madam. That is what I am doing. I am taking responsibility for things. I am delivering services. I am not just an empty, air-headed commentator engaging in a litany of complaints without knowing what I am talking about. I would like to take the member for Gellibrand seriously, but on the evidence of today’s speech there is nothing to justify that. The mere fact that members opposite chose to put the member for Gellibrand up today, of all days, the least watched day of the whole parliamentary year, shows how little they take her seriously and what little faith they have in her. The member for Gellibrand is like someone who, for the first time in her life, has landed at Heathrow airport and thinks, ‘I have discovered England,’ as though no-one has ever been there before. I have thought about these things myself. She says, ‘Prevention is better than cure,’ as though no-one has thought of this before in the whole history of the health portfolio.

Ms Roxon—What are you doing about it?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. IR Causley)—The member for Gellibrand!

Ms Roxon—What are you doing about it?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—The member for Gellibrand is a serial interjector. I warn her.

Mr ABBOTT—The member for Gellibrand will have her curiosity satisfied, believe me. What will not be satisfied is the curiosity the Australian people have about what actual policy Labor has in the health area.

We all know that since 1996 this government has delivered enormous economic benefits to the people of Australia. Real wages have gone up by 20 per cent and real net wealth per head has increased by 100 per cent, and one of the reasons we have seen these outstanding economic results is that the Howard government has invested in an ever-improving health system. When members opposite were last in government, just 15 per cent of federal government spending was on Health and Ageing portfolio programs. Today it is over 20 per cent and there will be more, let me assure you, Mr Deputy Speaker, in tonight’s budget.

As the American National Bureau of Economic Research pointed out, each year, improvement in a population’s life expectancy contributes to a four per cent increase in national output. It is no wonder that GDP is up, that wages are up and that real wealth is up, because since 1996 alone there has been a two-year increase in life expectancy for females and a three-year increase in life expectancy for males. That is due to the policy of the Howard government. If you listened to the member for Gellibrand, you would think that we have no interest in delivering better services and no interest in tackling chronic diseases; that all we are interested in is trying to rip off the states. What a contemptible and silly assertion from the member for Gellibrand. She says we have no interest in delivering better services and no interest in tackling chronic diseases; that all we are interested in is trying to rip off the states. What a contemptible and silly assertion from the member for Gellibrand. She says we have no interest in delivering better services and no interest in tackling chronic diseases; that all we are interested in is trying to rip off the states. What a contemptible and silly assertion from the member for Gellibrand.
says we have done nothing about cardiovascular disease. Let me tell her that in 1995 there were 53,407 deaths from cardiovascular disease. In 2005 there were 46,134 deaths from cardiovascular disease. If she stood up and said that the government could do more, that the government could do better or that this was good but it was not good enough, she would have some credibility, but this ridiculous idea that we have never thought of trying to reduce cardiovascular disease, that we are not interested in people dying of cardiovascular disease, is unworthy of a serious member of parliament because it is so obviously and self-evidently wrong.

In 1996 there were 61 deaths from breast cancer per 100,000 women. In 2004, that figure of 61 had dropped to 51. I am not claiming sole credit for the Howard government, but it did not happen entirely by accident; it happened because this government does take preventative health seriously and we do fund screening programs. In 1996 there were three deaths per 100,000 women from cervical cancer. In 2004 there were just 1.8 deaths. I deeply regret that the death rate is as high as that, but this improvement in the death rate did not happen by accident and it did not happen because God ordained a fall in the death rate; it happened because of better treatments, more screening and better awareness, and the federal government had a hand in all these things. As I said, all these improvements—the improvement in life expectancy, the fall in cardiovascular deaths and the fall in cancer deaths—did not happen by accident; they happened in part because of federal government policies.

On immunisation—and I do not want to sound like I am practising the blame game—heaven forbid that anyone should point out that the former government spent just $13 million on vaccines. Heaven forbid that anyone should say that the current government is actually interested simply because we spend some $200 million, almost $300 million, per year on vaccines! But we do, and that is one reason death rates have fallen. We have boosted screening programs and we are in the process of introducing a bowel-screening program, not because we are just a bunch of heartless, hard-hearted politicians shifting the blame wherever we can but because we care and because we want to do what is practical and reasonable to help deliver better outcomes to the Australian people.

There is constant reiteration from the member for Gellibrand that we do not have any policies, that we do not care and that we spend only something like two per cent of the health budget on screening or prevention. I ask her to tell me what her predecessors did which was significantly better than what we are doing. Why didn’t members opposite spend more on immunisation? Why didn’t members opposite think of a bowel-screening program?

Ms Roxon—I am happy to answer the question that the minister is asking me, if he has invited me to, because I thought perhaps the HIV and smoking initiatives that were actually the Keating government’s might be—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. BC Scott)—The member for Gellibrand will resume her seat. That is not a point of order and she should know that. She has already been warned by the previous occupant of this chair.

Mr Abbott—Why didn’t the Keating government think of health checks for people over the age of 75? Why didn’t the Keating government think of health checks for Indigenous people throughout life? Why didn’t the Keating government come up with the mid-life health check for people with risk factors? How dare she stand there and say that the government has no interest in these things!
Ms Burke—Who’s ‘she’, by the way?

Mr Abbott—How dare the member for Gellibrand stand there and say that the government has done nothing when all these things have happened through this government’s efforts. There were 650,000 GP care plans put in place in the last financial year. How dare she say nothing has been done. How dare she scorn the work of those GPs and the benefits the plans will deliver to their patients. More than 250,000 team care plans were put in place last year and more than half a million allied health consultations were delivered for people with chronic diseases and complex care needs last year, thanks to the policy of this government. How dare the member for Gellibrand stand up and say that none of that counts, that none of that matters.

It suggests ignorance, partisanship and a sheer reluctance to take people seriously that the member for Gellibrand comes up and engages in this utterly vacuous political banter. It really is utterly empty. It is very hard to take the Leader of the Opposition seriously as a credible alternative Prime Minister when he has this kind of performance from the putative health minister under any future Labor government.

I know what will happen tonight when new and improved policies are announced to address issues that have been raised from time to time. She will say, ‘We thought of it first.’ Oh yeah, right! Sure! Yeah, sure, you were the first person to think of diabetes and you were the first person to think of allied health professionals helping people with chronic and complex conditions that were impacting on their general health!

None of it can be taken seriously until we actually have a few concrete policies from members opposite. Anyone can stand up and complain. Anyone can say, ‘Oh, an AIHW report has said this.’ Anyone can say, ‘If the world were different, people might not need to go to hospital.’ The challenge is to actually come up with ways of doing better which are economically responsible and which are consistent with the personal freedom expected by citizens in a great democracy such as this.

That is the challenge, but until such time as we see some serious policy from members opposite the member for Gellibrand can witter on all she likes about increasing rates of diabetes and about the increase in obesity. She can talk all she likes about challenges and prevention but, without some concrete policies, it is all absolutely empty. It is but sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. The only policy in this area that we have seen from members opposite over the last few years is Medicare Gold, a policy that was utterly discredited at the last election and was subsequently denounced as a turkey by no less a person than the then President of the Australian Labor Party. That is the only serious health policy we have had from members opposite in the last 11 years. I have to say that, on the evidence of speech after empty speech and cliche-ridden talk from the shadow minister, they are not going to do any better in 2007.

Ms Burke (Chisholm) (4.11 pm)—Sound and fury signifying nothing has just come from the Minister for Health and Ageing. The minister who says he is responsible for his portfolio spoke for 15 minutes about his area of portfolio responsibility and said nothing in this MPI debate about health and its impacts on the workforce and productivity. In the last 15 minutes he said nothing about that, and it is an absolute indictment of him that he knows absolutely nothing about the health of this country. We had 15 minutes of absolute drivel; it is a disgrace.

In Australia we have a saying, ‘Play the ball, not the man.’ That was absolutely ap-
palling behaviour from a minister who comes into this place and says we should show respect. Well, show some respect. Talk about the policies not the individuals, and have a go. Referring to women in this parliament as ‘she’ and not actually discussing things is just disgraceful. You have no idea what you are talking about so you just waffle on. That last 15 minutes was an absolute indictment of this government and an indictment of you, Minister.

Australia is facing an epidemic of chronic diseases with serious consequences for our living standards, and nothing in the last 15 minutes was said about it. It was all about treatment. You missed the point completely, Minister. We are talking about prevention. You went on about treatment plans. What we are signifying here is: let’s avoid someone having to go that step to get those treatment plans. Let’s ensure they do not get there in the first place. You did not mention it once, and you had the fudge factor around tobacco: ‘Oh, some governments.’ It is not your government that can claim that. You did not mention AIDS because, under your watch, the number of people with AIDS has gone through the roof. You dropped the prevention program and now we are seeing the rise of the HIV-AIDS epidemic on your watch. You should be ashamed of that.

The message is pretty simple, really, isn’t it? Eat less, eat better and do more exercise. That is a pretty simple message. Why aren’t we selling it? Why aren’t we out there promoting that message? We are going to spend $55 million advertising the IR backflip but we are not out there telling people to eat less, eat better and do more exercise. I suppose the minister will throw around, as usual, that it is up to parents and individuals. Tragically, there are some parents and individuals who do not actually understand that and who need the advice, need the support and need the understanding, and who actually need help with affording good food. Tragically, the surveys all show that bad food is cheaper to acquire. It is easier to acquire and that is why a lot of people buy it. They do not have the time to buy good food, they do not have the money to buy good food and they do not have the time to go home and cook it.

We have heard very little from this minister on issues around taking a preventive message out to the community. He did slip it into a Sydney Morning Herald article, back in November 2006. That article stated:

Speaking after a conference on diabetes among Indigenous Australians—

after the conference, not in his conference, and probably off the record—

the minister said that if soft drinks were consumed other than as an “occasional treat” they could be “very harmful”.

It’s distressing that soft drinks are overwhelmingly the biggest single seller in our supermarkets right around Australia and the problem with soft drink is that it’s basically water spoilt.

The article continued:

Mr Abbott’s comments mark a shift in his position, which up until now has left the responsibility of what children consume to parents and to the industry itself.

“So if, as a matter of course, kids have a couple of cans of Coke a day obviously they’ve got to get that much more exercise if they’re going to avoid the problem of childhood obesity,” he said.

Yes, but did he then give us a program to stop them from drinking soft drinks? No, he has done absolutely nothing about it. Most of the state governments have picked up the can and are running on this issue now. In Victoria we are banning soft drinks from school canteens. We are running programs about how dangerous the consumption of soft drinks is—and even about how dangerous the consumption of some fruit juices is, because the labelling is so difficult to read that it is difficult to explain to kids that they cannot have

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apple juice because it has more sugar in it than some of the cans of soft drink that are in those fridges out there. But we are not doing this. This minister has done nothing. The girls from Strathcona college, who are in the gallery today, know the message because we have just had Healthy Living Week in Victoria. Schools are doing their bit to educate their children and the state government is doing its bit. But for big preventive health measures it must be the federal government—and they have sat on their hands for over 11 years and done nothing. Yes, we now all know about obesity, but we have done so for 11 years. And what have we done about it? That is the point. In your 15 minutes, you made not one mention of it.

Chronic disease generally involves prolonged illness and functional impairment or disability. Research shows that poor health outcomes are highly correlated with lower workforce participation. In the workforce, chronic disease results in absenteeism, reduced productivity and people dropping out of the workforce prematurely. We have the Treasurer saying, ‘Work till you drop,’ and that is literally what people are doing. But we are not helping them stay in the workforce by keeping them healthy in the workforce. Disease, injury and disability are all cited by those who are not in the workforce as a key reason for leaving their last job and staying out of the workforce. Chronic disease remains Australia’s biggest killer, with 50,000 deaths a year—50,000 predominantly preventable deaths. That does not even account for the cost of the preventive surgery that so many people go through—bypasses and other things—which is brought on by being overweight and not attending to diet. Some people have to have cardiovascular disease, because it is natural, but for the majority it can be avoided.

Globally, the World Health Organisation has tipped a 30 per cent increase in cardiovascular disease in the next 23 years, with the number of deaths a year rising from 10 million to 24 million. What are we doing about it in Australia? Very, very little. Type 2 diabetes has doubled in Australia in the last 20 years. More than one million Australians suffer from this disease and another one million have a pre-diabetic condition that will almost certainly develop into full-blown diabetes.

According to a study by Access Economics, obesity alone is estimated to cost the country $21 billion in health costs, lost productivity and other costs. This is almost dou-
ble the cost of running Medicare. What are we doing about it, in a preventive sense, so that we do not have people getting diabetes and so that we do not have to treat them? Two per cent of our budget. It is a disgrace.

Mike Smith, whom I quoted before, says the solution must come from a combination of public health policy, economic policy, taxation policy, education, advertising, marketing, research, communication, regulation, prohibition, persuasion, planning, construction and transport. He is right. This government is not doing that. We only need to look at what Canada is doing. Of course, Canada generally leads the world in public health outcomes. The Public Health Agency of Canada has actually set targets. By 2015 it wants to increase by 20 per cent the proportion of Canadians who make healthy food choices. They are going to provide surveys and statistics; they are actually going to provide the health information outcomes. By 2015 they want to increase by 20 per cent the proportion of Canadians who participate in regular physical activity based on 30 minutes a day of moderate to vigorous activity. I would recommend that to everybody in the House! By 2015 they want to increase by 20 per cent the proportion of Canadians who have a normal bodyweight, based on a BMI of 18.5 to 24.9, as measured by a national population survey.

Canada is setting standards and funding them through public health agencies and through preventive programs in schools and throughout the community. This government is doing nothing. This minister in particular is doing nothing. All he can do is come here and personally criticise. He is in charge of this very important budget and he should be doing very well. It is all very well for the health minister to talk about the government’s record on conservative implementation and delivering improvements in immunisation rates, boosting private health cover, improving pharmaceutical benefits and introducing the extended Medicare safety net, but what about the prevention of chronic disease? What about actually talking about prevention so that we do not have people dying from things that are completely preventable?

Mr LAMING (Bowman) (4.21 pm)—I hope to inject some fact into the debate. I know it has been quite emotive so far. There has also been criticism for the sin of omission. It is obviously very difficult to cover every sector of the health system in 10 minutes. The speaker who preceded me chose to focus on Canada. I can do nothing better than to present some comparisons between Australia and Canada. The OECD is a preferred source of this form of information. I know those on the other side of the chamber usually duck for cover and start scrounging around for a left-wing academic to quote every time they see an OECD report coming their way. That is true for the running of the economy; it is also true for the health reports.

I would like to start this debate by simply holding up an AIHW table that compares Australia’s health in the midst of the previous Labor government to Australia’s health in 2003. Approximately 30 indicators are listed. Of those, all but six have seen Australia move in the direction of performing better than its OECD counterparts. I will list some of those for you. For male life expectancy, Australia is ranked No. 2 in the world, behind Japan. For the indicators of male life expectancy from the age of 65, potential years of life lost, self-rated health levels, the incidence of HIV, children aged 12 with decayed, missing or filled teeth—I could list many more indicators—under the Howard government Australia has moved well up the list from being approximately in the middle or at the bottom of the top third; we have advanced significantly.
Ms Roxon—Not in teeth.

Mr LAMING—Sure, you can select a couple of exceptions and also some areas requiring further focus, such as obesity. In this regard, Australia has not moved significantly, and that does remain a key challenge.

I will now move from AIHW and inject some more fact, this time from the OECD. As I have already indicated, men in Australia rank No. 2 in the world and females No. 3 in the world. We come in behind Japan and France. Our death rates are the lowest in the world, following only Japan’s. There is no mention in that top group of Canada; nor is there any mention of Canada in the top group for life expectancy. For ischemic heart disease, Canada just sneaks into the top five; but it is Australia that sits behind only Denmark and Sweden in the OECD ranking for mortality rates.

Moving to the rate of death from accidental falls—I have lost two grandparents to accidental falls—I note that Australia leads the world in having the lowest rate. Again, there is no mention in the top group of Canada. Rates of Indigenous low birth weight and circulatory diseases are included in a whole area where there are a series of benchmarks which we are watching closely to see improvements in Aboriginal Australia. In looking at the frequency of dental caries in children aged 12, Australia leads the way in having the lowest rates, in front of the UK and Switzerland. Again, there is no mention of Canada in that top three.

This selective reporting of figures that we have seen from the opposition is a little reminiscent of the global warming debate, where everyone was harking to the promises made by Canada, only to find them eventually falling far short of their Kyoto targets. Perhaps, once again, grasping for Canada has not proven to be a terribly wise strategy. I can really only comment on Australia. The OECD comparisons can sometimes be brutal and the differences between economies often relatively small, but Australia has performed exceptionally well in those fairly external and objective comparisons made internationally.

Health is immensely complex. I would not be the first person to say that it is much more than the absence of disease. But the great challenge in this debate, as we have heard for the last half-hour, is that happiness becomes little more than good health and a very bad memory. You do not have to think too hard to remember the state of Australia’s health and the degree of investment in health under the previous government in the early nineties, and the complete lack of alternatives that have been presented by the other side in the 11 years in which we have followed their progress.

Nothing is more marked than the failure that was Medicare Gold, the proposition that came from the other side of the House—one of the first original thoughts we had seen from them—for in-hospital care for everyone over the age of 75. It was poorly costed, it was poorly thought-out and it triaged not on clinical need but purely on age, down to the day. It left partners of those who were over 75 in the lurch. It completely uprooted the whole notion of private care and private health as we know it and, in the end, it fell foul of nearly every commentator except the most biased Labor commentator available. We saw a range of references being made by everyone from Michael Costello to Peter Botsman and of course Barry Jones, who in those few words said that Medicare Gold ‘proved to be a turkey’.

We on this side of the chamber know well that a strong economy that allows families, youth and seniors to plan for the future also allows us to invest in a health system that provides what Australians need. I do not
want to be guilty, as a previous speaker on our side has been accused, of not mentioning every sector of the health system, but we have seen consistent increases in investment. We have seen that in the COAG arrangements. That has been witnessed through $42 billion in the healthcare agreements and an increase of $10 billion over the previous agreement. That is only possible with a well-run economy. Of course the other side will say that this was purely by accident—fortuitous externalities that see Australia’s economy moving ahead at the expense of other OECD nations that simply have not achieved such consecutive budget surpluses, and I hope we witness another surplus tonight. It is with that surplus that the great programs that can preserve and promote health can be funded.

One of the traps that the opposition falls into is to say that the division of responsibility between jurisdictions effectively becomes an abrogation of responsibility by the federal government. Of course we leave public health, except for what are called the public health outcome funding agreements, predominantly to the states, just as dental care has rested entirely with the states, except for a short moment of Keating madness as the economy collapsed, with a small injection of funding into dentistry that did nothing for the waiting lists and left states like Queensland no better off. That is the legacy of moments of Keating economics, and since then there have been no policies that have shone any light on alternatives to what the Howard government has done.

Let us look at that aspect. We have seen increases in bulk-billing rates, with rates now at 77.1 per cent. We have seen the return of private health insurance using a range of incentives—Lifetime Health Cover and the Medicare levy surcharge. There have been three strategies that have built the rate of private cover to 43 per cent. I can walk down streets in my community and know that families are protected, many choosing the benefits of private cover and in so doing reducing the burden on hospitals, which was recognised by a former health minister, Graham Richardson, under the Labor government. In my own area, in the Redlands, in the last 18 months alone, there have been 3,000 visits by after-hours mobile GP services—again, taking the strain off the hospital system and preventing individuals and families from having to sit and wait for hours in public hospitals, who now instead have a visit to their door.

I am not about to say that everything one government has done is good and everything that the state governments have done is bad. That is a simplistic argument that has been put to us by the other side. Of course the state governments do what they can, but from my experience in Queensland state governments are very much focused on cost minimisation. It is very much about how they reduce the throughput in public surgery and how they reduce the amount of time spent by VMOs in our hospitals. Sure, they are not firing VMOs; they are just spending a whole lot less time in the hospital seeing patients. What a frightening notion that VMOs would actually be spending time with patients in our state hospitals, to the point that medical students and surgical trainees cannot find work in the public system from which to hone their skills towards graduation and completing their specialty training.

Many of us, both in government and as doctors, recall the indemnity crisis of 2001. It was the premium support provided by this government that actually solved the unsolvable—the problem that Labor had ignored right through the nineties, despite plenty of warning. These were the same warnings about the workforce crisis that they were hearing while they were in government. Of course, it was Graham Richardson himself
who said that this country had too many doctors. It has been the Howard government that has turned those workforce issues around with a real focus on rural issues. The government has been looking after both the nursing numbers and the training of doctors and has been ensuring that bulk-billing rates increase right across the country.

I have sat with doctors in their consulting rooms and talked to them about the enhanced primary care initiatives. They are working. The health checks for those over 75 and the health checks for those aged 45 to 49 are working and are addressing the preventative needs that the opposition has spoken about but conveniently ignored. We have invested in HIV as well as in public health. Many of the programs like Healthy Schools and the tuckshop program in state schools which are funded by the federal government have been completely ignored. That is a loss to this debate and I hope that some injection of information makes it clear that, as international comparisons go, Australia leads the world in public health. Any suggestion otherwise is completely deceitful.

Mr GEORGANAS (Hindmarsh) (4.31 pm)—I too rise to speak in this matter of public importance discussion on Australia’s health and productivity. I have listened carefully to the members opposite talk about their achievements, but the reality is that the experts are telling us that if we do not intervene very soon the next generation of Australians will be less healthy than the previous generation of Australians for the very first time. Since settlement of this country every generation has looked forward to a better health system, better life expectancy and better health. We have managed to turn that around and, as I said, if there is no intervention for the very first time we will be looking at a generation that will have a lesser standard of health than we have. That will have an impact on Australia’s productivity.

Growth in Australia’s productivity has been in free-fall, from a growth rate of 2.6 per cent per annum in the 1990s to 2.1 per cent in the early part of this decade and to one per cent since 2003. Irrespective of which way you look at it, this government has done little to actively address and improve the connection between health and productivity, which would ensure the earning capacity of the nation’s employees and the ability of the nation’s families to make ends meet through their work. The government may point to statistics and claim that it had something to do with increases here or decreases there, but fundamentally this government pays comparatively less attention to the planning and execution of national wealth-creating and sustainable strategies than it does to the polls, as we have seen recently. No doubt that is what we are going to hear tonight in the 2007 budget speech.

Professor Warwick McKibbin, the Reserve Bank’s longest serving board member, recently criticised the government’s lack of action in the areas of education, infrastructure, climate change, tax reform and workforce participation. Australia’s productivity has been abandoned. Information technology, communication and other infrastructure continue to languish. Real apprenticeships continue to be as scarce as hen’s teeth. Small business regulation continues to hold people back from what they do best. And now the prediction is that, with the next generation having a less healthy lifestyle, productivity will be put into some form of danger. The government’s sole policy in addressing Australia’s capacity to earn a living and fund our future ageing population has been to cut wages and conditions—that is all we have seen; that has been their cornerstone. Work Choices, which is all we have heard, is less pay now and poorer old age for the future.

But the workforce’s capacity to work also demands attention. Just as the nation’s ag-
aggregate age can compromise the nation’s capacity to work and fund our individual and collective future, so the ability of those of working age to engage in employment within the workforce will be compromised as a result of the high prevalence of preventable disease. Mental health, type 2 diabetes, serious injury, cardiovascular disease, cancer and skeletal disease are six diseases alone that account for around 70 per cent of the disease burden of the working age population. The workforce’s participation rate is not at risk due to disease alone. Lifestyle choices, pastimes and other factors can induce absenteeism and substantially decrease participation rates. Alcohol consumption and risk-taking activities all play their part. The general population had a workforce participation rate of 65 per cent up to 2005. Mental health, the most devastating and costly of the six target diseases, decreases participation rates by almost half to 35 per cent.

Other diseases might not yet be having such a devastating effect on the working population, but one might expect the prevalence and severity of these other diseases to increase over time. The incidence of diabetes, for instance, has doubled globally over the past few decades. In Australia the number of people with diabetes is now over a million, increasing by 100,000 per year, and is characterised as the epidemic of the future.

What we have seen over the last 10 years of this government is a preference to ignore an issue, minimise its consequences and challenge our capacity to act. If the Prime Minister cannot get away with doing nothing anymore, he just denounces responsibility. I have heard from my colleagues about recent reports of the number of children being hospitalised, for example, for dental treatment and that has increased by 29 per cent over the last decade. (Time expired)

Mrs HULL (Riverina) (4.37 pm)—Prevention is better than cure, and I only wish that that had been the attitude of the previous Labor government under which we saw the running down of facilities right across rural Australia. It is thanks to this government that we in the rural areas of Australia have finally been seen and heard.

We heard in question time today from the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry of a Labor policy that used the word ‘drought’ once—and then it was only used in the context of the effect that it might have had on the city! That is just a taste of what did happen under Labor and what would happen again if Labor gained government. We would get exactly the same treatment that is dished out by the Iemma New South Wales government.

If we look at the issues that have been addressed by this government in its tenure since 1996, it is only this government which has indeed promoted flexible and sustainable healthcare services for small rural and remote communities and regional Australian people. And it has achieved this by maintaining and improving our access to health, aged care and other community services, in order that we may access preventive treatments.

I have looked at the services in cancer care that we had available to us in the country areas prior to this government taking an interest in rural and regional people. We have talked about an active workforce and about workforce productivity. Let me tell you: in rural Australia, prior to this government coming into its position, we had no choice. If you had cancer, you had no choice but to travel to a city hospital or facility. You had no choice but to be stranded in the city in order to achieve your, maybe, five minutes of radiotherapy or 10 or 20 minutes of chemotherapy a day, and you were there for months on end. You were unable to work. You were
unable to be productive because you could not be in the town you were employed in, because you had to travel to a city.

Only this government took an interest and said, ‘We will provide cancer care services to rural and regional people.’ Before that, the choice was this: if you lived in the city and you contracted cancer, you had ample opportunity to live; if you lived in the country and you contracted cancer, unless you went to the city you died. Many people simply could not make that step to the city. And some people had to be there for months or even a year at a time in order to get their treatments. How productive were they? Instead, this government brought the facilities to rural people so they could stay in their communities, access the treatments and have parity and equity with city people. That is what has been provided—and only by this government and, in particular, by this health minister, the Hon. Tony Abbott.

The number of GPs in rural and remote areas has increased by over 20 per cent. This has been facilitated by the funding of 14 new rural clinical schools, the first of which I was very proud to have in Wagga Wagga. They were then rolled out across other areas. We can see the success of this in that you can train and retain rural professionals, particularly in the health professions, in the country, and they are more likely to stay in the country and practise.

We have awarded over 430 medical scholarships under our Rural Australia Medical Undergraduate Scholarship Scheme. This is for the long term, to encourage practice in preventive health. Firstly, in order to have preventive health, you have to have health professionals in the country; you just cannot walk through any door and get provided with a series of services as you can in the city.

We have also introduced appropriately trained overseas doctors—270 of them—to fill those vacancies in the short term. And those people are appropriately filling those places in order to give us access to treatment. You might talk about preventive care, but no-one deserves to have no access to treatment at all, rather than just to be accessing preventive care. No-one has done more for the diabetes, asthma and other early intervention programs that are being delivered jointly with government GPs and pharmacies than this government. (Time expired)

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Jenkins)—Order! The discussion is now concluded.

COMMITTEES

Public Accounts and Audit Committee Statement

Mr BARRESI (Deakin) (4.42 pm)—I ask leave of the House to make a statement on behalf of the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit concerning the budget estimates for the Australian National Audit Office for 2007-08, and also for leave to present a copy of my statement.

Leave granted.

Mr BARRESI—I rise on behalf of the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit to report on the budget estimates of the Australian National Audit Office. This is a requirement of the Public Accounts and Audit Committee Act 1951, and reflects the Auditor-General’s status as an independent officer of the parliament.

The Audit Office’s direct appropriation in 2006-07 was just over $64 million, with no further funding sought or received during the year. The Auditor-General advised the committee that he had sought additional funding from 2007-08 onwards across two priority areas. Firstly, the Audit Office sought $19.6 million over four years to meet the requirements of new auditing standards. Concerns about the quality of financial reporting, fol-
Following high-profile corporate collapses both overseas and here in Australia, have led to more stringent requirements being imposed under the Australian Auditing Standards. The Auditor-General has advised that the standards continue to evolve, with further additional requirements expected to be imposed in the years ahead. The ANAO’s audits are, of course, undertaken in accordance with these standards, and the additional requirements have had a direct impact on the level of resources required by the Audit Office.

Secondly, the Audit Office sought additional funding of $3.7 million over four years, to increase assistance provided to audit institutions in the Asia-Pacific region. Within the limits of its resources, the Audit Office has provided valuable assistance to other countries. For example, the Audit Office is assisting the Indonesian Audit Board and the Papua New Guinea Audit Office, and has released staff to work in Afghanistan and the Solomon Islands.

The assistance to Indonesia and Papua New Guinea is being provided under the auspices of AusAID programs. However, the Audit Office is facing increasing calls for more informal, short-term assistance which it is obliged to fund from its internal resources. For example, the Audit Office hosted 34 short-term visits in 2005-06, involving 319 delegates from a range of countries. I note that the Audit Office was unable to support recent requests for ongoing audit training from the Bank of Indonesia and Thailand’s Auditor-General because of resource constraints.

I am pleased to report that, during the budget processes, the Audit Office managed to achieve an acceptable outcome in relation to its request for funding to meet the requirements of the new auditing standards. The Audit Office received half of the new funding sought for meeting the requirements of new auditing standards—that is, $9.8 million over four years. The Audit Office has also retained funding previously used on the audit of Telstra, which will cover most of the shortfall. The Auditor-General resigned as the auditor of Telstra during the year and negotiated to retain the portion of the audit cost that represented the Audit Office’s internal investment in the audit. That amounts to $7.6 million over four years.

The remaining shortfall, of $2.2 million over four years, will be made up from efficiencies generated by the Audit Office in its operational costs. These efficiencies include changes to the Audit Office’s accommodation arrangements, which will result in substantially reduced rental payments from September 2008. While some of those resources will be required for refurbishment and refitting of premises, savings should still be available.

The committee notes that the Audit Office did not receive approval in the 2007-08 budget for increased assistance to audit institutions in the Asia-Pacific region. However, the Audit Office will review possibilities of obtaining funding from other sources on a government-wide basis. The committee hopes that government-wide solutions can be progressed as soon as possible, given the strong capacity of the Audit Office and other agencies, to help encourage better governance practices in our region.

In addition to these funding measures, the committee itself recommended that the ANAO receive additional funding of $1.5 million in the 2007-08 budget to produce an annual audit on progress in major defence capital equipment projects. By way of background, the committee is undertaking a major inquiry into financial reporting and equipment acquisition at the Department of Defence and the Defence Materiel Organisation, following a series of critical reports by
the Auditor-General on individual projects. Although the inquiry is still ongoing, it quickly became clear that there would be significant benefit in the Audit Office being funded to annually review progress in major defence capital equipment projects in a manner similar to a review conducted by Great Britain’s National Audit Office.

The committee therefore released an interim statement by the inquiry late last year, unanimously recommending that the Defence Materiel Organisation produce an annual report on progress in the top 30 capital equipment projects. That report, in turn, will be subject to published assessment by the Audit Office. The recommendation made by the committee is similar to one previously made by the Senate, and which the Audit Office has unsuccessfully sought funds for in three previous budgets. Both the Audit Office and the Department of Defence have indicated their support of the committee’s recommendation.

I am pleased to advise that the Prime Minister has indicated that a submission, agreed between the Audit Office and Defence, should be brought forward in the context of the 2008-09 budget to give effect to the committee’s recommendation. We believe that the annual progress report will put the Audit Office and the parliament in a much stronger position to review project management at Defence, while major projects are still in train, rather than looking in the rear-view mirror via an audit and a parliamentary review some time after projects are finalised.

The committee recommended that the Audit Office receive start-up funding for this initiative in this year’s budget. However, that funding was not forthcoming. The Auditor-General has advised that his staff will still be able to undertake significant preparatory work within existing resources this coming year. This is something that the committee will assess as the year progresses. The committee also acknowledges that this new process will have resource implications for the Defence Materiel Organisation and believes that this should be taken into account, as required, in future years.

Overall, the Auditor-General advised the committee that the Audit Office’s budget for 2007-08 is sufficient to enable it to meet its auditing responsibilities. However, he also advised the committee that the cost of qualified auditors, accountants and audit contractors continues to rise, which puts pressure on its budget. We note that the Auditor-General has increased the allocation for staff remuneration from within the Audit Office’s budget for 2007-08. However, the attraction and retention of staff in the current market will remain a key issue for the Audit Office. In the light of these developments, the Auditor-General has indicated that he will monitor his budget position and market conditions throughout 2007-08 and will inform the committee of his assessment ahead of next year’s budget.

The committee considers that it is important to ensure that the Audit Office is properly resourced. The Audit Office must be able to attract and retain the high-quality staff it employs to undertake its performance and financial statement audits. We will await further advice from the Auditor-General before informing the parliament on the resourcing of the Audit Office beyond the coming budget year. The Auditor-General’s advice that this direct appropriation of just over $63 million for 2007-08 is sufficient has been noted and welcomed by the committee. Accordingly, we endorse the budget proposed for the Audit Office for the year ahead.

As this will be the last statement by the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit on the Audit Office budget before the federal election, I take this opportunity to
commend the Auditor-General and his staff for the productive relationship that they have cultivated with the committee in this parliament and for the efforts they go to to ensure that we are kept properly informed. Their share of the federal budget is a very cost-effective investment in ensuring that standards are maintained across the public sector and that the parliament is able to scrutinise the performance of executive agencies in spending taxpayers’ money. I present a copy of my statement to the House.

**HEALTH INSURANCE AMENDMENT (INAPPROPRIATE AND PROHIBITED PRACTICES AND OTHER MEASURES) BILL 2007**

**VETERANS’ AFFAIRS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (2007 MEASURES No. 1) BILL 2007**

**LIQUID FUEL EMERGENCY AMENDMENT BILL 2007**

**AUSTRALIAN WINE AND BRANDY CORPORATION AMENDMENT BILL (No. 1) 2007**

Referred to Main Committee

**Mr Bartlett** (Macquarie) (4.51 pm)—by leave—I move:

That the following bills be referred to the Main Committee for further consideration:

Health Insurance Amendment (Inappropriate and Prohibited Practices and Other Measures) 2007;
Veterans’ Affairs Legislation Amendment (2007 Measures No. 1) 2007;
Liquid Fuel Emergency Amendment 2007; and
Australian Wine and Brandy Corporation Amendment (No. 1) 2007.

Question agreed to.

**MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY**

**Mr Albanese** (Grayndler—Manager of Opposition Business) (4.53 pm)—I move:

That so much of the standing and sessional orders be suspended as would prevent the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry coming into the House and explaining why, during Question Time today, he:

1. falsely claimed that Labor’s National Platform makes only one reference to the impact of drought;
2. falsely claimed that the single reference concerned the impact of drought on our cities;
3. failed to acknowledge the commitment contained in Chapter Five of Labor’s National Platform to “maintain and improve programs that support farmers through droughts and other natural disasters while also developing programs to help farmers better prepare for these events”; and
4. failed to acknowledge Labor’s Platform commitment to a comprehensive strategy for agriculture and fisheries that encompasses:
   (a) increasing agricultural productivity;
   (b) maximising agricultural employment;
   (c) investment in innovative agriculture;
   (d) access to markets;
   (e) workplace safety on farms;
   (f) women in agriculture;
   (g) farm assistance programs;
   (h) intergenerational transfer of farms;
   (i) science and best practice;
   (j) food safety and quality assurance;
   (k) agriculture and the natural environment; and
   (l) fisheries and aquaculture.

The minister is prepared to play politics with drought-stricken farm families, who are suffering enough.

**Mr Baldwin** (Paterson—Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Industry, Tourism and Resources) (4.54 pm)—I move:

That the Member be no longer heard.

Question put.

The House divided. [4.59 pm]
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Question agreed to.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Jenkins)—Is the motion seconded?

Mr BYRNE (Holt) (5.07 pm)—Mr Deputy Speaker—

Mr BALDWIN (Paterson—Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Industry, Tourism and Resources) (5.07 pm)—I move:

That the Member be no longer heard.

Question put.

The House divided. [5.08 pm]
**Tuesday, 8 May 2007**

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

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<td>Question agreed to.</td>
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<td>Fitzgibbon, J.A.</td>
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<td>That the motion (Mr Albanese's) to be</td>
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<td>agreed to.</td>
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<td>[5.11 pm]</td>
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<td>(The Deputy Speaker—Mr Jenkins)</td>
<td>Hayes, C.P.</td>
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<td>Ayes...........</td>
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Question negatived.

MIGRATION AMENDMENT (BORDER INTEGRITY) BILL 2007

HEALTH INSURANCE AMENDMENT (PROVIDER NUMBER REVIEW) BILL 2007

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 3) 2006-2007

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 4) 2006-2007

Returned from the Senate

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

MIGRATION AMENDMENT (REVIEW PROVISIONS) BILL 2006

First Reading

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

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

COMMITTEES

Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity Committee

Science and Innovation Committee

Membership

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Jenkins)—Mr Speaker has received advice from the Chief Government Whip and the Chief Opposition Whip that they have nominated members to be members of certain committees.

Mr BALDWIN (Paterson—Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Industry, Tourism and Resources) (5.16 pm)—by leave—I move:

That:

(1) Mr Baird, Mrs May and Mrs Hull be appointed members of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on the Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity; and

(2) Mr Price be discharged from the Standing Committee on Science and Innovation and that, in his place, Mr K. J. Thomson be appointed a member of the committee.

Question agreed to.

AVIATION TRANSPORT SECURITY AMENDMENT (ADDITIONAL SCREENING MEASURES) BILL 2007

AIRSPACE BILL 2007

AIRSPACE (CONSEQUENTIALS AND OTHER MEASURES) BILL 2007

ENERGY EFFICIENCY OPPORTUNITIES AMENDMENT BILL 2007
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Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler) (5.18 pm)—
I rise to speak to the Broadcasting Legislation Amendment (Digital Radio) Bill 2007 and related amendments in the Radio Licence Fees Amendment Bill 2007 to the Trade Practices Act 1974. Today we have an opportunity to see the passage of legislation in this House that will enable digital radio services in Australia and enhance the radio experience of millions of Australians. We have this unique opportunity, but we also have an obligation to get it right. Let us be clear: federal Labor cleanly supports the introduction of a sound policy framework that will allow innovative digital radio services to be accessible to all Australians. A sound policy framework includes provisions for efficient and appropriate technology, settings, licensing arrangements and regulation to ensure equitable access and maximum uptake amongst broadcasters and listeners.

These are complex matters, and to ensure that we have the best possible outcome it is essential that the legislation be given due consideration by the parliament and that meaningful consultation be undertaken with key stakeholders. Unfortunately, as has been the case with so much legislation that has passed through both houses of the Australian parliament, the opportunity for careful scrutiny has been lost by the Howard government’s greater imperative to ensure the unhindered passage of its legislation and to undermine yet again the democratic process.

Members on the other side may argue that a Senate inquiry was held to explore issues of concern relating to this broadcasting legislation—and it was indeed. However, the way in which the inquiry was conducted highlights the government’s disinterest in proper scrutiny of its legislation. It highlights the Howard government’s desire for the Senate to be nothing more than a rubber stamp for its proposed legislation.

The Senate referred the digital radio bill to the Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts for an inquiry on 29 March 2007, with a reporting deadline of 30 April 2007. The committee advertised its call for submissions on 4 April and requested that submissions be received by 12 April. Interested parties had fewer than 10 days to consider some 137 pages of amendments and to submit a meaningful response. Also, the Senate inquiry committee members received submissions and information for deliberation just one day prior to the scheduled meeting of the committee. There is no reason why this legislation or, indeed, any other legislation that stands to impact on millions of Australians should be accelerated through the parliament without proper consideration.

Labor supports the introduction of digital radio. Labor’s involvement in parliamentary deliberation is not to stifle the passage of the bill; rather, it is to iron out any creases, thereby improving the legislation in the interests of the many Australians who will be affected by it. This is Labor’s interest and it
is our responsibility. It is imperative that the best possible legislative framework is agreed upon as we go forward into the digital realm. Unfortunately, we again see signs of a government that has been in power for too long and has lost touch with the importance of the democratic process, a government that is ready and willing to place the national interest last on its priority list because it is always the short-term political interest that dominates the objectives of this government. We see blatant disregard for process, time and time again.

As noted, Labor appreciates the importance of introducing digital radio in Australia and will for this reason not deny giving the bill a second reading. However, the bill has significant shortcomings, which Labor has attempted to address through the Senate inquiry process. Labor’s concerns have been disregarded in that forum. Therefore, we will again attempt in this forum to make important improvements to the policy framework by moving a second reading amendment. I move:

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

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

(1) notes
(a) that the Senate Committee inquiry into the bill did not allow interested parties sufficient time to consider and draft submissions to the committee, this constraint not allowing meaningful consultation on the bill;
(b) the lack of information as to how the omission of the Digital Radio Mondiale (DRM) platform from the legislation will affect the roll-out of digital radio to rural and regional Australia and notes that this legislation only specifies the use of Digital Radio Broadcasting (DAB); and
(c) that trials on DRM and compression standards are still being carried out;
(2) calls for debate on the bill to be deferred until meaningful consultation has occurred; and
(3) demands that the Government make every endeavour to ensure that standards are in place to enable the rollout of digital radio to remote, rural and regional Australia”.

I moved that amendment because it is only reasonable that there be proper scrutiny and that we get this right. We know that the pace of technological change has been quite extraordinary in recent times, particularly when it comes to communications, and we need to make sure that all Australians, regardless of where they live, get access to the improvements in that technology.

Labor’s amendment primarily goes to the point of equitable access of digital capacity and services to rural, remote and regional areas of Australia. It is imperative that every effort is made to ensure that standards are put in place to enable the rollout of digital radio to rural, remote and regional areas. One way this can be achieved is by making provision for the future implementation of the Digital Radio Mondiale, DRM, platform, should this prove to be the mechanism that enables digital radio rollout to rural and remote areas. As members would be aware, there are a number of different technologies available for digital radio broadcasting.

The proposed legislative framework requires that commercial broadcasters will be using the digital audio broadcasting platform. In its submission to the Senate inquiry the ABC indicated that DAB will not adequately service regional and remote areas. They maintain that the DRM system would allow better coverage. I think the government needs to respond to that submission by the ABC. This concern was acknowledged by the Senate inquiry committee. In their final report coalition senators stated:
The committee hopes that the government will take an approach that minimises the barriers to the adoption of digital radio in regional and remote areas.

However, in drafting the legislative framework, the DRM platform is omitted and there is a lack of information as to how this omission will affect the rollout of digital radio across Australia. While it is conceivable that DRM trials are still underway, it makes sense that the best digital radio standard be determined before the provisions of the bill come into effect—or, at the very least, that there is scope within the legislation to move to an alternative platform if this proves to be a better option. Explicitly providing such a possibility also provides manufacturers of radio receivers with an incentive to produce multifORMAT devices that can be adapted to receive both DAB and DRM. Once again, the absence of critical DRM information goes to my initial argument about the need to provide adequate time for deliberation on this bill. There is simply no need to rush the passage of this legislation. Getting it right from the beginning ensures the best possible outcome for service providers and consumers and provides industry with long-term certainty in relation to technology development.

I want to also address access entitlements and the operation of multiplex licences as they will be impacted by this legislation. In Australia, much of the spectrum suitable for digital radio broadcasting is already being used for analog and digital television and for defence communications. As a result unoccupied spectrum appropriate for digital radio services is limited. To maximise access the spectrum is split into ‘multiplexes’, allowing a number of different streams of content to be broadcast within the one spectrum. The DAB technology allows nine channels per multiplex. The bill does not provide guaranteed capacity for community radio broadcasting services on all available multiplexes. For example, the bill provides for commercial and community broadcasters to share category 1 licences and makes access by community broadcasters dependent on the decisions of commercial broadcasters. This provision in the legislation denies community broadcasters equitable access to the digital spectrum because they must first rely on a commercial broadcaster to seek digital capacity. Further inaccessibility issues arise in relation to category 2 licences, where community radio will only have access to licences if there is spare capacity after category 1 licences are filled.

National broadcasters are also disadvantaged. They have raised concerns that the requirement to form a company in order to be eligible to access category 3 licences places additional tax obligations and administrative costs on the broadcasters. That the Australian Communications and Media Authority can only issue multiplex licences to ‘digital representative companies’ is also onerous for community broadcasters.

It is clear that these are all complex issues worthy of adequate discussion and consideration so as to provide a digital radio service that best serves the nation. ‘Use it or lose it’ provisions in the proposed legislation allow ACMA to convert a licensee’s licence back to analog where it is not providing at least one digital commercial radio broadcasting service in its licence area. The legislation lacks any guidelines that ACMA should follow in exercising its discretion to convert licences back to analog. For example, it is unclear what would constitute an exceptional circumstance or reasonable excuse for a broadcaster not providing a commercial radio service in any given area. Also, it is unclear where this leaves community broadcasters in the event that a commercial radio broadcasting licensee, on whom the community broadcaster depends, ceases to hold a digital licence.
Content provisions also allow commercial, community or national broadcasters to take advantage of the new digital technologies which will allow them to deliver content other than traditional audio programming. This includes, and is limited to, content in the form of text or still visual images, or in a form specified in a legislative instrument made by the minister. The explanatory memorandum highlights animation as an example of further content which could be approved by the minister though a legislative instrument. Animation and video clips are already available on mobile phones. There is no evidence to suggest that inclusion of such content on digital radio would threaten the digital TV industry. In fact inclusion of such content is likely to encourage the take-up of digital radio. That the minister should have to approve further content is a retrograde provision that should be removed.

In conclusion, the introduction of digital radio is unquestionably an exciting development in the evolution of radio. It can offer a more robust transmission system and a range of images and text information which will facilitate access to warnings—particularly relating to weather—news, traffic updates, sports updates and stock exchange information, as well as additional functionality such as record and rewind. However, the move to digital is technically complex. We must ensure that rural, remote and regional areas in Australia are adequately serviced. We know that these communities are missing out, now, on much of the communications and information technology revolution that people in the inner west of Sydney, which I represent, can take for granted.

We need to make sure that equity of access is permitted and ensured from the very beginning. That is why my amendment goes to the need for further, proper consultation in ensuring that we get this legislation right. We must ensure access and entitlement issues are well managed, and we must ensure there are no unnecessary restrictions on content. Time invested in this transition today will result in better uptake of the technology and efficiencies tomorrow.

The government’s expeditious behaviour jeopardises the development of the best possible policy framework to take Australia forward. Good policy is made better through appropriate consideration and deliberation. Good policy is made worse through hasty decision making, which, once again, puts at risk the national interest. I urge the House to favourably consider the amendment that I have moved, which is directed towards making sure that this bill is the best possible bill that this House can carry and does justice to the important issues of digital radio as we move forward.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. AM Somlyay)—Is the amendment seconded?

Ms Livermore—I second the amendment.

Mr HARDGRAVE (Moreton) (5.35 pm)—I am delighted to speak on this amendment. It is the first time I have spoken on media related subjects for a handful of years or more, because of my responsibilities in the executive of government, but I bring to this subject a passion, which I declare to the House, when it comes to radio, particularly commercial radio. It was my first love. We had run a school radio station, 4MG, which first started out in 1974. That school radio station ran for over 20 years with other students getting bitten by the bug which is radio, the most exciting of all media. Radio is, without a doubt, the most personal media and the most instantaneous media. It is the media which others, such as television, try to copy. Perhaps Sky News do the best job of that by being instant and live and in running things, because they have great ex-radio
journalists like Roy Jamieson as producers. I simply make the point—and my declaration has been made—because it was only the member for Fadden who was there on 24 November 1974, at the opening of 4MG at MacGregor high school, as an ex-commercial radio announcer, ex-commercial radio presenter—the first face on Channel 0, now Channel 10, in Brisbane. The member for Fadden and I are the two people in this chamber who actually know something about commercial radio. So you can imagine how I felt listening and watching as the member for Grayndler rightly said that technology is driving the change, and wanting to participate in this debate.

Let me salute Senator Helen Coonan, the Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, because she has a job that I probably once coveted. I concede publicly, as I have conceded to her, that the legislative and legal framework associated with communications these days means that I will yield to her as a legal eagle. But if the Prime Minister wants to ring me one day I would be happy to take the call!

The key thing about commercial radio is viability. The member for Grayndler had a contorted—I was so sad for him—14 minutes of sheer pain. Three minutes into his contribution he moved his second reading amendment to try and get content. He was, in a discussion about digital radio, a bit like one of those old valve sets. One of his valves definitely needed a bit of a polish, because there was no oomph in it, no interest in it. As he rightly said, technology is driving it, but he demanded that government somehow or other presuppose what technology is going to be like and pick winners. The member for Grayndler, if he had been in this place in the seventies, would have been moving amendments demanding that Beta be the format of choice and that VHS be banished. Even though Beta was technically better, the marketplace went for VHS. The two things that are driving it are the technology and also the market, and viability is at the heart of this.

It is no point at all that—out of some aspiration, as the member for Grayndler suggested—rural and regional Australia are missing out on something. There is no point at all in imposing digital radio on, particularly, commercial and community operators in those parts of Australia when there is uncertainty about exactly what format is going to work. There is no point in destroying the viability of those radio stations by them forking out money to chase the technology rabbit down one hole when it is going to pop up out of another one. The Broadcasting Legislation Amendment (Digital Radio) Bill 2007 and cognate bill establish a framework by which digital radio can roll out over a period of time that works for the commercial radio industry.

Perhaps my only objection to the legislation is that we restrict the possibilities of what digital radio could deliver. There is a convergence of technology taking place today where you can click on the web and watch moving pictures—albeit at a slower rate than perhaps some would like, but it is getting faster every day. The complete nonsense that Telstra flogs about broadband speeds being too slow in Australia has to be put to rest. I welcome the group of nine telcos’ contribution to that debate today. The point I make is that online convergence of moving pictures and sound at digital quality will damage the radio industry if we are not careful. Australia rightly has a very strong and proud history when it comes to the use of radio as a means of communication, entertainment and information.

One of the great complaints I have is that over too many generations of both sides of politics radio has been the lab rat of media experiments. Radio was subjected to more
foreign ownership than any other point in the media dial. We could have people from all parts of the world owning all parts of the radio network around Australia. As they were chasing the viability of their sector, they amalgamated a lot of licences together, and that is why we have hubs in Albury, the Gold Coast and Townsville which are sending news all through the Sunshine Coast and so forth. It is not necessarily live and local radio these days as much as we would like. I think one of the things the government could look at is a licensing regime that makes licence fees cheaper for live and local radio stations and more expensive if you simply want to hub out of one place and beam, whether it is digital or analog signals, out of a transmission tower for which you have purchased a licence. That subject is perhaps for another day.

Equally, we need to make sure that we do not damage the enormous capacity radio has to reinvent itself, to change itself and to provide for itself a home in this convergence of technology. TV stations are under a similar amount of pressure. Newspapers are now sending out film crews with their journalists. I had the *Courier-Mail* come my office a couple of months ago, and there was a News Ltd crew for streaming video online. My only question is: why can’t radio do that if they want to also provide that sort of service? This legislation restricts them. It specifies certain things that we should at this point in time be doing with digital radio.

Nevertheless, this legislation does not lock into place the best guess of government, which is probably more likely than not to be the least likely to know where technology is going to go. No offence to any of the hard-working public servants in the Department of Communications, IT and the Arts, but in the end they are going to take their advice from people like Des DeCean of Austereo. I declare that Des is somebody I worked with—it seems like 100 years ago, but it must have been about 25 years ago—at 2CA. He would probably be the best walking, talking authority on radio and digital radio in Australia, and he works for Austereo, a major player in Australia’s media empires. Around this country they have major, very popular metropole stations—Triple M and B105 in Brisbane, for instance.

I simply make the point that the best knowledge is obviously in the companies themselves, in the organisations that are daily planning how to maintain their viability, how to ensure that something they sell—that is, access to the airwaves, to advertisers—turns a dollar and enables them to make a profit. How do they finance that? By having popular programming and by more people having access to them than to other radio stations. They maintain their viability by having a sufficient number of listeners to ensure that they have the ratings that they need to sustain it all, and on it goes.

One of the things that radio has to do is, as all the other media have done, to diversify the range of things they can sell. During the cricket coverage during summer they could be flogging a 0055 number to vote for the best catch or to purchase a cricket bat that Tony Greig has endorsed. That is what television is doing—providing access through the phone lines or the internet to purchase things from the cricket shop. Why is it that radio do not have the capacity, as they would under this legislation, to point people to competition, fine-print details and other things on their website or indeed to broadcast that through a separate channel? While they are broadcasting their main audio program on one channel, the visual content, still pictures, could explain some of the fine print and details of any competitions they run. Why can’t they do that? That is what this
digital technology is promising and creating a certain environment for.

The member for Grayndler put great store in the importance of community radio in rural and regional Australia. I do not disagree with the importance of that, but this legislation is marking out the six major metropolitan markets and saying: ‘Let’s see what the radio industry decides for itself within the framework of this legislation using the technology that is available and driving people towards this technology through their market influence. Let’s see what technology and the market together can deliver. Let’s trust the industry to create an environment in which it will turn people onto this digital radio technology.’ You obviously have to have a framework in which that can operate and that is what this legislation is providing.

We are introducing a six-year moratorium on the issue of new area planned commercial radio licences from the commencement of services in the respective markets so that we can allow those radio stations to bed down this far higher cost to their overall operation to maintain their viability while they prove the technology. This proof of technology is important because, for regional and rural areas, and indeed community radio, to have the opportunity to look at the example of the success or otherwise that has been generated by the more highly profitable stations in major metro markets and then make decisions, is an obvious, common-sense approach. But if you listened to the member for Grayndler, you would not even start the process until you had had a full-on second guess by mere politicians and slowed the whole process down and then told this sector what they should do. I do not for a moment believe the knowledge would ever reside in a Senate committee, with the greatest respect to our brothers and sisters in the other place. I do not believe the knowledge would reside in a Senate committee ahead of the knowledge which resides in people like Des De-Cean and others who have the technology background, who have experience in the industry, who understand where the industry gets its money from, how it maintains itself and how it plans to reinvent itself yet again.

In that regard, this legislation has got the balance right. This legislation does not declare but leaves open the way in which the system itself can develop the way ahead. This legislation simply talks about the Eureka 147 platform and the fact that we know that there is a need to ensure that digital radio can provide a real improvement on the analog services in regional Australia. It says that we do not think there can be a replication of the extensive broadcast coverage of services in many regional markets under that Eureka 147 platform, particularly AM services, and that we will be looking at other technologies, including the one the member for Grayndler mentioned—the digital radio mondiale system. But we are not locking people into them. The last time I bought a new computer for myself was 11 years ago. I
spent a couple of grand on it to upgrade the hard drive and then Bill Gates brought out something else and I could not fit it on the computer. We laypeople cannot possibly guess where technology is going to take us next, and I do not think the cumbersome wheels of government should be restraining the way in which technology in the market is driving things forward.

This whole thing will be decided essentially at the consumer level by people of about the age of 12 to 15 because they will be the ones consuming things such as the examples that were given by the member for Grayndler, the additional things that radio stations will be able to broadcast on other parts of the spectrum—still pictures and so forth. Just as mobile phone companies are offering ring tones and screensavers, radio stations will be able to offer the same thing. Equally, they will be able to do as they have done in parts of England for some years using digital technology and give you a digital readout of where traffic jams are and not just simply the audio report from some eye in the sky. You will be able to get your weather report through a different frequency. Getting this system right and working in all parts of Australia is going to be a far greater challenge than it is around Greater London, where it has been bedded down for most of the past decade. The government has to act within a framework which allows all of these possibilities to be discovered. That is what this legislation today is dealing with. It is certainly not specifying the outcome, but it is specifying a framework within which many of the flowers in the garden can flourish.

Consistent with the government’s commitment, given most recently at the last election, the government is maintaining that community broadcasters will be included in the initial planning process. The great diversity of radio in Australia today is being delivered by the community radio broadcasting sector, such as on Logan 101, where I know the member for Fadden is heard on a Sunday night playing the great show tunes, Julie London and people like that. They were around before I was born but, nevertheless, these sorts of community radio stations are very much living up to the mantra of ‘radio is where you live’. The importance of radio is that it is the ultimate one-to-one communication vehicle. For those of us who have been broadcasters, when we talk to one person at a time we might just happen to have hundreds of thousands or, if our ratings are good, maybe millions of people listening, but it is a very personal media. It is something we do not want to lose as the technology which is constantly driving this debate continues to pervade what has been a marvellous friend for so many people over the years.

The commercial radio industry have generally welcomed the government’s announcement of preparation for enabling legislation—and that is what this is: enabling legislation to build the framework on which other things can happen for the implementation of digital radio. They know that the start date of 1 January 2009 is feasible. It is in line with industry expectations and business planning. It allows the viability question to be exercised, and it allows businesses to make forward plans, report to shareholders and create an environment by which they can carefully and methodically plan their next step. But again the Labor Party and their politburo, central-planning concept of the way you should run government say very plainly: ‘The Senate committee will decide on the logic. Forget all of the technicians and the people who understand the radio industry, forget all of the viability questions, forget the way the market wants to operate and forget the technology; this is what you will do.’ It is no way to run a railroad or a radio station.

I congratulate Senator Helen Coonan for the close work and I congratulate the de-
partmental officers who no doubt have worked with her. In closing, I make the point that it is very plain to me that this will continue to be an ever-receding finish line—that technology will continue to provoke further changes. We want to see radio stations that have access to spectrum that is being preserved for this make good use of it and—if they are able to because the market demands it, the technology is settled and the industry has its absolute act together—introduce this well before 1 January 2009. But it is absolutely critical that the government’s way of doing this is understood as a way of building the critical mass by which others outside of major metro areas will be able to respond in time—that others in the community sector will be able to respond in the period of time.

The reason the member for Grayndler was the lead speaker in this and wimped out at 14 minutes will be a matter of enormous speculation in the commercial radio sector. Perhaps it could be because the Labor Party have no digital radio policy. In fact, when Senator Conroy put out a press release at the announcement of the digital radio framework in October 2005, he simply criticised the framework for not delivering radio services to rural and regional areas. Nothing has changed. The member for Grayndler was mouthing Senator Conroy’s press release of October 2005 here again. All this time down the track, and they pretend they want to be the government at the end of the year. They have no digital radio policy and no vision for Australia. Labor stand condemned.

Mr CREAN (Hotham) (5.54 pm)—I hope the member for Moreton stays in the House to understand why the Broadcasting Legislation Amendment (Digital Radio) Bill 2007 does not get the balance right. Labor does support us going digital in radio but it believes going digital means going digital for the whole of the country, not just for the capital cities. That is the fundamental problem with this bill. It has been conceived in haste. It is in the right direction, but it is a direction that only benefits the capital cities. Why shouldn’t we get right the framework that ensures the technology delivers it? I see the member for Moreton is now leaving the chamber. He poses the question of why Labor is concerned about the direction of this bill but will not stay. However, I am pleased to see he is now staying for the answer.

Mr Hardgrave—On a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker, I do not wish the member for Hotham to misrepresent me. I have answered the question he has posed to me, so I reject his point that I am now leaving.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. AM Somlyay)—There is no point of order.

Mr CREAN—I notice that he has no point of order and now he is not even staying in the chamber to listen to the answer to the question that he has posed. Why is that? Because he does not have any concern for regional and rural Australia, and nor does this bill. This bill does not get the balance right, and that is why we have moved the amendment that says we should defer the implementation of this bill until we do understand where this technology takes us.

It is not just the Labor Party that says that; it is also the national broadcaster, the ABC. The ABC has indicated that it believes that the only technology being referred to in the legislation is the digital radio broadcasting which is referred to as DAB or the Eureka 147 platform, but the ABC says that this will not adequately service remote areas. The commercial radio stations that the member for Moreton refers to may think it is great because they may be interested only in serving the capital cities, but the ABC is a broadcaster of international repute covering something like 100 per cent of the country, and it has problems with the direction of the
framework that is being proposed in this bill. The ABC goes on to say:

... a wide-area digital radio standard should be determined before the provisions of the ... Bill come into effect.

The bill omits the very technology that will provide that regional platform. Again, do not just take the Labor Party’s word for it; look at what the explanatory memorandum to the bill has to say. On page 21, where it talks about the technology choice, the explanatory memorandum says:

Digital Audio Broadcasting—
that is, the Eureka 147—
will be the primary technology platform for ... digital radio.

It then goes on to say:

DAB is unlikely to be a suitable platform to address the extended coverage requirements of some regional and remote services.

Why should we be proceeding now in haste to do something that will jeopardise the ability for this system, this technology, with all of its benefits, to be extended to the whole of Australia? Why should we be doing it in such haste that denies us getting right the framework that makes sure that that coverage is extended to the whole of Australia?

As I said before, Labor does support going digital but we support going digital by getting it right. We believe that we should defer implementation until the regions are assured of the benefits that the government claims this system will bring. We do not deny the benefits; we say that the regions should not be denied them, and we believe that as this bill stands we run the real risk of denying regional and rural Australia access to the very best of technologies. If you look at the places in which this has been successfully implemented, such as in Britain and parts of Europe, it has led to a better standard of service, but it has led to the introduction of new content and stations and it has been done by embracing the technology that this bill says it will wait till later to assess. We will run out of time.

At this stage, I think I have run out of time because of the provision for this House to adjourn early this evening. I seek leave to continue my remarks later.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 6.00 pm to 7.30 pm

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1) 2007-2008

Message from the Governor-General transmitting particulars of proposed expenditure and recommending appropriation announced.

First Reading

Bill presented by Mr Costello, and read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr COSTELLO (Higgins—Treasurer) (7.31 pm)—I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Introduction

Australia is different to the way it was 10 years ago.

Our economy is about 1½ times larger than it was back in 1996.

We have another 2 million Australians who have found jobs since then. And average wages have increased 20 per cent in real terms.

In the decade before 1996 inflation averaged 5 per cent a year. Since then inflation has halved, averaging the low and stable rate of 2½ per cent a year.

Ten years ago the Australian Government owed a net debt of $96 billion. The Government was paying an interest bill of $8.5 billion a year. Today we are debt free in net terms. And our net interest payments are
zero. This is saving taxpayers $8.5 billion a year.

Back in 1996 the Budget was in deficit. We were living beyond our means. Today we are living within our means. For the 10th time, I am outlining a Budget that will be in surplus.

We have come a long way and made a lot of progress. This year’s Budget has been framed to lock in that progress: to keep people in jobs; to keep our living standards up. We don’t want to lose all that we have achieved over the last 10 years. We want to lock in the gains and move forward.

The next decade will bring challenges all of its own—the ageing of the population, health care, aged care, the emergence of climate change, the instability of our region and the global shocks which can threaten our economy.

If we lock in the achievements of the past this will help us with the challenges of the future. We want to meet and deal with future challenges from a position of strength. This is a Budget which will build our economic capacity and give us that strength.

Tonight I will explain how we will invest for the future.

I will outline steps which will grow our economy.

I will introduce measures to give a helping hand to those who are struggling.

I will detail proposals to improve and conserve our natural environment—our water and our riverways.

And this Budget will fund the national security and defence preparedness we need to protect our country.

Two years ago I announced the Government would establish a Future Fund to invest now for liabilities that are falling due for payment in the years which lie ahead. The Fund is established and is well on its way. It will help pay entitlements to our soldiers, navy and air force personnel which must be honoured after they have retired and finished their service to the nation. The Fund operates as an accumulation fund and reinvests its earnings. It aims to meet its target by 2020.

If you rob capital or earnings from the Future Fund, taxpayers will have to make up the difference. You are passing our bills, our obligations, from our generation to the next. This will limit their future. We will strongly oppose any irresponsible attempt to raid this national investment for cheap political advantage.

Higher Education Endowment Fund

We do not want to limit the future chances of young Australians; we want to build them. So tonight I announce another investment in the future. For the first time ever, the Australian Government will establish an endowment fund—the Higher Education Endowment Fund (HEEF)—as a perpetual fund to generate earnings for capital works and research facilities in our institutions of higher learning.

The initial investment of $5 billion out of this year’s Budget surplus will broadly double all the existing financial investments and endowments currently held in the total university sector.

The capital will not be spent. It will be invested. And, what is more, we will add further capital from future Budget outcomes to this perpetual fund.

Individuals who wish to contribute to this visionary initiative will be able to make tax deductible gifts to be managed along with the Government endowment. The Endowment will be managed by the Guardians of the Future Fund.

The earnings generated by this investment will be dedicated to building first class institutes of learning—first class by world stan-
and put our Institutes of Higher Learning on a secure footing for ever.

In addition to this, tonight I announce a plan to improve the education system so as to help all young people achieve their full potential.

This $3.5 billion plan called Realising Our Potential has three components. At the school level it means improving literacy and numeracy. At the training level it means better vocational education and more apprenticeships. At the tertiary level it means better universities which are more responsive to student needs.

**Improving school outcomes**

Every parent is entitled to expect that their child will receive a high quality education and develop the basic skills they need in later life. If children fall behind early they find it very hard to catch up.

From 1 January next year we will help those children who do not achieve national literacy and numeracy benchmarks in Years 3 and 5 and 7 by providing a voucher to their parents for extra tuition outside of school. The voucher will be for $700. It can only be used for tuition. It is designed to give those children who need it specialized, personal, assistance.

If we want to improve literacy and numeracy we also need to reward those teachers and schools that do well.

In 2008 there will be a bonus of up to $50,000 available to schools that make significant improvements in the literacy and numeracy standards in their schools. This will reward school excellence.

The Government will also provide funding to establish Summer Schools for teachers to develop their skills in teaching Literacy and Numeracy, Australian History, Maths, Science and English. Teachers who attend these summer schools in their own time, will receive a $5,000 bonus from the Australian Government on completing the course.

The Government will also provide additional funding to get more practical experience for those who are training to be teachers. We will pay Institutions to provide a minimum 120 days experience in schools for trainee teachers who are doing three- and four-year degrees.

**Vocational education and training**

The Australian Government is a strong supporter of vocational education and training (VET). We recently had the Skills for the Future package to support skills training in the sector. We need more tradesmen and tradeswomen. We need to get more young people into apprenticeships.

That is why we will introduce a new tax exempt payment of $1,000 to first and second year apprentices in skill-shortage trades to top up their wages. It will be for those under 30 years of age. It will give them better wages while they are training. First and second year apprentices in skill-shortage trades, regardless of age, will also be entitled to a voucher of $500 which they can use to help offset course fees for their training. This will encourage more people to take up apprenticeships. This provision is $549 million over four years.

In addition to that I can announce tonight that the Australian government will establish three new Australian Technical Colleges in Brisbane, Sydney and Perth to add to the 25 being established around Australia.

**Higher education**

Our Budget will also allow universities to enrol more students in courses that students want to study and it will simplify Commonwealth funding arrangements.

We will also provide an additional 3,500 Commonwealth Learning Scholarships for university study over four years.
These measures for primary education, for apprentices and for higher education will boost the skills of our workforce and expand Australia’s productive capacity. More than ever Australia needs to be smarter and more productive to keep ahead of the pack and these measures will get us there.

**Income tax cuts**

Mr Speaker, if we want our economy to grow we must ensure there are strong incentives for people to join the workforce and reward them for better skills and better effort.

We commenced cutting personal income tax in 2000.

We have cut taxes in the last four Budgets.

Tonight I announce income tax cuts for the fifth year in a row. These tax cuts will take effect in two stages: from 1 July this year and 1 July next year.

From 1 July this year, the 30 per cent tax rate will only apply to income over $30,000: up from the current threshold of $25,000.

The low income tax offset will also rise and phase out later. This means that low income earners eligible for the offset will not pay tax until their annual income exceeds $11,000.

For a person on average wages the tax cut I announce tonight will be around $16 a week. For those below it can be more. These changes cut tax for every Australian taxpayer. They give incentive for those outside the workforce to enter it and for those in part-time work to take additional hours.

From 1 July next year, we will increase the 40 per cent threshold from $75,000 to $80,000 and the 45 per cent threshold from $150,000 to $180,000.

This will ensure that more than 80 per cent of taxpayers have a top marginal tax rate of 30 per cent or less across the forward estimates period. The top marginal tax rate will only apply to around 2 per cent of taxpayers. Back in 1996 the top marginal tax rate—which was higher than it is today—applied at $50,000. If that threshold had been indexed it would have stood below $68,000 on 1 July next year. Under these income tax changes that threshold, in fact, will be $180,000.

Senior Australians who are eligible for the senior Australians tax offset will now pay no tax on their annual income up to $25,867 for singles and up to $43,360 for couples.

Our tax system exists to fund the decent services in health, education, aged care, and other services that Australians legitimately expect and are entitled to receive. If after we provide for those services, invest for the future, and balance our Budget, we can reduce the tax burden, we should do so.

Tonight I am also announcing a programme to dramatically simplify income tax returns for the next financial year commencing on 1 July.

Taxpayers will be able to go online to access an income tax return prepared by the Commissioner of Taxation, with income from salary and wages, interest, dividends, information on private health insurance, and any benefits paid from the Government, including the family tax benefit.

If the taxpayer is satisfied with this pre-prepared statement, they will be able to click online and file their return without any further action. If there is additional information, this can be added to the pre-prepared return.

This will be available for the 9 million taxpayers who currently lodge their tax return electronically, either directly or through a tax agent.

**Improving child care arrangements**

Part of helping families to balance work and parenthood is to assist with child care. Government assistance for child care in
2007-08 will be $3 billion, nearly three times the level in 1996-97.

I announce tonight that, from 1 July 2007, the rates of Child Care Benefit will increase by 10 per cent, on top of indexation. This will provide $728 million in extra assistance to more than 700,000 families.

The Government will also reimburse 30 per cent of a family’s remaining out-of-pocket child care costs. From 1 July, families will receive the 30 per cent rebate as a direct payment shortly after the financial year in which they incur the out-of-pocket costs. Families who incur costs in both 2005-06 and 2006-07 will receive two rebates in 2007-08—one through the tax system under existing arrangements, and the other as a direct payment.

This reform will help mothers who want to take part in the paid workforce.

**Boosting investment in land transport infrastructure**

Mr Speaker, a high-quality transport network underpins our nation’s productivity, economic growth and prosperity.

The Government has a strategic plan to develop this network, which is known as AusLink.

We have invested $15.8 billion in road and rail projects like the Pacific Highway, the Deer Park Bypass, and the Caboolture Motorway.

Tonight I am announcing that the Government will boost its investment in road and rail infrastructure with the second AusLink plan and total funding of $22.3 billion over five years from 2009-10.

The National Network of road and rail is critical to our economy and provides the link between Australia’s major population and economic centres. It is the link for our exports to the world.

AusLink 2 will help reduce accidents on Australian roads. The Black Spot Programme will increase to $60 million per annum over the five years from 2009-10. The Roads to Recovery Programme constructs and maintains local roads and will be funded with $1.8 billion. The Strategic Regional Programme, which supports the growth of regional industry, will be allocated $300 million.

In order to get these strategic roads going, I am announcing tonight a bring-forward of $250 million in supplementary funding to be paid to local councils before 30 June.

**Supporting retirement savings**

Mr Speaker, encouraging people to save for retirement is critical to meet the challenges posed by the ageing of the population.

In last year’s Budget I announced the most comprehensive reform of Australia’s superannuation system ever. Taxes on benefits paid from a taxed fund to those over 60 will be abolished from 1 July 2007—no tax on pensions, no tax on lump sums.

Another superannuation incentive for people on low to middle incomes is the co-contribution scheme where the Government matches $1.50 for each dollar a person contributes from their own money to superannuation. In order to reward this saving further, the Government will pay an additional one-off to double the co-contribution in respect of the 2005-06 year.

This means an eligible person who contributed $1,000 will receive a co-contribution of $3,000 from the Government into their superannuation account for that year.

This will boost the superannuation savings of low- and middle-income earners by $1.1 billion.

**Rewarding older Australians**

Mr Speaker, since this Budget will boost the take-home pay of those in the workforce,
we also want to assist older Australians of retirement age.

This year the Government will provide a one-off seniors bonus payment of $500 to all individuals of Age or Service Pension age eligible for either the Utilities Allowance or the Seniors Concession Allowance as at tonight.

I also announce tonight, for the fourth consecutive year, that recipients of the Carer Payment will receive a bonus of $1,000 and recipients of the Carer Allowance a bonus of $600 for each eligible person in their care. These are people who look after others with a disability and help those unable to fully care for themselves. They deserve our support.

Both the seniors and the carers bonuses will be paid by 30 June 2007. These payments will be tax free and not treated as income when calculating social security payments.

These bonuses show we can extend the benefits of a strong economy to those outside the workforce. It recognises the contribution older Australians have made to building our economy. It lends a helping hand to our carers.

Accessible and affordable health care

Mr Speaker, the Government is committed to ensuring Australia’s health care system remains accessible and sustainable into the future.

In 2007-08 the Government will spend $51.8 billion on health and aged care, compared to $20 billion which was spent in 1996-97.

Our medical scientists have made Australia a world leader in health and medical research. Building on previous Budget investment in this area, tonight I announce grants this year to construct further world-class health and medical research facilities. Our scientists are among the best in the world. We want to support their work to unlock treatments to deal with debilitating and degenerative diseases.

And the Budget funds new pharmaceuticals to deal with conditions like diabetes that affect so many Australians. By keeping our Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme competitive we can give access to new treatments.

Mr Speaker, while primary responsibility for dental care lies with State and Territory governments, the Australian Government has responsibility for funding dental training and funding general health services through Medicare.

This Budget provides funding of $65 million over four years to establish a new regional dental school, with 60 additional dentistry places in regional centres. We will also provide $12.5 million over four years to create more opportunities for city dental students to undertake dental training in regional settings.

And tonight I am announcing additional Medicare funding for patients whose dental health is impacting on a chronic medical condition. A Medicare benefit up to $2,125 per year will be available for their dental treatment in the private sector as referred by a doctor.

Meeting the challenge of climate change

Mr Speaker, one of the great challenges we have is to maintain the beautiful, diverse and precious natural environment we have in Australia.

Our responsibility is to manage the environment for future generations. One of the serious long term threats is global warming.

Since 1996, the Government has invested $2 billion to develop practical responses to counter and reduce climate change.

The Government is already driving the development of solar and clean coal tech-
nologies through the Low Emissions Technology Demonstration Fund.

We want to encourage homeowners to install solar panels across Australia. The current rebates will be doubled so that households will receive up to $8,000 for installing an average system, which costs around $14,000, a rebate of over 50 per cent. Grants of up to $12,000 will be available for solar panels in schools and community buildings.

Forests play a key role in reducing greenhouse gases. Tonight I announce that the costs of establishing qualifying carbon sink forests will be tax deductible with immediate deductibility for five years commencing 1 July and concessional depreciation arrangements after that.

The Budget will also fund the Global Initiative on Forests and Climate, which will assist developing countries to manage and maintain—rather than slash and burn—their precious tropical forests.

This will be complemented by the establishment of partnerships with developing countries to support water management, energy efficiency and alternative energy initiatives.

A new Australian Centre for Climate Change Adaptation will be established. The CSIRO will be allocated funding for Climate Change and Energy Research. All this work, taken together, will help Australia respond to the great challenge of global warming.

A National Plan for Water Security

Mr Speaker, water is one of Australia’s most precious resources.

The Government has a $10 billion National Plan for Water Security, intended to place rural water use on a sustainable footing, increasing efficiency in irrigation and addressing overallocation of water.

Tonight I announce funding over six years to support the installation of water tanks and other water saving devices by schools and community organisations. We must capture as much of this precious resource as possible and use it carefully and wisely.

Protecting our natural resources

The Government is further extending the Natural Heritage Trust until June 2013, to protect against environmental degradation. This trust is protecting wetlands, controlling salinity in the River Murray and dealing with nutrient run-off into the Great Barrier Reef.

Farmers and other private landholders are frontline environmental managers for around 77 per cent of Australia’s land mass. Many of our rare and significant plants and animals are located on privately managed land.

Tonight I announce a new Environmental Stewardship Programme, where Government will partner with landowners to protect and improve environmental assets on private land.

The first of our natural assets to be targeted are the Box Gum Woodland areas that span inland from Queensland to Victoria. There is less than 5 per cent of this significant nationally endangered ecosystem left and much of it needs urgent work.

Rural and regional Australia

Mr Speaker, large parts of our country are suffering badly from a once in a century drought which continues on with devastating effect to farmers and rural communities.

Australians believe we should give a helping hand to those who are struggling. Combining last year and this year around $1.2 billion will be paid in exceptional circumstances drought assistance. Funding of $688 million in assistance is expected to be provided in 2007-08.

Our assistance includes income support and loan assistance, counselling and support services.
We will also fund professional advice for farmers in severe difficulty, subsidise management training and education and provide re-establishment grants to assist those who wish to exit the industry. Australia will stand by the struggling rural communities.

**Defence and national security**

Mr Speaker, the Government has no higher responsibility than the defence of Australia and its interests.

At present, members of the Australian Defence Force are serving their country with distinction in difficult and dangerous theatres.

Improved recruitment and retention is necessary in order to ensure that we maintain the current high standards of our defence force and enable the ADF to grow to its intended strength of 57,000.

Tonight I announce additional funding of $2.1 billion over 10 years for a range of initiatives to further improve recruitment and retention—an enhanced Defence homeownership assistance scheme, incentives for young Australians to take up a Defence apprenticeship in a technical trade, and an expanded cadet programme for young people.

The Government is committed to ensuring our defence force is fully equipped to meet new and existing challenges. This Budget provides funding of $6.6 billion over 13 years to acquire 24 FA-18F Super Hornets to ensure Australia maintains air superiority in our region. The purchase will ensure a smooth transition to the Joint Strike Fighter and allow for the orderly retirement of the existing F111 fleet.

The Government is committed to addressing emerging threats to national security.

This Budget has initiatives to safeguard against terrorism, including high-priority intelligence needs, an integrated e-security national agenda, and further strengthening of aviation security.

This brings to $10.4 billion the additional funding the Government has committed to national security over the 10 years to 2010-11.

**Economic outlook**

Australia has now recorded the longest economic expansion in its history. Unemployment is at a 30-year low.

I pay tribute to the enterprise of Australia’s small business people and the hard work of employees who can share credit for this standout performance.

The orderly adjustment to the current strength in the terms of trade demonstrates the flexibility we have now built in the Australian economy.

As a result, inflation is forecast to be 2½ per cent in 2007-08.

GDP growth is forecast to be 3¾ per cent, assuming a return to average seasonal conditions in the farm sector.

Business investment has grown strongly in recent years and is now at its highest level as a share of GDP in 32 years. This will boost capacity in the years ahead.

This Budget—with its investment in education, skills, in road and rail, and sharper work incentives—will add to Australia’s productive capacity. This investment will drive further economic growth.

We must now lock in the progress of the last decade if we want to keep our living standards high. From this position we can step out to meet the challenges of the future with purpose and confidence.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate (on motion by Mr Rudd) adjourned.
BUDGET DOCUMENTS 2007-08

Mr COSTELLO (Higgins—Treasurer) (8.02 pm)—I present the following 2007-08 documents in connection with the budget:

- Budget strategy and outlook 2007-08.
- Budget measures 2007-08.
- Federal financial relations 2007-08.
- Agency resourcing 2007-08.

Ordered that the documents be made parliamentary papers.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Mr COSTELLO (Higgins—Treasurer) (8.02 pm)—I present ministerial statements as listed in the document now available to honourable members in the chamber. Details of the statements will be recorded in the Votes and Proceedings.

APPROPRIATION BILL (NO. 2) 2007-2008

Message from the Governor-General transmitting particulars of proposed expenditure and recommending appropriation announced.

First Reading

Bill presented by Mr Nairn, and read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr NAIRN (Eden-Monaro—Special Minister of State) (8.03 pm)—I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

- It is with great pleasure that I introduce Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2007-2008, which, together with Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2007-2008, is one of the principal pieces of legislation underpinning the third budget of the fourth term of the coalition government.
- Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2007-2008 proposes appropriation for agencies to meet:
  - expenses in relation to grants to the states under section 96 of the Constitution and for payments to the Northern Territory, the Australian Capital Territory and local government authorities;
  - administered expenses for new outcomes;
  - requirements for departmental equity injections, loans and previous years’ outputs; and
  - requirements to create or acquire administered assets and to discharge administered liabilities.
- Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2007-2008 seeks approval for appropriations from the Consolidated Revenue Fund totalling $10,133.4 million.
- The bill includes a minor technical change to section 14 to streamline ministerial determinations that are made on payments to the states, territories and local government authorities. The change will enable payments to be made without the mandatory ministerial determination on the amount and timing. The provision otherwise is unaltered and determinations may be issued if required.
- We have also taken the opportunity to remove a redundant provision from appropriation bills Nos. 1 and 2 and the parliamentary departments appropriation bill. The Departmental Items Adjustments and other similar provisions will no longer be required in the annual appropriation bills. These sections were originally included to smooth the transition to the accrual arrangements implemented in 1999-2000. They have not been exercised for some five years and are no longer required.
- Details of the proposed appropriations are set out in schedule 2 to the bill, the
main features of which were outlined in
the budget speech delivered by my col-
league the Treasurer, earlier this evening.
I commend the bill to the House.

Debate (on motion by Mr Albanese) ad-
journed.

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENTARY
DEPARTMENTS) BILL (No. 1) 2007-2008

Message from the Governor-General
transmitting particulars of proposed expendi-
ture and recommending appropriation an-
nounced.

First Reading
Bill presented by Mr Nairn, and read a
first time.

Second Reading
Mr NAIRN (Eden-Monaro—Special
Minister of State) (8.07 pm)—I move:
That this bill be now read a second time.

• The purpose of the Appropriation (Par-
liamentary Departments) Bill (No. 1)
2007-2008 is to provide funding for the
operations of the three parliamentary de-
partments.

• The total appropriation sought through
this bill is $170.7 million. Details of the
proposed expenditure are set out in the
schedule to the bill.

• The redundant ‘departmental items’ pro-
vision has also been removed from the
parliamentary departments appropriation
bill. This provision has never been exer-
cised.

I commend the bill to the House.

Debate (on motion by Mr Albanese) ad-
journed.

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 5)
2006-2007

Message from the Governor-General
transmitting particulars of proposed expendi-
ture and recommending appropriation an-
nounced.

First Reading
Bill presented by Mr Nairn, and read a
first time.

Second Reading
Mr NAIRN (Eden-Monaro—Special
Minister of State) (8.08 pm)—I move:
That this bill be now read a second time.

It is with great pleasure that I introduce Ap-
propriation Bill (No. 5) 2006-2007.

There are two supplementary additional
estimates bills: Appropriation Bill (No. 5)
2006-2007 and Appropriation Bill (No. 6)
2006-2007. I shall introduce the latter bill
shortly.

These bills seek authority for supplemen-
tary appropriation from the Consolidated
Revenue Fund in the current financial year to
pay for important initiatives agreed by the
government since the additional estimates
2006-07.

The total appropriation being sought
through the supplementary additional esti-
mates bills is approximately $814 million,
with $554.8 million being sought in bill No.
5.

I now outline the major items provided for
in the bill.

• An increase of $66.3 million will be
made available to the Department of
Education, Science and Training to pro-
vide:
  – $50 million to the Indigenous Educa-
tion Strategic Initiatives Program for
infrastructure investment to existing
non-government schools, particularly
those in remote and regional areas
that accommodate significant num-
bers of Indigenous students; and
  – $50 million to the synchrotron facility
to support its ongoing operations,
subject to the Victorian state government matching this funding.

– These funding increases are partially offset by savings in 2006-07 of $33.7 million in other programs.

• An additional $435.8 million will be provided to the Department of Health and Ageing to fund a variety of development and expansion projects by medical research facilities. This measure will enhance the capacity and quality of Australia’s health and medical research efforts and assist Australian researchers to continue high-quality, world-class research. The major items of funding include:

– $100 million for the Princess Alexandra Hospital and University of Queensland;
– $100 million for the Western Australian Institutes for Health;
– $55 million for the Queensland Institute of Medical Research;
– $50 million for the Murdoch Children’s Research Institute in Victoria; and
– $30 million for the Prince of Wales Medical Research Institute in New South Wales.

The balance of the amount in Appropriation Bill (No. 5) relate to estimates variations and other minor measures.

I commend the bill to the House.

Debate (on motion by Mr Albanese) adjourned.

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 6) 2006-2007

Message from the Governor-General transmitting particulars of proposed expenditure and recommending appropriation announced.

First Reading

Bill presented by Mr Nairn, and read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr NAIRN (Eden-Monaro—Special Minister of State) (8.12 pm)—I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Appropriation Bill (No. 6) 2006-2007 requests additional funding for agencies to meet:

• expenses in relation to grants to the states under section 96 of the Constitution and for payments to the Northern Territory, the Australian Capital Territory and local government authorities; and
• non-operating requirements in the form of departmental equity injections.

Total additional appropriation of around $259.2 million is proposed in Appropriation Bill (No. 6) 2006-2007.

The supplementary appropriation is required to fund an important initiative during the current financial year that has been agreed by the government since the additional estimates 2006-07. The initiative involves an additional $250 million to the Department of Transport and Regional Services for the AusLink Strategic Regional Program. This funding increase is partially offset by savings in other programs.

The balance of the amount in Appropriation Bill (No. 6) relate to estimates variations, and other minor measures.

Appropriation Bill (No. 6) includes the same minor technical change to section 14 that has been made to Appropriation Bill (No. 2).

I commend the bill to the House.

Debate (on motion by Mr Albanese) adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.14 pm
NOTICES

The following notices were given:

Mr Brough to present a bill for an act to amend the law relating to social security and veterans’ affairs, and for other purposes. (Social Security and Veterans’ Affairs Legislation Amendment (One-off Payments and Other 2007 Budget Measures) Bill 2007)

Mr Dutton to present a bill for an act to amend the law relating to superannuation co-contributions. (Superannuation Laws Amendment (2007 Budget Co-contribution Measure) Bill 2007)

Mr Billson to present a bill for an act to amend the Defence Force (Home Loans Assistance) Act 1990. (Defence Force (Home Loans Assistance) Amendment Bill 2007)

Mr Abbott to move:

That standing order 31 (automatic adjournment of the House) be suspended for the sitting on Thursday, 10 May 2007 and at that sitting, after the Leader of the Opposition completes his reply to the Budget speech, the House automatically stand adjourned until 12.30pm on Monday 21 May 2007 unless the Speaker or, in the event of the Speaker being unavailable, the Deputy Speaker, fixes an alternative day or hour of meeting.

Mr Abbott to move:

That, unless otherwise ordered, standing orders Nos. 190(e) and 192 be as follows:

190 (e) The Committee shall stand adjourned at 6 pm on completion of all matters referred to it, or may be adjourned on motion moved without notice by any Member—

That the Committee do now adjourn.

192 Main Committee’s order of business

(a) If the Committee meets on a Wednesday or Thursday the normal order of business is set out in figure 4.

(b) The Committee shall meet, if required, on a sitting Monday from 4 pm to 6 pm to consider orders of the day relating to committee and delegation reports and these orders of the day shall have priority over other business, unless otherwise ordered.

**Figure 4. Main Committee order of business**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONDAY</th>
<th>WEDNESDAY</th>
<th>THURSDAY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.30 am</td>
<td>3 min statements</td>
<td>9.30 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>approx 10.00 am</td>
<td>Government business and/or committee and delegation reports</td>
<td>approx 10.00 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.00 pm</td>
<td>Committee and delegation reports and/or Government business</td>
<td>Adjournment debate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>approx 6.00 pm</td>
<td></td>
<td>approx 1.00 pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The sitting times of the Main Committee are fixed by the Deputy Speaker and are subject to change. Additional meetings may be scheduled if required. Adjournment debates can occur on days other than Thursdays by agreement between the Whips.
Mr Abbott to move:
That the following order of the day, government business, be discharged: Child Support Legislation Amendment Bill 2004: Second reading—Resumption of debate.

Mr Abbott to move:
That the House grants leave for the report by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Expenditure Northern Territory Forestry Program, 24 May 1978, to be produced in proceedings in the Federal Court of Australia in the case Collins v. Northern Territory of Australia, and in any subsequent proceedings.

Mrs Gash to move:
That the House:
(1) notes the contribution of small business to regional economies;
(2) acknowledges that small, micro businesses employ many people and are worthy of protection against predatory behaviour by conglomerates, including organised trade unions;
(3) acknowledges the role small, family-owned businesses play in creating employment opportunities in smaller communities;
(4) recognises the disadvantages faced by small business operators in competing against major chains in regional areas; and
(5) calls on the Government to take all steps necessary to ensure that small business in Australia remains viable in the face of the many threats confronting small business operators.
QUESTIONS IN WRITING

Australian Flag
(Question No. 1924)

Mr Tanner asked the Prime Minister, in writing, on 9 August 2005:
(1) Can he confirm that the image in the report in the online version of Army News dated 11 March 2005 showing him signing an Australian flag is accurate.
(2) On how many occasions since March 1996 has he signed an Australian flag and for which organisations were the flags signed.
(3) What steps did he take to ensure that these flags would not be used for fundraising or other inappropriate purposes.

Mr Howard—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:
(1) to (3) In light of the guidelines prepared by my department in relation to the commercial use of the Australian National Flag, I am advised that it is not inappropriate for flags to be signed and used to support fundraising, particularly for charitable purposes, provided that the Flag is treated with appropriate dignity and respect.

Consultancy Services
(Question No. 2457)

Mr Bowen asked the Minister representing the Minister for Finance and Administration, in writing, on 11 October 2005:
Did the Minister’s department engage Len Early Pty Ltd to provide consultancy services at a cost of $20,500; if so, what services were provided under the terms of this contract.

Mr Costello—The Minister for Finance and Administration has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:
Yes. Len Early Pty Ltd was engaged by the Department of Finance and Administration to undertake elements of a departmental security review.

Electoral Matters
(Question No. 2605)

Mr Danby asked the Special Minister of State, in writing, on 9 November 2005:
(1) What is the Minister’s response to the comments by Malcolm Mackerras that the recommendations of the report of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters are “relentless in their pursuit of the electoral interests of the Liberal Party”.
(2) Has the Government considered the prediction made by Mr Mackerras that the report’s proposed changes to the method of voting for the Senate would “massively drive up the informal vote”; if so, is the prediction accurate and, if it is not, can the Minister explain why not.
(3) What is the Minister’s response to the comments by Professor Colin Hughes, who was the Australian Electoral Commissioner from 1984 to 1989, and Professor Brian Costar of Swinburne University that “if Federal Parliament adopts some of its [the report’s] key recommendations, the right to vote will be significantly restricted, thereby diminishing Australia’s well-earned reputation as a world leader in democratic practice”.
(4) Does the Minister accept the statement in the AEC’s submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters inquiry that enrolments made during the five working days after the writs are
issued are scrutinised with the same degree of rigour as they are in a non-election period; if not, why not and what evidence is there to the contrary.

(5) What is the Minister’s response to Professor Hughes and Professor Costar’s observation that the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters report found that there is minimal evidence of actual roll fraud.

(6) Does the Minister intend to implement the recommendation of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters report to (a) change the method of voting for the Senate and (b) close the rolls on the day the writs are issued; if so, what is the Minister’s justification for the massive disenfranchisement of Australian voters which the changes will cause.

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

(1) Mr Mackerras has been wrong in the past and is likely to be so in the future. The recommendations supported by the Government have been implemented in the interests of all Australians who want a fair and honest electoral system.

(2) No. Not applicable.

(3) I reject the comments. Every eligible Australian retains their right to vote. Indeed it remains their legal and civic responsibility to do so.

(4) Yes. But the problem lies not in the rigour of the assessment process but in the limited statutory timeframe for removing fraudulent voters from the rolls. The investigation and removal process is such that even if suspicious activity were detected, it is highly unlikely that a fraudulent enrolment could be excised from the roll of eligible voters in time before the election.

(5) In relation to the substance of the allegation that there has been minimal evidence of fraud, I would remind Mr Danby of rorts perpetrated by Mr Mike Kaiser, the disgraced Labor roll-rorter who was forced to resign from the Queensland Parliament, or Ms Karen Erhmann, a Queensland State ALP candidate who went to gaol for electoral fraud. I would remind him of Mr Christian Zahra’s own false enrolment when he was not an Australian citizen. I would remind him of the roll rorts committed by a former Labor staffer of Mr Colin Hollis. And I would remind him of cases such as Curacao Fischer Cat, the pet cat that was enrolled in the NSW seat of Macquarie, and Giddy Goanna, a reptile that was enrolled in the seat of Groom. These are all actual, proven cases of serious electoral fraud.

Both the Labor Party and Professors Hughes and Costar continually choose to ignore these proven cases of fraud, or they choose to treat them as insignificant. The Government views the position taken by the ALP, and the academics upon whose views they rely so heavily, as nothing short of complacent. Roll rorting, no matter where or how it is perpetrated, will always undermine the integrity of our electoral system. These proven cases of fraud show vulnerability in our system, and rather than turning a blind eye, which is the preferred response of the ALP, Professor Hughes and Professor Costar, the Government is addressing these vulnerabilities through these reforms.

(6) (a) No. (b) Yes. There will be no disenfranchisement as long as people follow the law.

Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

(Question No. 3164)

Mr Albanese asked the Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, in writing, on 1 March 2006:

Has the Government considered, or will it consider, the adoption of the United Nations declaration of Indigenous Rights.
Mr Brough—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:
The Australian Government is committed to supporting a Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples that can be agreed by consensus by States, and welcomes further consultations to improve a text which we cannot support in its current form.

Media Training
(Question No. 3369)

Mr Bowen asked the Minister for Education, Science and Training, in writing, on 29 March 2006:
(1) Did the (a) Minister and (b) his personal staff receive any media training in 2005.
(2) What was the cost of the media training.
(3) What was the name and postal address of each company engaged to provide media training.

Ms Julie Bishop—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:
(1) (a) No, nor did my predecessor the Hon Dr Brendan Nelson MP.
(b) No
(2) Not Applicable
(3) Not Applicable

Media Training
(Question No. 3374)

Mr Bowen asked the Minister for Vocational and Technical Education, in writing, on 29 March 2006:
(1) Did the (a) Minister and (b) his personal staff receive any media training in 2005.
(2) What was the cost of the media training.
(3) What was the name and postal address of each company engaged to provide media training.

Mr Robb—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:
(1) (a) No. (b) No.
(2) Not Applicable.
(3) Not Applicable.

Governor-General
(Question No. 3499)

Mr Melham asked the Prime Minister, in writing, on 11 May 2006:
(1) What sum was spent by the Commonwealth Government on (a) travel, (b) accommodation, (c) security and (d) other expenses (including meals and incidentals) as a consequence of the visit to the United Arab Emirates, Turkey and Egypt in April 2006 by Their Excellencies the Governor-General and Mrs Jeffery.
(2) What are the details of the accommodation used by the Governor-General and Mrs Jeffery on this journey.
(3) What meetings did His Excellency have with foreign heads of state and/or government, ministers and/or senior officials during the trip.

QUESTIONS IN WRITING
(4) Who accompanied Their Excellencies on this journey.

**Mr Howard**—I am advised by the Official Secretary to the Governor-General that the answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) (a) $80,183.95\(^1\), (b) $47,706.81\(^2\), (c) Not available\(^3\), (d) $5,424.75

(2) Their Excellencies were accommodated at the following hotels:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Accommodation details</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Arab Emirates</td>
<td>Grand Hyatt Hotel, Dubai</td>
<td>20 April 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>Ciragan Sarayi Palace Hotel, Istanbul</td>
<td>21 April 2006 (and 27 April as Guests of Government)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>Crowne Plaza Hotel, Izmir</td>
<td>22 April 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>Kolin Hotel, Canakkale</td>
<td>23-24 April 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>Grand Hyatt Hotel, Cairo</td>
<td>28 April 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>Charm Life Hotel, El Alamein</td>
<td>29 April 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Arab Emirates</td>
<td>Meridien Hotel, Dubai</td>
<td>30 April 2006</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Their Excellencies resided at the Presidential Guest House, Ankara, Turkey on 25-26 April 2006 as guests of the President of Turkey.

(3) The list of meetings with foreign heads of state, government ministers and senior officials can be found in the Vice-Regal News notices on the Governor-General’s website at http://www.gg.gov.au/governorgeneral/vr-news.php?action=list&year=2006&month=4

(4) Their Excellencies were accompanied by the Official Secretary to the Governor-General, an Aide-de-Camp to the Governor-General, two personal staff, a media adviser and a doctor\(^3\).

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\(^{1}\) Excludes Defence costs

\(^{2}\) Includes meal costs

\(^{3}\) The Australian Federal Police does not provide detail on security arrangements or protection costs for the Governor-General, as doing so may breach the Governor-General’s security

**Governor-General**

(Question No. 3500)

**Mr Melham** asked the Prime Minister, in writing, on 11 May 2006:

(1) What sum was spent by the Commonwealth Government on (a) travel, (b) accommodation, (c) security and (d) other expenses (including meals and incidentals) as a consequence of the visit to Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Iraq and Afghanistan in December 2005 by His Excellency the Governor-General.

(2) What are the details of the accommodation used by the Governor-General and Mrs Jeffery on this journey.

(3) What meetings did His Excellency have with foreign heads of state and/or government, ministers and/or senior officials during the trip.

(4) Who accompanied His Excellency on this journey.

**Mr Howard**—I am advised by the Official Secretary to the Governor-General that the response to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) (a) $642.34\(^1\), (b) $Nil\(^2\), (c) Not available\(^1\), (d) $1,450.81
(2) The Governor-General was a Guest of Government during his visit to the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia (19-26 December 2005) with accommodation provided by the respective governments. No accommodation was used in either Iraq or Afghanistan.

(3) The list of meetings with foreign heads of state, government ministers and senior officials can be found in the Vice-Regal News notices (for 18 December 2005) on the Governor-General’s website at: http://www.gg.gov.au/governorgeneral/vr-news.php?action=view&id=1192

(4) The Governor-General was accompanied by the Official Secretary to the Governor-General, an Aide-de-Camp to the Governor-General, one personal staff member and a doctor3.

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1 Excludes Defence costs
2 The Governor-General was hosted as ‘Guest of Government’ while in the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia – refer also to response to question (2)
3 The Australian Federal Police does not provide detail on security arrangements or protection for the Governor-General, as doing so may breach the Governor-General’s security

Macquarie Island

(Question No. 3645)

Mr Melham asked the Minister for the Environment and Water Resources, in writing, on 15 June 2006:

(1) Since March 1996, how many Australian Government personnel have been stationed at Macquarie Island (a) each summer and (b) each winter.

(2) Which Australian Government departments or agencies currently have staff located at Macquarie Island, and how many personnel are drawn from each agency.

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

(1) Since 1996/1997, a total of 212 Australian Government personnel have been stationed at Macquarie Island. They have comprised Australian Government Antarctic Division (AGAD) and Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) personnel. The breakdown of personnel stationed at Macquarie Island each year is as follows:

(a) each summer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summer</th>
<th>AGAD</th>
<th>BOM</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006/2007</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005/2006</td>
<td>8</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004/2005</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>2003/2004</td>
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<td>2002/2003</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>18</td>
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<td>2001/2002</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>1999/2000</td>
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<td>1997/1998</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996/1997</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) each winter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Winter</th>
<th>AGAD</th>
<th>BOM</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006/2007</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005/2006</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004/2005</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The winter figures are not additional to the summer figures.

(2) There are currently nine (9) Australian Government Antarctic Division staff and three (3) Bureau of Meteorology staff at Macquarie Island.

**Macquarie Island**

(Question No. 3646)

Mr Melham asked the Minister for the Environment and Water Resources, in writing, on 15 June 2006:

(1) What was the annual cost of (a) Australian Antarctic Division and (b) Bureau of Meteorology activities relating to, or located at, Macquarie Island for each financial year since 1995-1996.

(2) Since 1995-1996, what types of scientific research have been undertaken by the (a) Australian Antarctic Division and (b) Bureau of Meteorology on Macquarie Island, and what benefits have been derived from this research.

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

(1) (a) The Australian Government Antarctic Division accounts do not distinguish in detail the break up of costs specifically for Macquarie Island. The direct operating cost to the Australian Government Antarctic Division of the Macquarie Island station is in the order of $2.7 million per annum in 2006/07 dollars. These costs include supporting the activities of the Bureau of Meteorology.

The direct operating cost to the Bureau of Meteorology of the Macquarie Island station is in the order of $700 000 per annum in 2006/07 dollars.

(2) (a) Research undertaken on Macquarie Island by scientists from the Australian Government Antarctic Division and collaboratively with scientists from Australian and overseas universities has concentrated on biology and geosciences.

Biological research into the breeding biology and life history of southern elephant seals, Antarctic and sub-Antarctic fur seals and leopard seals have contributed valuable knowledge on the status of populations of these species.

Research into the flora of the island has revealed the first recorded incidence of a pathogenic plant virus on a sub-Antarctic island, indicating that these remote and distant locations are vulnerable to the same pressures which affect more temperate latitudes. On-going studies on climatic changes on the island are revealing subtle changes to the flowering period of several species of plants.

Geologists have examined the structure of the ocean crust, because Macquarie Island is one of the only locations in the world where ocean floor can be studied with relative ease, as Macquarie Island is made up of part of the ocean floor which has been pushed to the surface of the ocean by geological processes.
Research into the treatment of soil contaminated with hydrocarbons has revealed how such pollution can be cleaned up in cold climates. Collaborative studies with Canadian researchers indicates that this research has widespread relevance to contamination in other parts of the world.

(b) Bureau of Meteorology research activities include routine synoptic weather observations, both automatic and manual.

The profile and total atmospheric column of ozone are measured as are various atmospheric constituents such as radon and cloud condensation nuclei. Trace gases are also monitored, particularly those implicated in the major environmental issues of global warming and stratospheric ozone depletion. Carbon-14 monitoring is also used to track the sources and sinks of CO2.

These data add to world weather observations used for weather forecasting and modelling, and to the world climate data record.

Macquarie Island

(Question No. 3647)

Mr Melham asked the Minister for the Environment and Water Resources, in writing, on 15 June 2006:

(1) Is the Minister aware of the suggestion made by Senator Barnaby Joyce in a Senate Estimates Committee Hearing on 25 May 2006, that the Commonwealth should acquire Macquarie Island as an external territory.

(2) What advantages and/or disadvantages does the Minister believe would be associated with a transfer of responsibility for Macquarie Island from the Government of Tasmania to the Commonwealth Government.

(3) Has this issue been raised with, or by, the Tasmanian Government.

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

(1) Yes.

(2) The fact that Macquarie Island is part of Tasmania does not hinder the Commonwealth’s ability to pursue its interests on the Island.

(3) The Tasmanian Government has not offered to cede Macquarie Island to the Commonwealth.

Governor-General

(Question No. 3726)

Mr Melham asked the Prime Minister, in writing, on 20 June 2006:

(1) What sum was spent by the Commonwealth Government on (a) travel, (b) accommodation, (c) security and (d) other expenses (including meals and incidentals) as a consequence of the visit to the United Kingdom from 13 to 19 June 2006 by Their Excellencies the Governor-General and Mrs Jeffery.

(2) What are the details of the accommodation used by the Governor-General and Mrs Jeffery on this trip.

(3) Who accompanied Their Excellencies on this journey.

Mr Howard—I am advised by the Official Secretary to the Governor-General that the response to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) (a) $38,124.03, (b) $18,491.23, (c) Not available, (d) $610.05.
(2) Their Excellencies were accommodated at the Berkley Hotel, London.
(3) Their Excellencies were accompanied by an Aide-de-Camp to the Governor-General and one personal staff member.

1 Excludes Defence costs
2 Includes meal costs
3 The Australian Federal Police does not provide detail on security arrangements or protection for the Governor-General, as doing so may breach the Governor-General’s security.

**Governor-General**

**(Question No. 3727)**

Mr Melham asked the Prime Minister, in writing, on 20 June 2006:

(1) What sum was spent by the Commonwealth Government on (a) travel, (b) accommodation, (c) security and (d) other expenses (including meals and incidentals) as a consequence of the visit to Norfolk Island from 7 to 9 June 2006 by Their Excellencies the Governor-General and Mrs Jeffery.
(2) What are the details of the accommodation used by the Governor-General and Mrs Jeffery on this trip.
(3) Who accompanied Their Excellencies on this journey.

Mr Howard—I am advised by the Official Secretary to the Governor-General that the answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) (a) $272.61, (b) $673.50, (c) Not available, (d) $200.55
(2) Their Excellencies were accommodated at Government House, Norfolk Island.
(3) Their Excellencies were accompanied by the Official Secretary to the Governor-General and his wife, the Senior Media and Communications Adviser, an Aide-de-Camp to the Governor-General and one personal staff member.

1 Excludes Defence costs
2 Excludes Defence costs
3 The Australian Federal Police does not provide detail on security arrangements or protection costs for the Governor-General, as doing so may breach the Governor-General’s security.

**Electoral Matters**

**(Question No. 3738)**

Mr Danby asked the Special Minister of State, in writing, on 20 June 2006:

(1) Has he seen figures prepared by the Australian Electoral Committee, and presented in evidence to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters, which show that, at the 2004 election:
   (a) 78,816 people enrolled to vote for the first time in the five working days between the announcement of the election and the closing of the rolls;
   (b) 78,495 people renewed lapsed enrolments during that period; and
   (c) 225,314 people changed their enrolments so that they were enrolled at their correct address.
(2) Is he aware of any cases of fraudulent enrolment for the 2004 election; if so, how many.
(3) What evidence does he have for his frequent assertion that abolishing the five-day enrolment period after the announcement of an election is necessary to prevent fraudulent enrolment.
(4) What justification does he have for his plan to close the rolls on the day the election is announced, thus potentially depriving 380,000 Australians of their right to vote.

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

(1) Yes. However, the figures you quoted are for the seven days between the issue of the writs and the close of the rolls—not five days from the announcement of the election to the close of the rolls.

(2) The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) has advised that there have been no prosecutions for enrolment fraud for the 2004-05 financial year.

(3) The Government is committed to ensuring the integrity of the electoral process and considers that the earlier close of rolls period will remove a vulnerability in the electoral system and will provide the AEC with extra time to identify and discount fraudulent enrolments.

(4) The electoral rolls will not close on the day the election is announced. The rolls will close on the day the writs are issued for new enrolments and for people who are re-enrolling. The rolls will close on the third working day after the writs have been issued for the following people:

- those who are already enrolled but who need to change their enrolment details;
- residents who will be granted Australian citizenship in the period between the day on which the writs are issued and polling day; and
- young people aged 17 years who will turn 18 years of age between the day on which the writs are issued and polling day.

The Government does not accept that 380,000 people would not be able to vote as a consequence of the earlier close of rolls. The Government’s reasons for changing the close of rolls period were canvassed during the debate of the Electoral and Referendum Amendment (Electoral Integrity and Other Measures) Act 2006 in the Parliament in 2006. I refer the honourable member to my answer to the House of Representatives Question on Notice 2605 asked on 9 November 2005 and to my comments during debate on 11 May 2006 of proposed amendments to the close of rolls period (Hansard, 11 May 2006, pages 11 to 12 refer).

Tourism Australia

(Question No. 3948)

Mr Martin Ferguson asked the Minister for Small Business and Tourism, in writing, on 16 August 2006:

(1) When was the Tourism Australia “Where the bloody hell are you?” campaign launched.

(2) What was the average number of hits on the Tourism Australia website prior to the launch.

(3) What has been the average number of hits on the Tourism Australia website since the launch.

Fran Bailey—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) The Tourism Australia Uniquely Australian Invitation campaign with the tag line ‘So Where the Bloody Hell Are You?’ was launched in Sydney on Thursday 23 February 2006.

(2) The number of visits to the website vary from month to month and from day to day and also vary depending on the season, like most travel websites. It is therefore possible to derive different figures of usage depending on the time periods chosen for comparative purposes and difficult to provide an ‘average’ figure. Therefore, the number of visits over a twelve month period is provided. For the twelve month period for 1/2/2005 to 31/1/2006 there were approximately 5.9 million visits to the Tourism Australia consumer site, Australia.com.

(3) In the twelve month period 1/2/2006 until 31/1/2007 there were 6.9 million visits to Australia.com. In addition, there were also 1.5 million visits to the dedicated campaign website,
www.sowherethebloodyhellareyou.com in this period. The total number of visits to Tourism Australia websites over this period was 7.4 million.

**Foreign Fishing Vessels**

(Question No. 4002)

Mr Bevis asked the Minister representing the Minister for Justice and Customs, in writing, on 4 September 2006:

(1) What has been the top speed of the fastest illegal fishing vessels known to have entered Australian waters.

(2) For each year since 1996, (a) how many illegal vessels have been sighted, (b) how many illegal vessels have been apprehended, (c) in which month was the greatest number of illegal vessels sighted, (d) in which month was the greatest number of illegal vessels apprehended, (e) how many illegal vessels have been sighted within 12 nautical miles of the Australian mainland and (f) how many known terrorists have arrived in Australia by way of illegal vessel.

Mr Ruddock—The Minister for Justice and Customs has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

(1) The fastest Illegal Foreign Fishing Vessel (IFFV) encountered by an Australian Customs Vessel to date has been estimated at 12-13 knots.

(2) The answers to the following questions relate to data on Foreign Fishing Vessels in Australian waters for each of the calendar years between 2003 and 2006. Data prior to 2003 cannot be verified with appropriate accuracy.

(a) 2003 – 13 515
   2004 – 9,016
   2005 – 9,471
   2006 – 7,440

   Note: These figures are from Coastwatch aircraft only and will include multiple sightings of the same vessel by different flights and vessels legitimately fishing and/or transiting from areas such as the Memorandum of Understanding Box.

(b) 2003 – 139
   2004 – 162
   2005 – 281
   2006 – 365

(c) August 2003

(d) October 2005

(e) 2003 – 53
   2004 – 33
   2005 – 209
   2006 – 205

   Note: These figures are from Coastwatch aircraft only and will include multiple sightings of the same vessel by different flights and may include vessels legitimately fishing and/or transiting the Australian waters.

(f) Customs has no knowledge of any terrorists arriving by illegal fishing vessel.
Telstra
(Question No. 4013)

Mr Fitzgibbon asked the Minister representing the Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, in writing, on 4 September 2006:

What is the estimated number of telephone lines in the federal electorate of Hunter that are "pair gained."

Mr McGauran—The Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:
Telstra has advised that it considers information about the structure and nature of its network to be commercial-in-confidence, and has declined to provide this information.

Crosby/Textor Contracts
(Question No. 4023)

Mr Kelvin Thomson asked the Attorney-General, in writing, on 4 September 2006:

(1) What contracts, if any, were granted to Crosby/Textor by the Minister, or by any departments or agencies in the Minister’s portfolio, in (a) 2004-05 and (b) 2005-06.

(2) What contracts, if any, have been awarded to Crosby/Textor for (a) 2006-07 or (b) 2007-08.

(3) In respect of each contract referred to in Parts (1) and (2), (a) what was, or is, the cost and (b) what work was, or will be, carried out by Crosby/Textor pursuant to that contract.

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

(1) (a) Nil. (b) The Family Court of Australia awarded one contract to Crosby/Textor during 2005-06.

(2) Nil.

(3) (a) The cost of the contract was $13,750 plus an additional $553.97 for the reimbursement of travel costs. (b) Provision of professional services to facilitate a strategic communication workshop.

KPMG Contracts
(Question No. 4050)

Mr Kelvin Thomson asked the Treasurer, 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 Costello—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

Australian Bureau of Statistics

(1) and (2) For the periods in question, the ABS has awarded the following contracts to KPMG:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount (GST incl)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) 2004-05</td>
<td>License agreement to use ABS data in the KPMG publication ‘Population Growth’</td>
<td>$7880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) 2005-06</td>
<td>License agreement to use ABS data in the KPMG publication ‘Population Growth’</td>
<td>$703</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(revenue contract)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Amount (GST incl)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Australian Competition & Consumer Commission**

(1) and (2) For the periods in question, the ACCC has awarded the following contracts to KPMG:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount (GST excl)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>Gas Regulatory Reporting on Guidelines for gas transmission service providers</td>
<td>$7,920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>Review of advice to DITR regarding formulation of ring-fencing regimes in the energy sector</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>Review of accounting guidelines by Australian Pipeline Industry Authority</td>
<td>$9,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Information regarding contracts over $10,000 awarded to KPMG by the ACCC can be found at: [http://www.accc.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/402431/fromItemId/383833](http://www.accc.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/402431/fromItemId/383833)

**Australian Office of Financial Management**

(1) (a) Nil.  
(b) Nil.  
(c) Nil.  

(2) Not Applicable.

**Australian Prudential Regulation Authority**

(1) and (2) For the periods in question, the APRA has awarded the following contracts to KPMG:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount (GST exclusive)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>Professional Services Rendered (invoice date – 22 June 2005)</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>KPMG Actuaries Pty Ltd - KPMG Assistance to APRA and ASIC on Reviewing Sections of Draft Guide to Good Practice for Unit Pricing (Invoice date – 26 August 2005)</td>
<td>$23,061 $1,620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>Provision of internal audit services for the entire financial year</td>
<td>$114,346.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>Contracts for the secondment of two people in Enforcement</td>
<td>$38,014.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>Provision of internal audit services for the entire financial year</td>
<td>$100,437.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>Provision of internal audit services for July 2006</td>
<td>$27,749.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Australian Securities and Investments Commission**

(1) and (2) For the periods in question, the ASIC has awarded the following contracts to KPMG:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount (GST exclusive)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>Provision of internal audit services for the entire financial year</td>
<td>$114,346.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>Contracts for the secondment of two people in Enforcement</td>
<td>$38,014.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>Provision of internal audit services for the entire financial year</td>
<td>$100,437.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>Provision of internal audit services for July 2006</td>
<td>$27,749.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**QUESTIONS IN WRITING**
Australian Taxation Office

(1) (a) For the financial year 2004-05, the information appears on page 330 of the Commissioner of Taxation Annual Report.

(b) For the financial year 2005-06, the information appears on pages 310 and 311 of the 2005-06 Commissioner of Taxation Annual Report.

(c) and (2) The following contracts and relevant costs have been awarded to KPMG for the financial year 2006-07:

1. Provide services for a Technical Quality Review - $12,375 GST incl
2. Provide services for a Technical Quality Review - $5,000 GST incl
3. Provide services on the Indirect Taxes Rulings Panel - $20,000 GST incl
4. Provide services on the Indirect Taxes Rulings Panel - $40,000 GST incl
5. Review of credit and cash allocation process - $22,880 GST incl

For the financial year 2006-07, this information will be tabled in the Commissioner of Taxation Annual Report in October 2007.

Corporations & Markets Advisory Committee

(1) (a) Nil, (b) Nil, (c) Nil.

(2) Not applicable.

Inspector-General of Taxation

(1) (a) Nil, (b) Nil, (c) Nil.

(2) Not applicable.

National Competition Council

(1) (a) Nil, (b) Nil, (c) Nil.

(2) Not applicable.

Productivity Commission

(1) (a) Nil, (b) Nil, (c) Nil.

(2) Not applicable.

Royal Australian Mint

(1) (a) Nil, (b) Nil, (c) Nil.

(2) Not applicable.

Treasury

(1) and (2) For the periods in question, the Treasury has awarded the following contracts to KPMG:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount (GST Inclusive)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) 2004-05</td>
<td>Preparation of financial statement and annual report for Takeover Panel for 2004-05</td>
<td>$2,200.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Software licence for the 2005-06 FBT Simplifier and associated training costs.</td>
<td>$6,001.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) 2005-06</td>
<td>Preparation of financial statement and annual report for Takeover Panel for 2005-06.</td>
<td>$2,420.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provision of internal audit services for Treasury for a three year period from 2006 to 2008.</td>
<td>$1,024,030.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Media Monitoring and Clipping Services
(Question Nos 4118 and 4120)

Mr Bowen asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Trade, 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 Downer—On behalf of the Minister for Trade and myself, the answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) Media monitoring costs in 2005-06:
   Mr Downer’s office: $60,761.30
   Mr Vaile’s office: $15,307.34

(2) Media Monitors
    PO Box 2110
    Strawberry Hills NSW 2012
    Rehame
    PO Box 537
    Port Melbourne VIC 3207
    Allan Gilvear and Associates (also trades as Caption IT)
    PO Box 338
    HALL ACT 2618

Media Monitoring and Clipping Services
(Question No. 4119)

Mr Bowen asked the Treasurer, 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 Costello—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) $9,167 (GST exclusive).
(2) Media Monitors, Level 3 219-241 Cleveland Street, Strawberry Hills NSW 2012.
Media Monitoring and Clipping Services  
(Question No. 4134)

Mr Bowen asked the Minister representing the Minister for Justice and Customs, 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 Ruddock—The Minister for Justice and Customs has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

(1) $42,059.99 (excluding GST)

(2) Media Monitors
    PO Box 2110
    Strawberry Hills NSW 2012

    Rehame Australia Monitoring Services Pty Ltd
    PO Box 537
    Port Melbourne VIC 3207

Media Monitoring and Clipping Services  
(Question Nos 4148 and 4150)

Mr Bowen asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Trade, in writing, on 7 September 2006:

(1) What sum was spent on media monitoring and clipping services engaged by the department and agencies in the Minister’s portfolio in 2005-06;

(2) Did the department or any agency in the Minister’s portfolio order newspaper clippings, television appearance transcripts or videos, radio transcripts or tapes on behalf of the Minister’s office in 2005-06; if so, what sum was spent by the department or agency on providing this service.

Mr Downer—On behalf of the Minister for Trade and myself, the answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

DFAT
(1) $378,110.

(2) Yes. See reply to Questions 4118 and 4120 regarding costs of media monitoring and clipping services engaged by Ministers’ offices, which includes costs for orders placed on behalf of Minister’s offices.

ACIAR
(1) Nil.

(2) No.

AJF
(1) Nil.

(2) No.
Media Monitoring and Clipping Services  
(Question No. 4164)

Mr Bowen asked the Minister representing the Minister for Human Services, in writing, on 7 September 2006:

(1) What sum was spent on media monitoring and clipping services engaged by the department and agencies in the Minister’s portfolio in 2005-06;

(2) Did the department or any agency in the Minister’s portfolio order newspaper clippings, television appearance transcripts or videos, radio transcripts or tapes on behalf of the Minister’s office in 2005-06; if so, what sum was spent by the department or agency on providing this service.

Mr Brough—The Minister for Human Services has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>(1) Sum Spent Excluding GST</th>
<th>(2) Did Any Order?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core Department</td>
<td>$82,757.62</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Support Agency</td>
<td>$32,023.43</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRS Australia</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centrelink</td>
<td>$141,000</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicare Australia</td>
<td>$41,865.58</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Hearing</td>
<td>$8,754.88</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Health Services Australia

(1) Nil.
(2) No.

To prepare this response it has taken approximately 13 hours and 16 minutes at an estimated cost of $730.

Media Monitoring and Clipping Services

(Question No. 4165)

Mr Bowen asked the Minister for Veterans’ Affairs, in writing, on 7 September 2006:

(1) What sum was spent on media monitoring and clipping services engaged by the department and agencies in the Minister’s portfolio in 2005-06;
(2) Did the department or any agency in the Minister’s portfolio order newspaper clippings, television appearance transcripts or videos, radio transcripts or tapes on behalf of the Minister’s office in 2005-06; if so, what sum was spent by the department or agency on providing this service.

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

(1) $34,437.77
(2) Yes. $124,854.65

Prime Minister: Entertainment Expenses

(Question No. 4182)

Mr Kelvin Thomson asked the Prime Minister, in writing, on 12 September 2006:

(1) What was the total cost of entertainment expenses for the 2005–06 financial year for the Minister’s (a) department and agencies and (b) office.
(2) Will the Minister provide a breakdown of entertainment expenses incurred by the Minister’s (a) department and agencies and (b) office in the financial year 2005-06, listing: (i) purpose; (ii) outcome; (iii) expenses; including alcohol, tobacco, contracts and transport; and (iv) persons present.

Mr Howard—I am advised that the answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) (a) $719,885 for my department, of which $648,237 relates to the State Occasions and Official Visits programme, and $101,025 for the portfolio agencies. (b) $4,853.
(2) The respective financial information systems within the portfolio are unable to identify individual payments of this nature. I am not prepared to authorise the significant diversion of resources required to manually check the systems for transactions to prepare a complete response.

However, neither my department, its agencies or my office provide tobacco products as part of official entertainment.

Prime Minister and Cabinet: Programs

(Question No. 4297)

Mrs Elliot asked the Prime Minister, in writing, on 12 September 2006:

(1) What programs have been administered by the Minister’s department in the federal electorate of Richmond since October 2004.
(2) In respect of each project or program referred to in Part (1), (a) what is its name, (b) by whom is it operated and (c) what are its aims and objectives.
(3) What grants have been provided to individuals, businesses and organisations by the Ministers’ department in the federal electorate of Richmond since October 2004.
Mr Howard—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) and (2) I am advised that no programmes have been administered by my department since October 2004 in the federal electorate of Richmond.

(3) I am also advised that no grants have been provided by my department in the electorate of Richmond since October 2004.

Treasury: Programs
(Question No. 4299)

Mrs Elliot asked the Treasurer, in writing, on 12 September 2006:

(1) What programs have been administered by the Minister’s department in the federal electorate of Richmond since October 2004.

(2) In respect of each project or program referred to in Part (1), (a) what is its name, (b) by whom is it operated and (c) what are its aims and objectives.

(3) What grants have been provided to individuals, businesses and organisations by the Ministers’ department in the federal electorate of Richmond since October 2004.

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

(1) No programs have been administered by the Department of Treasury in the federal electorate of Richmond since October 2004.

(2) Not applicable.

(3) No grants have been provided to individuals, businesses and organisations by the Department of Treasury in the federal electorate of Richmond since October 2004.

Finance and Administration: Programs
(Question No. 4301)

Mrs Elliot asked the Minister representing the Minister for Finance and Administration, in writing, on 12 September 2006:

(1) What programs have been administered by the Minister’s department in the federal electorate of Richmond since October 2004.

(2) In respect of each project or program referred to in Part (1), (a) what is its name, (b) by whom is it operated and (c) what are its aims and objectives.

(3) What grants have been provided to individuals, businesses and organizations by the Ministers’ department in the federal electorate of Richmond since October 2004.

Mr Costello—The Minister for Finance and Administration has supplied the following answer to the honorable member’s question:

Department of Finance and Administration

(1) Nil.

(2) N/A.

(3) Nil.

Immigration and Citizenship: Programs
(Question No. 4306)

Mrs Elliot asked the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, in writing, on 12 September 2006:
(1) What programs have been administered by the Minister’s department in the federal electorate of Richmond since October 2004.

(2) In respect of each project or program referred to in Part (1) (a) what is its name, (b) by whom is it operated and (c) what are its aims and objectives.

(3) What grants have been provided to individuals, businesses and community organisations by the Minister’s department in the federal electorate of Richmond since 2004.

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

(1) Information regarding what programmes have been administered by the department within the federal electorate of Richmond since October 2004 is contained in Portfolio Budget Statements and other publicly available documents.

(2) In respect to each project and programme administered by the department, information regarding the name, operator and aims and objectives is also contained in Portfolio Budget Statements and other publicly available documents.

(3) Following are the details related to the programme/s administered by the department within the federal electorate of Richmond:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Individuals</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Businesses</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Organisations</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2005 under the Living In Harmony Programme, the organisation Community Support Centre – Murwillumbah received a grant to ‘reduce racism and prejudice through recruiting and training community members from five cultural backgrounds to facilitate hands-on workshops in primary schools’.

Treasury: Programs

(Question No. 4321)

Mrs Elliot asked the Minister for Revenue and Assistant Treasurer, in writing, on 12 September 2006:

(1) What programs have been administered by the Minister’s department in the federal electorate of Richmond since October 2004.

(2) In respect of each project or program referred to in Part (1), (a) what is its name, (b) by whom is it operated and (c) what are its aims and objectives.

(3) What grants have been provided to individuals, businesses and organisations by the Ministers’ department in the federal electorate of Richmond since October 2004.

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

(1) No programs have been administered by the Department of Treasury in the federal electorate of Richmond since October 2004.

(2) Not applicable.

(3) No grants have been provided to individuals, businesses and organisations by the Department of Treasury in the federal electorate of Richmond since October 2004.

Finance and Administration: Programs

(Question No. 4325)

Mrs Elliot asked the Minister representing the Minister for Finance and Administration, in writing, on 12 September 2006:
(1) What programs have been administered by the Minister’s department in the federal electorate of Richmond since October 2004.

(2) In respect of each project or program referred to in Part (1), (a) what is its name, (b) by whom is it operated and (c) what are its aims and objectives.

(3) What grants have been provided to individuals, businesses and organisations by the Ministers’ department in the federal electorate of Richmond since October 2004.

Mr Costello—The answer to the honorable member’s question is as follows:

(1) to (3) Please refer to the answer provided by the Treasurer, the Hon Peter Costello MP, on behalf of the Minister for Finance and Administration for Question on Notice 4301.

Freedom of Information
(Question No. 4366)

Mr Kelvin Thomson asked the Minister representing the Minister for Human Services, in writing, on 14 September 2006:

(1) How many freedom of information applications have the Minister’s department and agencies received in each financial year since 1 July 2000.

(2) In respect of the applications identified in Part (1), how many resulted in documents being released (a) in full, (b) in part and (c) not at all.

(3) Has the Minister’s department issued any conclusive certificates since 1 July 1996; if so, what are those details.

(4) In respect of each of the conclusive certificates identified in Part (3), will the Minister provide (a) the sections of the Freedom of Information Act 1982 to which the certificate relates and (b) the details of any appeal against the certificate lodged with the Administrative Appeals Tribunal, including the outcome of the appeal.

Mr Brough—The Minister for Human Services has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

Core Department
In relation to the core department (excluding the Child Support Agency and CRS Australia), from the commencement of the Department in 26 October 2004:

(1) Information is publicly available in annual reports made under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (FOI Act).

(2) Information about the outcome of FOI applications finalised each financial year by each department and agency is publicly available in annual reports made under the FOI Act.

(3) No.

(4) Not applicable.

Child Support Agency
(1) This information is publicly available in annual reports made under the FOI Act.

(2) Information about the outcome of FOI applications finalised each financial year by each department and agency is publicly available in annual reports made under the FOI Act.

(3) CSA has not issued any conclusive certificates since the establishment of the Department of Human Services.

(4) Not applicable.
CRS Australia

(1) CRS Australia received the following freedom of information applications in the financial years since 1 July 2000: (see table below for Questions. 1 and 2)

(2) In respect of the applications identified in Part (1), the following resulted in documents being released: (see table below for Questions. 1 and 2)

(3) CRS Australia is not aware of any conclusive certificates being issued in relation to CRS Australia since 2000.

(4) Not applicable.

FOI applications since 1 July 2000 (financial years)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>*Total</th>
<th>(a) Full release</th>
<th>(b) Partial release</th>
<th>(c) Access refused</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000-01</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-02</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-03</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-04</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-31Aug 06</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Where totals do not match figures for release, applications were either withdrawn or requests for amendments were made.

** In 2000 5 FOI applications were actioned prior to the electronic database commencing. These have been archived and information on this is not readily available in the time frame.

Centrelink

(1) This information is publicly available in annual reports made under the FOI Act.

(2) Information about the outcome of FOI applications finalised each financial year by each department and agency is publicly available in annual reports made under the FOI Act.

(3) No.

(4) Not Applicable.

Medicare Australia

(1) This information is publicly available in annual reports made under the FOI Act.

(2) Information about the outcome of FOI applications finalised each financial year by each department and agency is publicly available in annual reports made under the FOI Act.

(3) No.

(4) Not applicable.

Australian Hearing

(1) This information is publicly available in annual reports made under the FOI Act.

(2) Information about the outcome of FOI applications finalised each financial year by each department and agency is publicly available in annual reports made under the FOI Act.

(3) No.

(4) Not applicable.

Health Services Australia

Health Services Australia has not received any applications in the timeframe specified.

To prepare this answer it has taken approximately 12 hours and 35 minutes at an estimated cost of $735.

QUESTIONS IN WRITING
Environment and Water Resources: Credit Cards  
(Question No. 4405)

Mr Kelvin Thomson asked the Minister for the Environment and Water Resources, in writing, on 14 September 2006:

(1) How many credit cards have been issued to employees of the Minister’s department and agencies in each financial year since 1 July 2000.

(2) Of the credit cards identified in Part (1):
   (a) how many have been reported lost;
   (b) how many have been reported stolen;
   (c) have any been subject to fraud; if so, what was the total cost of each incident;
   (d) what is the average credit limit for each financial year;
   (e) what was the total amount of interest accrued; and
   (f) have any employees been subjected to criminal proceedings as a result of credit card fraud.

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

(1) The table below identifies the number of credit cards issued in each financial year since 1 July 2000 to the employees of the Minister’s department and agencies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department of the Environment and Water Resources</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director of National Parks</td>
<td>Records not retained</td>
<td>Records not retained</td>
<td>Records not retained</td>
<td>Records not retained</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney Harbour Federation Trust</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bureau of Meteorology</td>
<td>Records not retained</td>
<td>Records not retained</td>
<td>Records not retained</td>
<td>Records not retained</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Qualification: Due to changes in suppliers of credit card facilities to the department and its agencies over the period required not all data associated with this question was available.

(2) Of the credit cards issued in the response to Part (1)
   (a) The table below identifies how many credit cards have been reported lost:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department of the Environment and Water Resources</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director of National Parks</td>
<td>Records not retained</td>
<td>Records not retained</td>
<td>Records not retained</td>
<td>Records not retained</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney Harbour Federation Trust</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bureau of Meteorology</td>
<td>Records not retained</td>
<td>Records not retained</td>
<td>Records not retained</td>
<td>Records not retained</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualification: Due to changes in suppliers of credit card facilities to the department and its agencies over the period required not all data associated with this question was available.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(b) The table below identifies how many credit cards have been reported stolen:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department of the Environment and Water Resources</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director of National Parks</td>
<td>Records not retained</td>
<td>Records not retained</td>
<td>Records not retained</td>
<td>Records not retained</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney Harbour Federation Trust</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bureau of Meteorology</td>
<td>Records not retained</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority</td>
<td>Records not retained</td>
<td>Records not retained</td>
<td>Records not retained</td>
<td>Records not retained</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(c) The table below identifies how many credit cards have been subject to fraud, and the cost of each incident:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department of the Environment and Water Resources</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director of National Parks</td>
<td>3,180.5</td>
<td>$3,056.1</td>
<td>$1,380.5</td>
<td>$5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney Harbour Federation Trust</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bureau of Meteorology</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(d) Information on the average credit limit for the department and portfolio agencies for each financial year is not readily available. This is due to the number of divisions within the department, the number of agencies within the portfolio and the different credit card services suppliers that have been used over the period requested.

(e) The table below identifies the total amount of interest accrued:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department of the Environment and Water Resources</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director of National Parks</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney Harbour Federation Trust</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bureau of Meteorology</td>
<td>$11</td>
<td>$6</td>
<td>$16</td>
<td>$8</td>
<td>$10</td>
<td>$4</td>
<td>$1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(f) One employee has been subjected to criminal proceedings as a result of credit card fraud.
Commonwealth Cars: Fuel Costs
(Question No. 4434)

Mr Kelvin Thomson asked the Minister representing the Minister for Finance and Administration, in writing, on 14 September 2006:

For each financial year since 1 July 2000, what was the total cost of fuel purchases for all Commonwealth cars operated by the Minister’s department and agencies.

Mr Costello—The Minister for Finance and Administration has supplied the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department or Agency</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department of Finance and Administration</td>
<td>$104,009.75</td>
<td>$101,961.22</td>
<td>$108,237.14</td>
<td>$110,451.96</td>
<td>$125,120.57</td>
<td>$121,453.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministerial and Parliamentary Services_Group1</td>
<td>$682,555.08</td>
<td>$644,160.50</td>
<td>$669,405.76</td>
<td>$755,000.76</td>
<td>$855,594.67</td>
<td>$903,663.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Electoral Commission</td>
<td>$79,005.64</td>
<td>$68,580.26</td>
<td>$67,537.59</td>
<td>$79,537.69</td>
<td>$77,466.04</td>
<td>$70,219.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commonwealth Grants Commission</td>
<td>$6,407.00</td>
<td>$6,228.42</td>
<td>$5,068.34</td>
<td>$6,707.24</td>
<td>$6,707.24</td>
<td>$3,942.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ComSuper</td>
<td>$10,915.26</td>
<td>$1,707.97</td>
<td>$6,256.36</td>
<td>$12,386.43</td>
<td>$14,997.82</td>
<td>$15,231.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Fund Management Agency</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Reward Investment Alliance</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:
1 Ministerial and Parliamentary Services data includes fuel consumption data for Parliamentarians’ electorate cars and staff cars. QON 4449, tabled on 25 October 2006, provides the data for COMCAR, which has not been included in this response.

2 The Future Fund Management Agency was established on 3 April 2006 and does not operate any Commonwealth cars.

Fuel purchase data for the entire fleet is only able to be reported by calendar year, commencing in 2001, due to the reporting configuration of the Australian Government Fleet Manager’s IT system. Information for the period 1 July—31 December 2000 is not available.

The cost of fuel for all Parliamentary Commonwealth cars (subsequently clarified by Mr Thompson’s office as COMCAR vehicles) was provided in response to House of Representatives Parliamentary Question No. 4449 tabled 25 October 2006.

Commonwealth Cars: Fuel Costs
(Question No. 4435)

Mr Kelvin Thomson asked the Minister for Transport and Regional Services, in writing, on 14 September 2006:

For each financial year since 1 July 2000, what was the total cost of fuel purchases for all Commonwealth cars operated by the Minister’s department and agencies?

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

The Fleet Monitoring Body (FMB) within the Finance and Administration portfolio has advised that LeasePlan’s IT reporting configurations require data to be presented in calendar years, therefore financial year reporting is not available as requested.

The FMB also advised that LeasePlan is not able to provide information prior to 2001.
### Department of Transport and Regional Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Calendar Year</th>
<th>Total Cost of Fuel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>$53,131.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>$75,206.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above figures do not include fuel used in the vehicles leased by Senior Executive Service staff as those costs are met from officers’ own remuneration.

### National Capital Authority

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Calendar Year</th>
<th>Total Cost of Fuel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>$9,689.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>$15,379.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>$15,407.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>$18,109.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>$19,059.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>$22,031.38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Airservices Australia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Year</th>
<th>Total Cost of Fuel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000/01</td>
<td>$619,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001/02</td>
<td>$416,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002/03</td>
<td>$535,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003/04</td>
<td>$311,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004/05</td>
<td>$550,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005/06</td>
<td>$678,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Civil Aviation Safety Authority

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Year</th>
<th>Total Cost of Fuel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000/01</td>
<td>$113,430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001/02</td>
<td>$138,716</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002/03</td>
<td>$126,977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003/04</td>
<td>$99,637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004/05</td>
<td>$102,888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005/06</td>
<td>$121,914</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Australian Maritime Safety Authority

Australian Maritime Safety Authority does not have any Commonwealth vehicles.

#### Commonwealth Cars: Fuel Costs

(Question No. 4447)

Mr Kelvin Thomson asked the Minister representing the Minister for Human Services, in writing, on 14 September 2006:

For each financial year since 1 July 2000, what was the total cost of fuel purchases for all Commonwealth cars operated by the Minister’s department and agencies.

Mr Brough—The Minister for Human Services has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:
Core Department
The Department of Human Services was established on 26 October 2004. The total cost by calendar year for fuel purchases for Commonwealth cars operated by the core Department of Human Services is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>$55.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>$6,185.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>$10,781.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Noting that the information on total cost of fuel purchases for the core department is presented in calendar year format (as outlined in the Fleet Monitoring Body Advice Issue 2006/18, LeasePlan is unable to provide data in financial year format) and further noting that the 2004 dates are from 26 October – 31 December 2004.

Child Support Agency
For each calendar year since 2000 the Child Support Agency spent the following amounts on fuel purchases for Commonwealth Cars operated by the Agency:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>$1,040.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>$7,370.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>$20,342.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>$31,944.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>$30,152.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CRS Australia
The total cost of fuel purchases for all Commonwealth cars operated by CRS Australia is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Year</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000-2001</td>
<td>$496,066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-2002</td>
<td>$359,935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-2003</td>
<td>$409,087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-2004</td>
<td>$458,248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-2005</td>
<td>$471,922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-2006</td>
<td>$545,517</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Centrelink
Data has been provided by LeasePlan Australia (through the Fleet Monitoring Body). LeasePlan was unable to provide data for the year 2000 and was only able to provide data on a calendar year basis.

The total cost of fuel purchases for Commonwealth cars operated by Centrelink for each of the calendar years 2001 – 2006 was:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Calendar Year</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>$1,589,819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>$1,726,644</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>$1,900,498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>$1,822,330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>$1,913,438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>$1,863,395</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QUESTIONS IN WRITING
Medicare Australia
Fuel costs associated with the operation of motor vehicles within Medicare Australia and the then Health Insurance Commission for the period requested are reflected in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Year</th>
<th>Health Insurance Commission</th>
<th>Medicare Australia</th>
<th>Fuel Expenditure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002-03</td>
<td>$496,688</td>
<td>$496,688</td>
<td>$496,688</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>$369,494</td>
<td>$369,494</td>
<td>$369,494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>$75,911</td>
<td>$270,520</td>
<td>$346,431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$2,244,816</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Australian Hearing
Australian Hearing does not operate Commonwealth vehicles.
Health Services Australia
Health Services Australia does not operate Commonwealth vehicles.

To prepare this answer has taken approximately 12 hours and 36 minutes at an estimated cost of $669.

Sexual Harassment Claims
(Question No. 4498)

Mr Kelvin Thomson asked the Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence, in writing, on 14 September 2006:

For each financial year since 1 July 2000, how many sexual harassment claims have been reported in the Minister’s department and agencies.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Year</th>
<th>Claims</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000-01</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-02</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-03</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-04</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 2005-06 includes one sexual harassment claim from Defence Housing Australia.

Education, Science and Training: Departmental Liaison Officer
(Question No. 4523)

Mr Kelvin Thomson asked the Minister for Education, Science and Training, in writing, on 14 September 2006:

In respect of the secondment to the Minister’s office of a Departmental Liaison Officer (DLO), what is the (a) average, (b) shortest and (c) longest period of secondment and (d) what is the total number of DLOs that have been employed in the Minister’s office since 1 July 2000.

Ms Julie Bishop—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:
Departmental records provide the following information in relation to Departmental Liaison Officers in the Minister’s office for the period 1 July 2000 to 14 September 2006:

(a) average - 41.4 weeks
(b) shortest - 1 week
(c) longest - 111 weeks
(d) total no. - 14

The information provided above includes short term replacements during periods of Departmental Liaison Officer recreation and other leave.

**Attorney-General’s: Employment Agencies**
*(Question No. 4572)*

Mr Kelvin Thomson asked the Attorney-General, in writing, on 14 September 2006:

For each financial year since 1 July 2000: (a) which employment agencies has the Minister’s department engaged; (b) what was the total cost of engaging employment agencies; and (c) how many employees were placed by these agencies and, of those, which were employed on (i) an ongoing and (ii) a non-ongoing basis.

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

(a) The following agencies were used by the Department from 1 July 2000 – 30 June 2001.

- Adecco Australia Pty Ltd
- Allstaff
- Careers Unlimited Pty Ltd
- Drake Office Overload
- ECA Personnel Pty Ltd
- Effective People Pty Ltd
- Employment National(Administration)
- Green & Green Group Pty Ltd
- Hays Personnel Services (Aust) PL
- Hudson Global Resources
- Julia Ross Recruitment Pty Ltd
- Kelly Services (Australia) Limited
- Key People Personnel
- Professional Careers Aust P/L
- Recruitment Management Company
- Select Appointments
- Staffing and Office Solutions
- Wizard Personnel & Office

The following agencies were used by the Department from 1 July 2001 – 30 June 2002.

- Careers Unlimited Pty Ltd
- Drake Office Overload
- ECA Personnel Pty Ltd
- Effective People Pty Ltd
- Frontier IT Recruitment Consulting
- Hays Personnel Services (Aust) PL
- Hudson Global Resources
- Julia Ross Recruitment Pty Ltd
- Kelly Services (Australia) Limited
- Key People Personnel
The following agencies were used by the Department from 1 July 2002 – 30 June 2003.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kowalski Recruitment Pty Ltd</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Umbrella Group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment Management Company</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled Engineering Ltd</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spherion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staffing and Office Solutions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westaff Australia Pty Ltd</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wizard Personnel &amp; Office</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following agencies were used by the Department from 1 July 2003 – 30 June 2004.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adecco Australia Pty Ltd</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allstaff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careers Unlimited Pty Ltd</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drake Office Overload</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective People Pty Ltd</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green &amp; Green Group Pty Ltd</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hays Personnel Services (Aust) PL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hudson Global Resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaz Group Pty Limited</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly Services (Australia) Limited</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kowalski Recruitment Pty Ltd</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Careers Aust P/L</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spherion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staffing and Office Solutions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following agencies were used by the Department from 1 July 2004 – 30 June 2005.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adecco Australia Pty Ltd</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CareerNet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careers Unlimited Pty Ltd</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chandler &amp; Macleod Pty Ltd</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective People Pty Ltd</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hays Personnel Services (Aust) PL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hudson Global Resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julia Ross Recruitment Pty Ltd</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaz Group Pty Limited</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kowalski Recruitment Pty Ltd</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Careers Aust P/L</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment Management Company</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment Solutions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staffing and Office Solutions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wizard Personnel &amp; Office</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QUESTIONS IN WRITING
Allstaff
Ambit Group Pty Ltd
Cantlie Recruitment
Careers Unlimited Pty Ltd
Effective People Pty Ltd
face2face Recruitment Pty Ltd.
Frontier Group Australia Pty Ltd
Green & Green Group Pty Ltd
Hays Personnel Services (Aust) PL
Hudson Global Resources
Icon Recruitment Pty Ltd
Julia Ross Recruitment Pty Ltd
Kaz Group Pty Limited
Kowalski Recruitment Pty Ltd
Patriot Alliance Security Grade
Professional Careers Aust P/L
Ross Human Directions
Select Australasia
Staffing and Office Solutions
Wizard Personnel & Office

(a) The following agencies were used by the Department from 1 July 2005 – 30 June 2006.

(b) and (c) The information below includes costs for a range of services including scribes, referral services, conduct of selection processes, recruitment-related consultancy services and contractor services (i.e. actual labour hire costs). The Attorney-General’s Department is unable to disaggregate the information available to obtain the more detailed information sought to respond to part (c) of the question.

The total cost of engaging employment agencies by the Department 1 July 2000 – 30 June 2001 was $357,212.63 (Inc GST)

The total cost of engaging employment agencies by the Department 1 July 2001 – 30 June 2002 was $222,722.27 (Inc GST)

The total cost of engaging employment agencies by the Department 1 July 2002 – 30 June 2003 was $225,328.14 (Inc GST)

The total cost of engaging employment agencies by the Department 1 July 2003 – 30 June 2004 was $406,403.24 (Inc GST)

The total cost of engaging employment agencies by the Department 1 July 2004 – 30 June 2005 was $357,190.03 (Inc GST)

The total cost of engaging employment agencies by the Department 1 July 2005 – 30 June 2006 was $1,016,111.78 (Inc GST)
Immigration and Citizenship: Employment Agencies
(Question No. 4574)

Mr Kelvin Thomson asked the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, in writing, on 14 September 2006:
For each financial year since 1 July 2000:
(1) Which employment agencies has the Minister’s department engaged.
(2) What was the total cost of engaging employment agencies.
(3) How many employees were placed by these agencies and, of those which were employed on (i) an ongoing and (ii) a non-ongoing basis.

Mr Andrews—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:
Agencies generally invoice a sum total, rather than an itemised account, which is then entered into the financial system under relevant general ledger codes. This prevents the Department from being able to distinguish between salary and administration costs paid to recruitment agencies. At this time a breakdown of all individual invoices would entail the allocation of substantial Departmental resources as well as time.

Industry, Tourism and Resources: Employment Agencies
(Question No. 4576)

Mr Kelvin Thomson asked the Minister for Industry, Tourism and Resources, in writing, on 14 September 2006:
For each financial year since 1 July 2000:
(a) Which employment agencies has the Minister’s department engaged;
(b) What was the total cost of engaging employment agencies; and
(c) How many employees were placed by these agencies and, of those, which were employed on:
   (i) an ongoing and
   (ii) a non-ongoing basis.

Mr Ian Macfarlane—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:
(a) A list of employment agencies used by the Department is provided in Attachment A.
(b) Total payments made to employment agencies by the Department for each financial year since 1 July 2000 are as follows:
   2000-01, $2.63m
   2001-02, $3.11m
   2002-03, $2.38m
   2003-04, $5.00m
   2004-05, $7.89m
   2005-06, $2.16m
   2006-07, $0.09m
(c) To determine the number of employees who were placed by employment agencies who were then employed on an ongoing or a non-ongoing basis since 1 July 2000, would require an exhaustive search of the department’s records which would be an unreasonable diversion of resources.
### Employment Agencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attachment A</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment Agencies</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Recruitment Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Employment National P/L</td>
<td>Manpower Services (Aust) P/L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACIS Pty Ltd</td>
<td>EOS International</td>
<td>Mastec Asia Pacific Pty Ltd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achieve</td>
<td>Finite Recruitment Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Meeting Innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acumen Alliance</td>
<td>Forge Data Solutions Pty Ltd</td>
<td>M I L Services Pty Ltd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adecco Australia P/L</td>
<td>Frontier Group Australia Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Morgan &amp; Banks Ltd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adecco Australia Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Getronics (Australia) Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Morgan &amp; Banks Use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alectus Personnel P/L</td>
<td>Gippsland Area Consultative Committee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliance Consulting Group Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Green &amp; Green Group</td>
<td>Omaha It Services Pty Ltd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliance Recruiting Australia</td>
<td>Greg Ryan &amp; Associates</td>
<td>Omega Personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allstaff</td>
<td>Hays Accountancy Personnel</td>
<td>Orix Australia Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambit Group Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Hays Metier Personnel</td>
<td>OZ Jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambition Recruitment August</td>
<td>Hays Personnel Services</td>
<td>Patacat Computing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bas Corporate Services 000</td>
<td>Hudson Global Resources (Aust)</td>
<td>Paxus People (NSW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bev Sweeney &amp; Associates</td>
<td>Icon Recruitment</td>
<td>Peoplebank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Island Corporation Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Igate Australia Pty Ltd</td>
<td>People Bank Recruitment Pty Ltd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridgemaker Personnel Services Ceo Collegiate</td>
<td>Indigo Pacific Pty. Ltd</td>
<td>Prime Commercial Placements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnbax Consulting</td>
<td>Informed Sources P/L</td>
<td>Profess Agency Employment Consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candle Australia Ltd</td>
<td>Interim HR Solutions Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Professional Careers Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Public Affairs Consultants</td>
<td>Interim HR Solutions Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Professional Careers Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careers Unlimited</td>
<td>Interim Office Professionals</td>
<td>Professionals Online Pty Ltd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castelain Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Interim Technology Solutions</td>
<td>PR Placements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careers Unlimited</td>
<td>Interim Technology Associates</td>
<td>Public Relations Placements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chandler Macleod Group</td>
<td>Inter Staffing Services Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Qix Pty Ltd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chandler Maclead Consulting Solutions</td>
<td>IT Matters (AUS) Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Quadrade Solutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXC Consulting Pty Ltd Corpers (464) P/L</td>
<td>Julia Ross Personnel</td>
<td>Quest Group P/L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Finance &amp; Administration</td>
<td>Justin Poyser &amp; Associates</td>
<td>Recruitment Management Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimension Data Australia Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Kelly Services</td>
<td>Recruitment Solutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversiti Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Kelly Services Australia</td>
<td>Rocketboots Pty Ltd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kowalski Consulting P/L</td>
<td>Science Media</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**QUESTIONS IN WRITING**
Mr Kelvin Thomson asked the Minister for Defence, in writing, on 14 September 2006:

1. For each financial year since 1 July 2000, on how many occasions have departmental employees accessed files or records without proper authorisation.

2. In each instance identified in Part (1), (a) what action was taken against the employee and (b) if the unauthorised access involved customer records, in how many instances was the customer notified.

3. Are employees able to access personal or customer files without (a) being detected, or (b) leaving a record of their access.

4. What auditing procedures exist to monitor employee access to files and records.

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

The information sought in the honourable member’s questions is not readily available. To collect and assemble such information solely for the purpose of answering the questions would be a major task and I am not prepared to authorise the expenditure and effort that would be required.

Industry, Tourism and Resources: Unauthorised File Access

(Question No. 4614)

Mr Kelvin Thomson asked the Minister for Industry, Tourism and Resources, in writing, on 14 September 2006:

1. For each financial year since 1 July 2000, on how many occasions have departmental employees accessed files or records without proper authorisation.

2. In each instance identified in Part (1), (a) what action was taken against the employee and (b) if the unauthorised access involved customer records, in how many instances was the customer notified.

3. Are employees able to access personal or customer files without (a) being detected, or (b) leaving a record of their access.

4. What auditing procedures exist to monitor employee access to files and records.

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

1. There have been no known cases of unauthorised access to files or records by departmental employees during this period.

2. Not applicable.

3. Employees are required to follow departmental records management policies and procedures. Access to files is based on the security classification and the business requirement of the employee.

4. The official record keeping system for the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources, TRIM, holds audit and history details. Monitoring of the employee services system, AURION is completed every six weeks.
Mr Kelvin Thomson asked the Prime Minister, in writing, on 14 September 2006:
Is the Minister’s department, or any portfolio agency, in the process of having office accommodation constructed at a new location; if so, (a) what is the total construction cost and (b) when will construction be completed.

Mr Howard—I am advised that the answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:
Yes. As at 14 September 2006, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet was in the process of having office accommodation constructed at One National Circuit, Barton.
(a) The Department is a tenant in the building and is not party to the building construction contract. The contract is between the owner, Industry Superannuation Property Trust and the builder, Bovis Lend Lease.
(b) The building was completed on 16 February 2007.

Mr Kelvin Thomson asked the Minister for Industry, Tourism and Resources, in writing, on 14 September 2006:
Is the Minister’s department, or any portfolio agency, in the process of having office accommodation constructed at a new location; if so, (a) what is the total construction cost; and (b) when will construction be completed.
Mr Ian Macfarlane—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:
My department and portfolio agencies are not currently in the process of having any office accommodation constructed, at any new location. There is new accommodation space being constructed, by the building owner, at IP Australia’s current premises in Canberra which they will lease on its completion.

Mr Kelvin Thomson asked the Minister for the Environment and Water Resources, in writing, on 14 September 2006:
Is the Minister’s department, or any portfolio agency, in the process of having office accommodation constructed at a new location; if so, (a) what is the total construction cost and (b) when will construction be completed.
Mr Turnbull—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:
The Department of the Environment and Water Resources and Portfolio Agencies are not in the process of having accommodation constructed at a new location where the Commonwealth will own the office accommodation.
A private developer is building a small office building at Kingston Tasmania, adjacent to the Australian Antarctic Division, which will be leased at normal commercial rates by the Department for the National Oceans Office. This building is due for completion by 30 June 2007.
The Department is also engaged in discussions with the Department of Finance and Administration regarding the construction of new premises for the Department in Barton. It is expected that these prem-
ises would be leased by the Department and would meet all of the Department’s Canberra office accommodation requirements. The project is at an early conceptual stage and the premises would not be completed until 2011 at the earliest.

**Human Services: Office Accommodation**  
*(Question No. 4639)*

**Mr Kelvin Thomson** asked the Minister representing the Minister for Human Services, in writing, on 14 September 2006:

Is the Minister’s department, or any portfolio agency, in the process of having office accommodation constructed at a new location; if so, (a) what is the total construction cost and (b) when will construction be completed.

**Mr Brough**—The Minister for Human Services has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

**Core Department**
The core department is not in the process of having office accommodation constructed.

**Child Support Agency**
The Child Support Agency does not have any office accommodation being constructed at a new location.

**CRS Australia**
CRS Australia has no office accommodation under construction.

**Centrelink**
Centrelink does not procure office accommodation as capital assets, but through leases. Centrelink does not know the construction costs.

There are 13 office buildings that will be leased by Centrelink that are currently under construction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Scheduled Completion Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Support Office, Greenway ACT</td>
<td>July 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Macquarie Call Centre, NSW</td>
<td>February 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wendouree Call Centre, Victoria</td>
<td>March 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryborough Customer Service Centre, Queensland</td>
<td>March 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deception Bay Customer Service Centre, Queensland</td>
<td>3rd quarter 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yuendumu Remote Area Service Centre, Northern Territory</td>
<td>3rd quarter 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuncurry Customer Service Centre, New South Wales</td>
<td>3rd quarter 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oakleigh Customer Service Centre, Victoria</td>
<td>4th quarter 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woy Woy Customer Service Centre, New South Wales</td>
<td>4th quarter 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Launceston Customer Service Centre, Tasmania</td>
<td>1st quarter 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caboolture Customer Service Centre, Queensland</td>
<td>1st quarter 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inala Customer Service Centre, Queensland</td>
<td>1st quarter 2008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Orange-Bellied Parrots

(Question No. 4703)

Mr Kelvin Thomson asked the Minister for the Environment and Water Resources, in writing, on 9 October 2006:

(1) Has the Government conducted or commissioned any modelling in respect of the risk of wind turbines to Orange-Bellied Parrots; if so, will the Minister make that modelling publicly available.

(2) Did the Government carry out any investigations prior to approving wind farms in southwest Victoria, such as those near Yambuk, Codrington and Portland, in 2002; if so, what were the findings of these investigations in respect of the risk of collisions involving Orange-Bellied Parrots.

(3) Did the Government carry out any investigations is respect of the risk to Orange-Bellied Parrots prior to blocking the proposed Bald Hills wind farm in South Gippsland; if so, what were the findings of these investigations.

(4) Is the Minister aware that Orange-Bellied Parrots are regularly sighted in the areas of southwest Victoria where wind farms have been approved, but that not one Orange-Bellied Parrot has been sighted within kilometres of the rejected wind farm site at Bald Hills; if so, can the Minister explain why the Government has approved wind farms where Orange-Bellied Parrots are found, but rejected them where they are not.

(5) Can the Minister confirm that birds are at greater risk of being hit by cars than by wind turbines; if so, can the Minister explain the policy rationale behind the decision not to proceed with a wind farm at Bald Hills.

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

(1) Yes. My Department commissioned modelling in respect to the risk posed by the cumulative effect of wind energy installations on a number of nationally threatened and migratory bird species, including the Swift Parrot, Orange-bellied Parrot, Tasmanian Wedge-tailed Eagle, White-bellied Sea Eagle and other migratory birds. The results of that modelling are presented in a report titled Wind farm collision risk for birds: Cumulative risks for threatened and migratory species. The modelling was undertaken by Biosis Research Pty Ltd and finalised in February 2006. This report is currently available as a hard copy on request from the Department or can be found at: http://www.deh.gov.au/epbc/publications/index.html

(2) Yes. All projects that are determined to be controlled actions under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (the EPBC Act) undergo an assessment and approval process as set out in the Act.
Three wind farms have been approved under the Act – Portland in Victoria, and Woolnorth and Musselroe in Tasmania. The potential impacts of these installations on flora and fauna, including on threatened birds, was assessed on the best available information at the time.

Mortality risk modelling for Orange-bellied Parrots was undertaken by Biosis Research Pty Ltd in 2001/2002 as part of the assessment of the proposed Portland Wind Energy Installation. Using the ecologically reasonable scenario recommended by Biosis, the modelling predicted that between 0.0117 to 0.137 birds per year could be killed. To date, there have been no reports of post-construction mortalities of listed species at the site.

(3) Yes. The proposal to construct the Bald Hills Wind Energy Installation was assessed by the Victorian Government under a bilateral agreement with the Australian Government which is provided for under the EPBC Act. An Environment Effects Statement (EES) was prepared and assessed in accordance with the Victorian Government’s Environment Effects Act 1978.

During the EES process the Victorian Government’s Department of Sustainability and Environment made the following comment: “The Bald Hills wind farm proposal will increase the level of threat to the Orange-bellied Parrot… A conservative approach is therefore required which acknowledges that this proposed development will increase the cumulative risk to the species posed by the wind farm industry.”

The Panel was established to assess the project under the Environment Effects Act 1978 was satisfied that the project would not materially harm the Orange-bellied Parrot.

Also see answer to Question (1).

(4) The distribution of Orange-bellied Parrots in Australia, including Victoria, is contained within the draft Orange-bellied Parrot Recovery Plan. The Orange-bellied Parrot Recovery Team supplied detailed demographic data for the entire known Australian population of Orange-bellied Parrots to Biosis Research Pty Ltd so they could undertake the modelling for the report cited in Question (1).

On 21 December 2006 the former Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Senator the Hon Ian Campbell, approved the Bald Hills wind farm, with conditions. The conditions were designed to take into account any impact on the Orange-bellied Parrot while allowing for ecologically sustainable development.

(5) A draft Orange-bellied Parrot Recovery Plan was presented to the Threatened Species Scientific Committee in November 2006 for its consideration.

The supporting information for the draft Recovery plan lists the following potential threats (in no particular order) to the Orange-bellied Parrot:

a. Biology and ecology relevant to threatening processes;

b. Degradation and loss of habitat;

c. Invasive weeds;

d. Introduced predators and competitors;

e. Wind farms;

f. Psittacine Circoviral Disease;

g. Illuminated boats and structures; and

h. Trapping (historical).

The former Minister approved the Bald Hills wind farm on 21 December 2006.
**Mobile Phone Towers**  
*(Question No. 4718)*

Ms Annette Ellis asked the Minister for Health and Ageing, in writing, on 6 October 2006: Will the Government undertake a national health audit to investigate and assess patterns of ill health amongst Australians living or working near mobile phone towers; if not, why not.

Mr Abbott—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows: Based on advice from the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA) and the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA), I can inform the honourable member that ARPANSA has set a public health standard for exposure to electromagnetic energy (EME). ACMA has adopted the limits of this standard in its regulation of public exposure to EME emissions from mobile phones and mobile phone towers. Advice from ARPANSA is that the weight of national and international scientific opinion is that there is no substantiated evidence that EME emissions associated with living or working near a mobile phone base-station pose a health risk.

ARPANSA monitors the World Health Organization (WHO) reviews of EME studies and WHO’s current advice is that none of the recent reviews have concluded that exposure to EME emissions from mobile phones and their base-stations cause any adverse health effects.

ARPANSA is currently initiating a mobile phone base-station audit program. It is expected that up to 12 sites will be audited each year. Sites will be selected across all the states. Audits will include the measurement of EME levels from mobile phone base-stations at sites where there is particular public concern.

Individuals in Australia who believe they have suffered ill-effects as a result of exposure to EME can lodge a written complaint with ARPANSA to be put on the Electromagnetic Complaints Register. ARPANSA will protect the privacy of complaints.

The Government provides $1 million each year to the Health and Ageing portfolio, from a levy on radiocommunication licences, for research into public health effects of EME emissions from radiocommunication devices, including mobile phones, and for a public education program.

ACMA and ARPANSA have made available a Mobile Phone Towers and EME Information Pack to further address community concerns about EME. The pack contains fact sheets on EME, deployment of mobile phone towers, mobile phone handsets and associated health issues, and information for rural communities on telecommunications facilities.

**Governor-General**  
*(Question No. 4731)*

Mr Melham asked the Prime Minister, in writing, on 10 October 2006:

(1) What sum was spent by the Commonwealth Government on (a) travel, (b) accommodation, and (c) other expenses (including meals and incidentals) incurred on the visit of the Governor-General and Mrs Jeffery to the Kingdom of Tonga, the Republic of Singapore and the Kingdom of the Netherlands between 19 and 29 September 2006.

(2) What were the details of the accommodation used by the Governor-General and Mrs Jeffery on this journey.

(3) Who accompanied Their Excellencies on this journey overseas.

Mr Howard—I am advised by the Office of the Official Secretary to the Governor-General that the response to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

1. (a) $111,905,
2. (b) $34,543,
3. (c) $10,186

QUESTIONS IN WRITING
Location | Accommodation details | Date
---|---|---
The Kingdom of Tonga | High Commissioner’s Official Residence – Tonga | 19 September 2006
The Republic of Singapore | The Four Season’s Hotel – Singapore | 20 September 2006
The Kingdom of the Netherlands | The Grand Hotel – Amsterdam | 21–25 September 2006

(3) The Governor-General and Her Excellency were accompanied by the Official Secretary to the Governor-General, an Aide-de-Camp to the Governor-General, a Personal Aide to Her Excellency, one personal staff member, a media adviser and a doctor.

1 Excludes Defence costs
2 The Australian Federal Police does not provide detail on security arrangements or protection for the Governor-General, as doing so may breach the Governor-General’s security
3 Their Excellencies were accommodated at no cost to the Office as guests of the High Commissioner in Tonga at his official residence (19 September 2006) and were guests of Her Majesty the Queen of the Kingdom of the Netherlands at the Royal Noordeinde Palace in The Hague (26–28 September 2006).
4 Head of State Visit to the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Swan Island Training Area
(Question No. 4737)

Mr Melham asked the Minister for Defence, in writing, on 10 October 2006:
Further to question No. 3733, for each financial year since 1996-1997, what was the annual cost to the Department of Defence of the operation and maintenance of the Swan Island Training Area.

Dr Nelson—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:
For security reasons it would be inappropriate to divulge figures relating to the operation of Swan Island Training Area. I can advise that the contracts for the period outlined below cost Defence:
Garrison Services cleaning - $145,000 over the ten year period 1996-2006; and Comprehensive Maintenance - $2.78m over the period 2000-2006.
I will not provide breakdowns for each financial year as to collect and assemble such information solely for the purpose of answering the question would be major task, and I am not prepared to authorise the expenditure and effort that would be required.

Mr Geoff Cousins
(Question No. 4760)

Mr Martin Ferguson asked the Prime Minister, in writing, on 12 October 2006:
In respect of the engagement of Mr Geoff Cousins as a consultant: (a) when was Mr Cousins first engaged; (b) what was the initial period of engagement; (c) has it been necessary to extend the initial period of engagement at any time; if so, by what length of time; (d) has the engagement ceased; if so, when; (e) who engaged Mr Cousins, and who conducted negotiations with Mr Cousins regarding the terms and conditions of the consultancy; (f) what are the financial terms of the consultancy in respect of (i) fees, (ii) travel entitlements and (iii) use of secretarial and/or office facilities; and (g) for each financial year of Mr Cousins’ engagement, what are the itemised details of payment to Mr Cousins.

QUESTIONS IN WRITING
Mr Howard—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(a) (b), (c) and (e) Mr Cousins was first engaged by me on 6 October 1997 for a 12 month period on a part-time basis. Details of subsequent engagements can be found in the annual reports of consultants engaged under part 4 of the Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984.

(d) Mr Cousins resigned from his consultancy agreement on 18 September 2006.

(f) Under the contract in force immediately before Mr Cousins resigned:

(i) $10,000 per annum;

(ii) Mr Cousins was entitled to travel at SES rates at Commonwealth expense subject to my approval; and

(iii) When in Sydney, Mr Cousins had access to my offices in Philip Street.

(g) This information was provided to the Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration on 29 January 2007 by the Department of Finance and Administration in response to questions in writing at the October 2006 Senate Supplementary Budget Estimates hearings. Mr Cousins also incurred travel costs of $2,618.85, comprising $2,382.00 (airfares) and $236.85 (car transport), in 1997-98.

Telstra

(Question No. 4766)

Mr Bowen asked the Minister representing the Minister for Finance and Administration, in writing, on 16 October 2006:

(1) At the launch of the T3 Prospectus in Sydney on Monday 9 October 2006, did the Minister say: “We’ve conducted widespread research right across Australia, speaking to over 13,000 Australians in metropolitan, regional and rural areas about their attitude to this float...”, as quoted in an ABC Online news bulletin; if so, (a) what was the cost of the research undertaken, (b) what is the name and address of each company that conducted the research, (c) what form did the research take, (d) will the Minister release the results of the research, and if not; why not, and (e) did the research include questions about the respondents’ views on the further privatisation of Telstra; if so, what were the results.

(2) Was the research referred to in Part (1) a part of the Government’s $20 million advertising campaign to sell T3 shares.

Mr Costello—The Minister for Finance and Administration has supplied the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

(1) Yes.

(a) The cost of the research was $1,436,800.70.

(b) DBM Consultants Pty Ltd, 5-7 Guest Street, Hawthorn, Victoria undertook the research.

(c) The research took the form of surveys of community attitudes, advertising concept testing and qualitative and quantitative research on likely retail demand for Telstra shares, including offer structure features and forms of securities.

(d) No. The results of the market research contain market sensitive information and commercially sensitive information which could prejudice the interests of the Commonwealth and Telstra.

(e) Yes. See answer to 1 (d).

(2) No.
Commonwealth Funded Programs  
(Question No. 4783)

Ms King asked the Treasurer, in writing, on 16 October 2006:

(1) In respect of the federal electorate of Ballarat, does the Minister’s department, or any agency in the Minister’s portfolio, administer any Commonwealth-funded programs under which community organisations, schools, businesses or individuals can apply for funding; if so what are the details of those programs.

(2) In respect of each Commonwealth-funded program identified in Part (1), how many (a) community organisations, (b) schools, (c) businesses or (d) individuals received funding in (i) 2001, (ii) 2002, (iii) 2003, (iv) 2004, (v) 2005 and (vi) 2006.

(3) In respect of each Commonwealth-funded program identified in Part (1), (a) what is the name and address of the funding recipient and (b) what sum was allocated in (i) 2001, (ii) 2002, (iii) 2003, (iv) 2004, (v) 2005 and (vi) 2006.

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

Australian Bureau of Statistics
(1) No.
(2) Not applicable.
(3) Not applicable.

Australian Competition & Consumer Commission
(1) The ACCC does not administer any Commonwealth funded programs under which community organisations, schools, businesses or individuals can apply for funding.
(2) Nil
(3) Nil

Australian Office of Financial Management
(1) No
(2) Not applicable
(3) Not applicable

Australian Prudential Regulation Authority
(1) No.
(2) Not applicable.
(3) Not applicable.

Australian Securities and Investments Commission
(1) No.
(2) Not applicable.
(3) Not applicable.

Australian Taxation Office
(1) No.
(2) Not applicable.
(3) Not applicable.
Corporations & Markets Advisory Committee
No
Not applicable
Not applicable

Inspector-General of Taxation
(1) No.
(2) Not applicable.
(3) Not applicable.

National Competition Council
(1) The National Competition Council does not administer any Commonwealth-funded programs.
(2) and (3) Not applicable

Productivity Commission
(1) No.
(2) Not applicable.
(3) Not applicable.

Royal Australian Mint
(1) No.
(2) Not applicable.
(3) Not applicable.

Treasury
(1) The Treasury administers one Commonwealth-funded programme, the HIH Claims Support Scheme, that community organisations, schools, businesses and individuals in the Federal Electorate of Ballarat can apply for funding from. In order to qualify for support from the scheme individuals and not-for-profit organisations must have held an HIH policy at the time of the collapse of the company and have suffered an insurable loss or have been receiving salary continuance or other payments from HIH at that time. Eligibility for assistance is also means tested for some types of claim. Small businesses in Australia may also qualify for claims assistance in some circumstances. The scheme closed to new applicants in February 2004. However late claims may be made in limited circumstances. Approval of a claim is made by an independent assessor against the scheme criteria and the insurance policy of the applicant.
(2) The claims made against the scheme by community organisations, schools, businesses and individuals in the federal electorate of Ballarat cannot readily be determined.
(3) The claims made against the scheme by community organisations, schools, businesses and individuals in the federal electorate of Ballarat cannot readily be determined.

Ballarat Electorate: Programs
(Question No. 4785)

Ms King asked the Minister representing the Minister for Finance and Administration, in writing, on 16 October 2006:
(1) In respect of the federal electorate of Ballarat, does the Minister’s department, or any agency in the Minister’s portfolio, administer any Commonwealth-funded programs under which community organisations, schools, businesses or individuals can apply for funding; if so what are the details of those programs?
(2) In respect of each Commonwealth-funded program identified in Part (1), how many (a) community organisations, (b) schools, (c) businesses or (d) individuals received funding in (i) 2001, (ii) 2002, (iii) 2003, (iv) 2004, (v) 2005 and (vi) 2006?

(3) In respect of each Commonwealth-funded program identified in Part (1), (a) what is the name and address of the funding recipient and (b) what sum was allocated in (i) 2001, (ii) 2002, (iii) 2003, (iv) 2004, (v) 2005 and (vi) 2006

Mr Costello—The Minister for Finance and Administration has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

(1) No.
(2) Not applicable.
(3) Not applicable.

Telstra
(Question No. 4848)

Ms Corcoran asked the Minister representing the Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, in writing, on 31 October 2006:

(1) How did Telstra obtain permission from each of its drivers to install a Global Positioning System (GPS) in each of its cars.

(2) Prior to the installation of the GPS devices, were all Telstra drivers in Western Australia, the Northern Territory and Victoria advised of their right to refuse GPS installation in the cars they drive.

(3) Is the Minister aware that (a) the Australian Institute of Petroleum’s Guidelines for Safe Refuelling specifically state: “Do not use your mobile phone (or any other electronic device)—Turn it off and leave it inside the vehicle”, (b) the GPS devices installed by Telstra use a mobile telephone signal in order to connect with the base and (c) the GPS units cannot be switched off by the vehicle’s driver.

(4) In view of the hazards associated with the operation of electronic devices whilst refuelling, what steps will be taken to ensure the safety of drivers and passengers of Telstra vehicles following the installation of the GPS devices.

(5) In respect of the data obtained by Telstra’s GPS devices: (a) what information will be collected for each vehicle; (b) will it include information about customers; (c) by whom will it be collected and where will it be stored; (d) what safeguards exist to ensure its security; and (e) what policies and safeguards exist to prevent its misuse.

(6) What policies and processes exist to ensure that the drivers of Telstra vehicles are not monitored outside work hours.

Mr McGauran—The Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

Telstra has provided the following information:

(1) Telstra has advised that it has been communicating the benefits of this technology and its overarching strategy to improve customer service with its workforce and unions since April 2006. Follow-up meetings were also held individually with each employee to consult on the initiative. Consent was sought consistent with Telstra’s obligations under relevant legislation, its industrial instruments, and its employees’ contracts of employment.

(2) Telstra has advised that consent from Telstra employees was sought consistent with Telstra’s obligations under relevant legislation, its industrial instruments and its employees’ contracts of employment.
(3) (a) Telstra has advised that the Australian Institute of Petroleum has confirmed that as a GPS unit is fitted inside the vehicle and cannot be removed, there is no risk of static discharge and therefore no potential ignition source.

(b) Yes.

(c) Yes.

(4) Telstra has advised that it is satisfied that it has taken all reasonably practicable steps to ensure that the devices are safe.

(5) (a) Vehicle’s speed, location and braking.

(b) No.

(c) Telstra has advised that it will collect and store vehicle information as part of its vehicle-fleet management. Only Telstra authorised personnel have access to the actual GPS data.

(d) Telstra has advised that GPS data, like all Telstra data, is stored securely in accordance with Telstra’s privacy policies and relevant legislative obligations. Only Telstra authorised personnel have access to the actual GPS data.

(e) Telstra has advised that it takes its privacy obligations very seriously and has extensive policies in accordance with relevant legislative obligations. As with any breach of privacy, employees found misusing the information may be subject to disciplinary action (up to and including dismissal in serious cases).

(6) Telstra has advised that limited monitoring occurs after hours for safety and asset protection reasons only, noting that the device monitors the vehicle’s location only. In any event, in the vast majority of cases Telstra employees do not have out of hours use of vehicles.

Climate Change

(Question No. 4871)

Ms Bird asked the Prime Minister, in writing, on 27 November 2006:

(1) Can he confirm recent media reports that he has asked the Office of National Assessments (ONA) to report on global warming and its security implications; if so, on what date did he request the ONA report.

(2) Will he make the ONA conclusions public; if so, by what method; if not, why not.

(3) Since 2002, how many ONA assessments have analysed and reported on global warming.

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

ONA reports on climate change issues from time to time as part of its standing mandate to assess international issues affecting Australia’s national interests. The contents of ONA reports are – and will remain – confidential.

Child Care

(Question No. 4873)

Ms Plibersek asked the Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, in writing, on 27 November 2006:

(1) In respect of the move to a “uniform system” of quality assurance, which he announced on 18 May 2006, will he provide details of the precise changes affecting the quality assurance indicators and processes for (a) long day care, (b) family day care and (c) outside school hours care; in particular, could he describe (i) the new quality assurance indicators and (ii) whether the indicators will be the same for each service type.

(2) How many National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC) assessors are employed full-time.
QUESTIONS IN WRITING

(3) Of the NCAC assessors who are employed full-time, how many were working full-time prior to 18 May 2006 and how many have been appointed to full-time positions since 18 May 2006.

(4) In respect of each childcare service type, how many (a) accreditation checks and (b) random spot checks have been carried out by NCAC assessors since 1 July 2006.

(5) What overlap, if any, exists between any State/Territory childcare licensing requirements and the Commonwealth accreditation requirements, including any NCAC requirements which are the same as, or similar to, any State/Territory government requirements.

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

Development of the new Child Care Quality Assurance (CCQA) system is not complete and my department is consulting with the sector on changes to the quality assurance indicators. However, it is intended that the current three different sets of indicators for long day care, family day care and outside school hours care will be replaced with a primary set of indicators that can be applied to all service types.

The NCAC is transitioning from a system of using peer validators to one of employing validators as members of NCAC staff. As at 1 April 2007, the NCAC had employed 36 staff validators. The process of recruitment is continuing and the NCAC will progressively phase out the use of peer validators once the pool of staff validators has reached a sustainable level. While NCAC continues to recruit staff validators, there are approximately 279 peer validators that continue to conduct unannounced Validation Visits on behalf of NCAC.

The 36 staff validators employed by the NCAC were contracted as staff validators after 18 May 2006. For the period 1 July 2006 to 31 March 2007 there have been 1,397 validation visits for long day care centres, 1,067 for outside school hours care services and 88 for family day care services.

Quality Assurance Spot Checks commenced in November 2006 with all accredited child care services being notified that they should expect a QA Spot Check at any time. The NCAC is currently training validators on Spot Check procedures and is in the process of amending the NCAC database to enable full implementation of the Spot Check process and will be accelerating its program of Spot Checks in 2007. Around 100-200 Spot Checks will be undertaken per month.

One of the objectives of the new CCQA system is to minimise any regulatory burden on the child care sector that does not contribute to efforts to provide safe, quality care. Not all states and territories have licensing regulations for all types of child care services, but where regulations are in place they may overlap with the CCQA standards. The Australian Government is currently reviewing, in consultation with state and territory governments, whether any of these overlaps constitutes duplication and this will be taken into account in the development of the new CCQA system.

Indigenous Affairs: Child Care

(Question No. 4874)

Ms Plibersek asked the Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, in writing, on 27 November 2006:

(1) When did he receive the report, written by Professor Saggers, titled Towards an Indigenous Child-Care Plan.

(2) Can he supply me with a copy of the report; if not, why not.

(3) Do indigenous parents receive any special assistance in accessing, or paying for, childcare in addition to the financial subsidies available to non-indigenous families and communities.

(4) Does the Government provide any funding to assist in the establishment of childcare or early childhood centres for indigenous children, if so, what are the details.

QUESTIONS IN WRITING
(5) What proportion of indigenous children use approved childcare services (a) one to five days each week and (b) at least once each fortnight.

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

The department received a draft report from Professor Saggers in June 2006. The contract with Edith Cowan University was terminated because the contents failed to meet the terms and conditions of the contract. As such, the report was never finalised. It would not be appropriate to release any aspect of incomplete work.

Child care services receiving Australian Government funding are required to adhere to the Priority of Access Guidelines when there is a shortage of places to be allocated. There are three categories and within each Indigenous children are given priority. Further details about payments and Indigenous focused programs and services can be found on the FaCSIA website at www.facsia.gov.au.

A number of programs run by FaCSIA support a range of Indigenous focused services. Some of these programs include Multifunctional Aboriginal Children’s Services (MAC), programs under the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy, Indigenous JET crèches and Intensive Support Playgroups. Further details about these programs are on the FaCSIA website at www.facsia.gov.au.

The 2004 Australian Government Census of Child Care Services shows that there were 11,971 Indigenous children were attending Australian Government supported child care services in 2004. Further information can be found in the publication FACS, 2004 Australian Government Census of Child Care Services on the FaCSIA website. Data about the number of days Indigenous children spend in approved child care services is not collected.

Foreign Fishing Vessels

(Question No. 4879)

Mr Bevis asked the Minister representing the Minister for Justice and Customs, in writing, on 27 November 2006:

In respect of the Ministers’ joint announcement on 9 May 2006 that $14 million has been allocated in the current budget to fund the use of civilian charter vessels to tow apprehended illegal foreign fishing vessels to shore:

(a) for each month of this financial year, (i) what costs have been incurred under this scheme, (ii) what payments have been made to owners of civilian charter vessels for towing apprehended foreign fishing vessels to shore, and (iii) on how many occasions has a civilian charter vessel been engaged to perform this service;

(b) what is the name of each civilian charter vessel engaged to tow apprehended illegal foreign fishing vessels to shore;

(c) for each civilian charter vessel used, (i) what is its home port, (ii) where did it travel under the charter arrangements and (iii) by whom is it owned; and

(d) for what period of time is the $14 million allocated.

Mr Ruddock—The Minister for Justice and Customs has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

(a) (i) The following costs have been incurred under the scheme as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Costs</th>
<th>Aug 06</th>
<th>Sep 06</th>
<th>Oct 06</th>
<th>Nov 06</th>
<th>Dec 06</th>
<th>Jan 07</th>
<th>Feb 07</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tender</td>
<td>28,948</td>
<td>40,684</td>
<td>43,285</td>
<td>6,673</td>
<td>1,133</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>110,178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>9,450</td>
<td>12,786</td>
<td>9,560</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charter</td>
<td>110,178</td>
<td>110,178</td>
<td>110,178</td>
<td>110,178</td>
<td>110,178</td>
<td>110,178</td>
<td>110,178</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 28,948 40,684 43,285 16,123 13,919 9,560 110,178
An invoice for $110,178 has been received from an owner of a towing charter vessel.

Only one civilian towing vessel has been chartered to date.

The name of the civilian vessel was KFV Heron (Kailis France Vavoon).

The home port for KFV Heron is Darwin.

The vessel travelled to an area approximately 120 nautical miles due north of Elcho Island and returned to Darwin.

The vessel is owned by Newfishing Australia Pty Ltd.

Customs has funding of $14 million ($3.5 million each year over 4 years) for the establishment of the panel of providers and the subsequent carrying out of the services. Deeds of Standing Offer have been issued to the owners or operators of 20 vessels. Vessels will be used and payments made on a “as needs” basis.

It is proposed that Customs will undertake periodic reviews (approximately every 12 months) to ensure that the panel remains operationally effective.

Telephone Service Contracts

Question No. 4907

Mr Georganas asked the Minister representing the Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, in writing, on 27 November 2006:

What actions are being taken, or will be taken, by the Government and/or relevant agencies, to minimise the potential for people to be drawn into mobile telephone service contracts, which make additional and unrelated premium message services and consequent charges possible, without the consumer’s knowledge or explicit consent.

Can the Government ensure that mobile telephone service contracts that are confirmed by text message only, such as those relating to participation in a specific competition, are not transferable or able to be linked to unrelated matters without the knowledge or explicit consent of the customer, and cannot be constructed as permission to send, and charge for, non-related messages, if so, how.

Mr McGauran—The Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

In response to growing community concern, the Government directed the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) to develop service provider rules requiring industry to inform consumers about the financial risks associated with premium rate services and the actions consumers can take to lessen these risks. These service provider rules require the provision of information to consumers of ‘190’ numbers or international premium services, and premium rate mobile services supplied on ‘19’ number ranges and on proprietary networks.

The mobile carriage service providers have also developed the self-regulatory Mobile Premium Services Industry Scheme to provide safeguards for mobile premium services users of numbers with a ‘19’ prefix. The Scheme came into force on 29 October 2006 and requires content providers to provide consumers with information about the costs, terms and conditions of using mobile premium services, including how to unsubscribe from subscription services. Under the Scheme consumers are able to protect themselves by requesting that their provider block access to numbers beginning with 19xx; or choosing a mobile plan that does not include access to 19 numbers.

The Scheme also provides a formal complaints resolution process, through the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman (TIO). The TIO investigates and resolves complaints that consumers have been unable to resolve with their service providers.

Messages which contain a commercial offer, advertisement or promotion are covered by the Spam Act 2003 (the Act). The Act applies to commercial electronic messages sent by email, SMS, mul-
timedia messaging and instant messaging. Under the Act, messages which make a commercial offer may only be sent with the consent of the recipient. These messages must also include accurate information to identify the sender and a facility to allow the recipient to opt-out of future commercial electronic messages. ACMA actively enforces the Act in respect of SMS.

**Members of Parliament: Staff**

*(Question No. 4915)*

Mr Bowen asked the Special Minister of State, in writing, on 27 November 2006:

In respect of his letter of 17 November to all Members and Senators regarding the collective agreement being offered to Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984 employees, and in which he stated that the offer “reflects the outcomes of the consultation process”: (a) was any effort made to consult with Members and Senators about the impact of the proposed changes on the running of their offices; if so, (i) what consultation occurred, (ii) how was it undertaken and (iii) with which Members and Senators; (b) is he aware that a large number of Members and Senators are concerned about the potential impact of the proposed agreement upon staff and on the running of their offices; and (c) will he withdraw the offer and consult with members and Senators about this change to the administration of their offices.

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

(a) Senators and Members had an opportunity to contribute to the consultation process for the new Collective Agreement. On 3 November 2005, my predecessor, Senator the Hon Eric Abetz, in Circular 2005/33, advised all Senators and Members that the Members of Parliament Staff (Commonwealth) Certified Agreement 2003-2006 would reach its nominal expiry date on 20 August 2006 and that a Staff Representative Group would again be elected by staff to negotiate a new agreement on behalf of their colleagues. Senator Abetz also advised that the consultation process would seek the views and opinions of staff, prioritise issues raised and communicate views and opinions in discussions with the Department of Finance and Administration.

(b) The assertion that a “large number of Members and Senators are concerned about the potential impact of the proposed agreement upon staff and on the running of their offices” is inconsistent with the very small number of representations received from Senators and Members. Any views put forward were taken into account in the final proposals put to the vote of all staff.

(c) I cannot withdraw this offer. A majority of staff covered by the agreement voted for the agreement and received their pay rise on payday 28 December 2006.

**Australian Federation Guard**

*(Question No. 4939)*

Mr Melham asked the Minister for Defence, in writing, on 30 November 2006:

(1) How many Australian Defence Force personnel are presently serving in the Australian Federation Guard.

(2) For each financial year since the Government’s Decision to establish the Australian Federation Guard, what was the cost of the unit’s operations, including capital costs and salaries.

(3) What specific ceremonial duties have been performed by the Australian Federation Guard since its establishment and on what dates at which locations have these duties been performed.

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

(1) Australia’s Federation Guard has an establishment of 159 personnel. There 147 currently serving personnel in Australia’s Federation Guard.
(2) Financial Year | Total expenditure $m | Salaries $m
--- | --- | ---
2005-06 | 8.647 | 7.782
2004-05 | 8.435 | 7.541
2003-04 | 7.675 | 6.520
2002-03* | 1.322 | 0.613

* Australia’s Federation Guard was established in early 2002.

(3) Records detailing the activities undertaken by Australia’s Federation Guard from 2002 to 2005 are not readily available. Details of activities undertaken in 2005, 2006 and 2007 are as follows.

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<td>Commonwealth Park, ACT</td>
<td>Flag Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>29 January 2005</td>
<td>Edinburgh Military Tattoo</td>
<td>Sydney Telstra Stadium, NSW</td>
<td>Guard of Honour and Precision Drill Team</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 February 2005</td>
<td>Credential Guard</td>
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<td>Credential Guard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 February 2005</td>
<td>Commanding General Philippine Army</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 February 2005</td>
<td>Credential Guard</td>
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<td>9 February 2005</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Tri-Service Half Guard Of Honour, Door Orderlies, Army Banner Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 March 2005</td>
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<td>Fairbairn, ACT</td>
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<tr>
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<td>26 May 2005</td>
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<tr>
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<td>15 July 2005</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Canberra Stadium</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
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<td>Governor General of Solomon Islands</td>
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<td>Credential Guard</td>
<td>Government House, ACT</td>
<td>Credential Guard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 March 2007</td>
<td>Army Birthday</td>
<td>Blamey Square, ACT</td>
<td>Army Half Guard, Door Orderlies, Banner Party Precision Drill Team for Clipsal 500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-4 March 2007</td>
<td>Clipsal 500</td>
<td>Adelaide, SA</td>
<td>Precision Drill Team for Clipsal 500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 March 2007</td>
<td>Australian War Memorial Closing Ceremony</td>
<td>Australian War Memorial, ACT</td>
<td>Catalfaque Party and Vigil at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 March 2007</td>
<td>Australian War Memorial Open Day</td>
<td>Australian War Memorial, ACT</td>
<td>Catalfaque Vigil, Precision Drill Team, AFG Routine for Open Day 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 March 2007</td>
<td>Chief of Navy, Spain</td>
<td>Blamey Square, ACT</td>
<td>Navy Half Guard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 March 2007</td>
<td>Chief of Air Force, Canada</td>
<td>Blamey Square, ACT</td>
<td>Air Force Half Guard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-18 March 2007</td>
<td>Australian Grand Prix</td>
<td>Albert Park, Melbourne, VIC</td>
<td>Precision Drill Team for Australian Grand Prix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 March 2007</td>
<td>Colour Party Sydney Harbour Bridge</td>
<td>Sydney Harbour Bridge, NSW</td>
<td>Tri Service Colour Party</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Airport Security**

*(Question No. 4947)*

Mr Bevis asked the Minister for Transport and Regional Services, in writing, on 4 December 2006:

Further to his response to question No. 4286 *(Hansard, 28 November 2006 page 132)*: (a) what audit or verification process has been put in place to ensure compliance with the 100 per cent in-line x-raying of international checked baggage, given that this requirement has been in force since 31 December 2005; (b) on what day it was each Counter Terrorism First Response (CTFR) airport checked for compliance; and (c) did any CTFR airport(s) fail to meet the 100 per cent level, if so which airport(s) and when.

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

(a) International checked baggage screening processes and requirements are included as part of the annual auditing undertaken by the Office of Transport Security.

(b) The Department of Transport and Regional Services worked closely with those CTFR airports with regular international flights to ensure that airports met the 100 per cent in-line x-raying of interna-
tional checked baggage required for open-charter and regular public transport operations from 1 January 2006. The formal auditing that has confirmed the ongoing compliance with these requirements were last undertaken as follows:

Adelaide: 5-8 June 2006
Perth: 13-17 June 2006
Sydney: 22-28 September 2006
Melbourne: 3-13 July 2006
Brisbane: 8-9 November 2006
Cairns: 2 August 2006
Coolangatta: 27 October 2006

Hobart processes only closed charter international flights and are not required to have in-line x-raying of baggage at this time.

Alice Springs and Canberra have infrequent international flights and as per Regulation 4.17 ‘The Methods, Techniques and Equipment to be used for Screening’ they are not required to operate in-line x-raying of baggage. 100 per cent of international baggage is however screened and cleared.

(c) All CTFR airports, that are required to, meet the 100 per cent level.

Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation 2007 Meetings and Events

(Question No. 4989)

Mr Melham asked the Prime Minister, in writing, on 7 December 2006:

What joint working groups, committees, other bodies and fora have been or will be established by the Commonwealth and New South Wales Governments (NSW) to facilitate arrangements for APEC 2007 meetings and events.

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

Four joint committees have been established by the Commonwealth and NSW Government to assist in the facilitation of arrangements for APEC 2007 meetings and events.

• APEC Executive Committee (AEC). This committee is chaired by the Secretary of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and the membership includes the Director General of the New South Wales Premier’s Department and the Commissioner of the New South Wales Police. AEC is the senior governing body for the Taskforce. It oversees the high-level strategic development and implementation of APEC 2007.

• APEC Leaders’ Week Executive Management Committee (AEMC). This committee includes the Head of the APEC 2007 Taskforce and senior officers of the New South Wales Premier’s Department and New South Wales Police.

• AEMC is the senior planning body for the Taskforce for leaders’ week. It is responsible for endorsing all major organisational and logistics planning components for and oversight the implementation of leaders’ week.

• APEC Leaders’ Week Security Operations Group (ASOG)

• ASOG is responsible for the detailed planning and management of the security arrangements associated with the delivery of leaders’ week in Sydney.

• APEC Leaders’ Week Operations Group (AOG)

• AOG is responsible for the planning and management of the non-security aspects of the delivery of leaders’ week in Sydney.
A number of smaller, tightly focussed working groups have also been established by the governance bodies described above. Their work encompasses security and non-security aspects of holding APEC meetings in Sydney.

**Oil for Food Program**

(Question No. 4996)

Mr Kelvin Thomson asked the Prime Minister, in writing, on 7 December 2006:

Does he stand by his statement of 31 January 2006 that:

“There were no alarm bells, there was no suggestion, there was no evidence before us that AWB were paying any bribes. The whole focus in 2002 was preserving Australia’s wheat sales and that is what the Government legitimately did and at no stage did we come across any evidence that there were bribes being paid”.

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

The knowledge of the government, including myself and other ministers, of AWB’s activities in relation to the United Nations Oil-for-Food Programme has been comprehensively addressed by Commissioner Cole in his report.

**Oil for Food Program**

(Question No. 4998)

Mr Kelvin Thomson asked the Prime Minister, in writing, on 7 December 2006:

How is Washington State Senator Patty Murray’s 2003 statement urging the Bush Administration to investigate the payment of bribes by AWB to Saddam Hussein’s government, which stressed that “US taxpayers have a right to ask if Australia acted improperly in close cooperation with the former government of Saddam Hussein to manipulate wheat sales” consistent with the Prime Minister’s statement that “There were no alarm bells, there was no suggestion, there was no evidence before us that AWB were paying any bribes”.

Mr Howard—I am advised that the answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

Senator Murray’s statement was issued five months after the United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 1483, which provided for the termination of the Oil-for-Food Programme (‘the programme’). By this time the Coalition Provisional Authority had assumed partial responsibility for the administration of the programme and had gained extensive access to Iraqi government files and documents. The knowledge of the government, including myself and other ministers, of AWB’s activities in relation to the United Nations Oil-for-Food Programme has been comprehensively addressed by Commissioner Cole in his report.

**Treasury: Graduate Program**

(Question No. 5016)

Mr Kelvin Thomson asked the Treasurer, in writing, on 7 December 2006:

1. For 2006, what was the estimated cost to the Minister’s department and agencies of the Graduate Program, including (a) recruitment, (b) program, (c) travel, (d) external training and (e) internal administrative costs.

2. At 6 December 2006, what was the retention rate for the department’s 2005 Graduate Program intake.

3. In 2006, how many Departmental Liaison Officers did the Minister’s department and agencies provide to the officers of Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries.
Mr Costello—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

Australian Bureau of Statistics
(1) For 2006, the estimated cost of the Graduate Program was $559,072.76:
   (a) recruitment costs of $111,944.70
   (b) program costs of $78,482.81
   (c) travel costs of $64,072
   (d) external training costs of $14,584.55
   (e) internal administrative costs of $289,988.70.
   All costs are GST exclusive.
(2) As of 6 December 2006, the retention rate for the ABS’ 2005 Graduate Program intake was 76.5%.
(3) A list of Departmental Liaison Officers is routinely provided by the department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet at Senate Estimates Hearings.

Australian Competition & Consumer Commission
(1) For 2006, the estimated cost of the Graduate Program was $765,651:
   (a) recruitment costs of $46,673
   (b) program costs of $0 – We have defined program costs as the cost of an external service provider administering the program.
   (c) travel costs of $455,690 – Travel includes accommodation cost.
   (d) external training costs of $90,114
   (e) internal administrative costs of $173,174
   All costs are GST exclusive.
(2) As at 6 December 2006, the retention rate for the ACCC’s 2005 Graduate Program intake is 100 percent.
(3) A list of Departmental Liaison Officers is routinely provided by the department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet at Senate Estimates Hearings.

Australian Office of Financial Management
(1) (a) recruitment costs of $33,475.00.
   (b) program costs of $6,084.00.
   (c) travel costs of Nil.
   (d) external training costs of $12,442.00.
   (e) internal administrative costs of $2,102.00
   All figures provided are GST inclusive.
(2) 0%.
(3) A list of Departmental Liaison Officers is routinely provided by the department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet at Senate Estimates Hearings.

Australian Prudential Regulation Authority
(1) The total estimated costs incurred for 2006 was $200,000.
   (a) $95,000 (includes relocation for interstate graduates).
   (b) $25,000 (includes costs incurred from induction program, rotation component of graduate program, presentations).
(c) $15,000.
(d) $45,000.
(e) $20,000.
Please note all figures are GST inclusive.

(2) 88%
(3) A list of Departmental Liaison Officers is routinely provided by the department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet at Senate Estimates Hearings.

**Australian Securities and Investments Commission**

(1) (a) Recruitment, $7,840.00.
(b) Program, $40,000.00.
(c) Travel, $1,000.00.
(d) External training, $19,128.00 (excluding internal induction and development programs).
(e) Internal administrative costs, $65,917.00.
All figures provided are GST exclusive.

(2) At 6 December 2006, the retention rate for the ASIC’s 2005 Graduate Program intake was 82%.
(3) A list of Departmental Liaison Officers is routinely provided by the department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet at Senate Estimates Hearings.

**Australian Taxation Office**

(1) The estimated cost to the Tax Office in administering the graduate program for the period January 2006 to December 2006 is provided below.
(a) Recruitment $90,279.00.
(b) Program $11,957,567.00.
(c) Travel $16,560.00.
(d) External training $103,614.00.
(e) Internal administrative costs $1,700,250.00.
Please note figures are GST exclusive.

(2) The graduate program retention rate for 2005 intake up to 6 December is 89.4%.
(3) A list of Departmental Liaison Officers is routinely provided by the department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet at Senate Estimates Hearings.

**Corporations & Markets Advisory Committee**

(1) CAMAC does not have a graduate program.
(2) Not applicable.
(3) A list of Departmental Liaison Officers is routinely provided by the department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet at Senate Estimates Hearings.

**Inspector-General of Taxation**

(1) The IGT does not have a graduate program.
(2) Not applicable.
(3) A list of Departmental Liaison Officers is routinely provided by the department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet at Senate Estimates Hearings.
National Competition Council
(1) The National Competition Council does not have a Graduate Recruitment Program.
(2) Not applicable.
(3) A list of Departmental Liaison Officers is routinely provided by the department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet at Senate Estimates Hearings.

Productivity Commission
(1) The estimated cost excluding GST in 2006 for:
   (a) Recruitment $34,139
   (b) Program $521.
   (c) Travel $25,567.
   (d) External training Nil.
   (e) Internal administrative costs $12,164
(2) 80% (Of the five recruited four remain with one accepting a transfer to another APS agency).
(3) A list of Departmental Liaison Officers is routinely provided by the department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet at Senate Estimates Hearings.

Royal Australian Mint
(1) No cost. The Royal Australian Mint does not have a Graduate Program.
(2) Not applicable.
(3) A list of Departmental Liaison Officers is routinely provided by the department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet at Senate Estimates Hearings.

Treasury
(1) The estimated cost including GST in 2006 for:
   (a) recruitment, which includes travel, interview and panel costs and promotional activities is $167,180,
   (b) program, (including external training) is $74,038, and
   (e) Internal administration, including security clearance, health assessment costs and graduate teams costs, is $249,490.
(2) The retention rate for the department’s 2005 Graduate intake at 6 December 2006 was 82 per cent.
(3) A list of Departmental Liaison Officers is routinely provided by the department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet at Senate Estimates Hearings.

Australian Public Service Program Review
(Question No. 5033)

Mr Kelvin Thomson asked the Minister representing the Minister for Finance and Administration, in writing, on 7 December 2006:
Has there been any change to the method, terms of reference or administration of Australian Public Service Program Review in 2006; if so, what are those details.

Mr Costello—The Minister for Finance and Administration has supplied the following answer to the honourable member’s question:
There were no changes to the method, terms of reference or administration of reporting of programmes across Government departments and agencies in 2006.
Heritage Preservation  
(Question No. 5034)

Mr Kelvin Thomson asked the Minister for the Environment and Water Resources, in writing, on 7 December 2006:

(1) Is the Minister aware of the Productivity Commission report titled Conservation of Australia’s Historic Heritage Places; if so, does the Minister support each of its recommendations; if not, which recommendations does the Minister support and why.

(2) What steps has the Minister taken to implement each of the recommendations.

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

(1) I am aware of the report and as the Minister for the Environment and Water Resources, I have responsibility for developing the Australian Government response. The Government response will address each of the Productivity Commission’s recommendations. I am not in a position to indicate which recommendations the Government supports until the response has been finalised.

(2) I will take steps to implement those recommendations supported by the Government as soon as practical after the Government’s response is announced.

Industry, Tourism and Resources: Telephone Costs  
(Question No. 5085)

Mr Kelvin Thomson asked the Minister for Industry, Tourism and Resources, in writing, on 7 December 2006:

For each financial year from 1 July 2004, what was the total cost to the Minister’s department of all (a) landline and (b) mobile telephone calls.

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

(a) Landline calls:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>$716,420.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>$700,409.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>$783,120.98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) Mobile calls:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>$307,457.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>$325,372.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>$246,767.42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry: Telephone Costs  
(Question No. 5088)

Mr Kelvin Thomson asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, in writing, on 7 December 2006:

For each financial year from 1 July 2004, what was the total cost to the Minister’s department of all (a) landline and (b) mobile telephone calls.

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

The total cost of landline and mobile telephone calls for the financial years since 2004 is as follows:
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Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs: Telephone Costs

(Question No. 5089)

Mr Kelvin Thomson asked the Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, in writing, on 7 December 2006:

For each financial year from 1 July 2004, what was the total cost to the Minister’s department of all (a) landline and (b) mobile telephone calls.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2004/05</th>
<th>2005/06</th>
<th>2006/07 YTD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Landline $</td>
<td>3.10M</td>
<td>3.18M</td>
<td>2.25M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile $</td>
<td>0.87M</td>
<td>0.94M</td>
<td>0.78M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures provided are inclusive of GST. OIPC data has been included from May 2006 following machinery of government changes. Figures are for telephone call costs, however there will be a proportion of line rental costs included in the mobile phone figures as the billing structure does not allow these line rental costs to be easily divorced from the call costs. The landline costs do not include line rental.

Prime Minister and Cabinet: Trespass

(Question No. 5112)

Mr Kelvin Thomson asked the Prime Minister, in writing, on 7 December 2006:

For each financial year from 1 July 2004, how many instances of trespass have been recorded by the Minister’s department, and for each instance of trespass, (a) what type of trespass occurred, (b) what action was taken against the offender and (c) what action was taken to prevent a future occurrence.

Mr Howard—I am advised that the answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

None.

(a) Not applicable.
(b) Not applicable.
(c) Not applicable.

Treasury: Trespass

(Question No. 5114)

Mr Kelvin Thomson asked the Treasurer, in writing, on 7 December 2006:

For each financial year from 1 July 2004, how many instances of trespass have been recorded by the Minister’s department, and for each instance of trespass, (a) what type of trespass occurred, (b) what action was taken against the offender and (c) what action was taken to prevent a future occurrence.

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

The department has no recorded instances of trespass for each financial year from 1 July 2004.

QUESTIONS IN WRITING
Foreign Affairs and Trade: Trespass
(Question Nos 5115 and 5117)

Mr Kelvin Thomson asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Trade, in writing, on 7 December 2006:

For each financial year from 1 July 2004, how many instances of trespass have been recorded by the Minister’s department, and for each instance of trespass, (a) what type of trespass occurred, (b) what action was taken against the offender and (c) what action was taken to prevent a future occurrence.

Mr Downer—On behalf of the Minister for Trade and myself, the answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

Since 1 July 2004 there have been two incidents of trespass recorded at the RG Casey Building.

Incident on 15 September 2005:
(a) After hours burglary in the Currawong Child Care Centre.
(b) The burglary was reported to ACT police, the offender could not be identified and therefore no action could be taken against them.
(c) Extra security cameras were installed and patrol procedures strengthened.

Incident on 15 August 2006:
(a) Emergency door release activated from centre level 1 to south level 1 access, raised an alarm at the security desk.
(b) The offender was apprehended and reported to ACT police.
(c) Improved testing of the access control and emergency door release alarm systems has been implemented.

There have been no recorded incidents of trespass at State Offices. To provide the detailed information sought for overseas posts would entail a significant diversion of resources and, in these circumstances, I do not consider the additional work can be justified.

Attorney-General’s: Trespass
(Question No. 5119)

Mr Kelvin Thomson asked the Attorney-General, in writing, on 7 December 2006:

For each financial year from 1 July 2004, how many instances of trespass have been recorded by the Minister’s department, and for each instance of trespass, (a) what type of trespass occurred, (b) what action was taken against the offender and (c) what action was taken to prevent a future occurrence.

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

There have been no instances of trespass recorded for each financial year from 1 July 2004.

Industry, Tourism and Resources: Trespass
(Question No. 5123)

Mr Kelvin Thomson asked the Minister for Industry, Tourism and Resources, in writing, on 6 December 2006:

For each financial year from 1 July 2004, how many instances of trespass have been recorded by the Minister’s department, and for each instance of trespass, (a) what type of trespass occurred, (b) what action was taken against the offender and (c) what action was taken to prevent a future occurrence.
Mr Ian Macfarlane—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

**2004-05** - Five instances of trespass occurred.

5 September 2004
(a) Break and entry into 4th floor of 40 Allara Street – loose change, cigarettes and a compact disk were stolen.
(b) Offender unknown.
(c) Incident Report filed.

21 December 2004
(a) Break and entry into 4th floor of 40 Allara Street – money, Government laptop, compact disks were stolen.
(b) Offender unknown.
(c) After-hours access tightened.

5 - 6 March 2005
(a) Unauthorised access obtained to Level 4 of 40 Allara Street – a Government travel card and charity money stolen.
(b) Offender unknown.
(c) Guard patrols increased.

12 - 13 March 2005
(a) Unauthorised access obtained to Level 4 of 40 Allara Street – draws vandalised and money and Dell notebook stolen.
(b) Offender unknown.
(c) Two additional CCTV cameras installed to protect premises.

12 April 2005
(a) Backpack stolen from the SA/NT State Office, Level 11, 178 North Terrace, Adelaide.
(b) Intruder unknown.
(c) Access to premises unknown.

**2005-06** - Three instances of trespass occurred.

22 July 2005
(a) An irrational man who appeared intoxicated was found on level 5 during business hours.
(b) Intruder left.
(c) Incident Report submitted – no further action taken.

14 October 2005
(a) Unknown person seen on Level 7 of 20 Allara Street by guard on CCTV.
(b) Intruder unknown.
(c) Incident Report submitted.

31 January 2006
(a) Intruder in basement change room of 33 Allara Street – Government mobile, wallet, cash and sun glasses stolen (bike bag and car keys recovered).
(b) Offender not identified.
(c) Change room combination changed. Staff advised to secure lockers at all times.

QUESTIONS IN WRITING
Two instances of trespass occurred.

7 July 2006

(a) Intruder entered via level 4 foyer and sought to enter various floors of 20 Allara Street – cleaner’s house and car keys stolen.

(b) Intruder unknown.

(c) Incident logged. No action taken as the Department was about to move into a new building.

14 February 2007

(a) Intruder found in internal female toilets on Level 4 of 20 Allara Street.

(b) Intruder not identified.

(c) New electronic security brought on line.

Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs: Trespass
(Question No. 5127)

Mr Kelvin Thomson asked the Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, in writing, on 7 December 2006:

For each financial year from 1 July 2004, how many instances of trespass have been recorded by the Minister’s department, and for each instance of trespass, (a) what type of trespass occurred, (b) what action was taken against the offender and (c) what action was taken to prevent a future occurrence.

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

Since 1 July 2004 there have been six reported instances of trespass on FaCSIA premises (organisational entity as per Administrative Arrangements Orders for the relevant period). Three occurred in 2004/05, one in 2005/06 and two in 2006/07 (as at the end of February 2007). In each case the offender/s were not apprehended.

A Protective Security Risk Review was undertaken in response to each of the incidents. Each review made recommendations to minimise the risk of a future occurrence.

Education, Science and Training: Trespass
(Question No. 5128)

Mr Kelvin Thomson asked the Minister for Education, Science and Training, in writing, on 7 December 2006:

For each financial year from 1 July 2004, how many instances of trespass have been recorded by the Minister’s department, and for each instance of trespass, (a) what type of trespass occurred, (b) what action was taken against the offender and (c) what action was taken to prevent a future occurrence.

Ms Julie Bishop—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

Financial year 2004-05:

(a) on 14 February 2005 an unauthorised person attempted to enter a DEST building during business hours.

(b) the person was challenged and prevented from entering past the foyer by the security guard on duty. The unauthorised person refused to leave and assaulted the security guard. Police were then called to attend. The unauthorised person left the premises before police arrived.

(c) no additional action taken.

Financial year 2005-06:

(a) on 9 May 2006, three unauthorised persons attempted to gain entry to a DEST building after normal business hours by entering through entry doors as staff members were exiting the building.
(b) the persons were challenged and questioned by a staff member and were asked to leave. The unauthorised persons complied with this request to leave.

(c) no additional action taken.

**Financial year 2006-07:**

(a) on 9 January 2007 two persons entered the reception area of DEST premises during business hours and refused to leave.

(b) the reception area to the main DEST premises was secured and they were ordered to leave by an Authorised Officer under the Public Order (Protection of Persons and Property) Act 1971. When the persons remained on the premises, the police were called and the persons were escorted from the premises.

(c) the office staff maintained security between the reception and the remainder of DEST premises for the remainder of the day.

(a) on 10 January 2007, one of the two persons returned during business hours and refused to leave DEST premises.

(b) the person was ordered to leave by an Authorised Officer under the Public Order (Protection of Persons and Property) Act 1971. When he remained on the premises, Police were called and he was escorted from the premises.

(c) the reception area security roller shutter was closed, allowing business to continue, but securing the reception area, for the following week.

**Communications, Information Technology and the Arts: Departmental Property**

(Question No. 5139)

Mr Kelvin Thomson asked the Minister representing the Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, in writing, on 7 December 2006:

(1) For each financial year from 1 July 2004, what was the total cost the Minister’s Department of departmental property reported missing.

(2) For the financial year 2005-06, what items of property were reported missing and what was the cost of each.

Mr McGauran—The Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

(1) The total cost of Departmental property reported missing for each financial year from 1 July 2004:

2004-05: $1,408.
2005-06: $549

(2) For 2005-2006 there were two items reported missing:

Mobile phone (Nokia 3310) - old phone and had no value.
Mobile phone (Nokia 6170) - valued at $549.