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SITTING DAYS—2009

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FORTY-SECOND PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION—SIXTH PERIOD

Governor-General
Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce, Companion of the Order of Australia

House of Representatives Officeholders
Speaker—Mr Harry Alfred Jenkins MP
Deputy Speaker—Ms Anna Elizabeth Burke MP
Second Deputy Speaker—Hon. Bruce Craig Scott MP

Members of the Speaker’s Panel—Hon. Dick Godfrey Harry Adams MP, Hon. Kevin James Andrews MP, Hon. Archibald Ronald Bevis MP, Ms Sharon Leah Bird MP, Mr Steven Georganas MP, Hon. Judith Eleanor Moylan MP, Ms Janelle Anne Saffin MP, Mr Albert John Schultz MP, Mr Patrick Damien Secker MP, Mr Peter Sid Sidebottom MP, Hon. Peter Neil Slipper MP, Mr Kelvin John Thomson MP, Hon. Danna Sue Vale MP and Dr Malcolm James Washer MP

Leader of the House—Hon. Anthony Norman Albanese MP
Deputy Leader of the House—Hon. Stephen Francis Smith MP
Manager of Opposition Business—Hon. Christopher Maurice Pyne MP
Deputy Manager of Opposition Business—Mr Luke Hartsuyker MP

Party Leaders and Whips
Australian Labor Party
Leader—Hon. Kevin Michael Rudd MP
Deputy Leader—Hon. Julia Eileen Gillard MP
Chief Government Whip—Hon. Leo Roger Spurway Price MP
Government Whips—Ms Jill Griffiths Hall MP and Mr Christopher Patrick Hayes MP

Liberal Party of Australia
Leader—Hon. Malcolm Bligh Turnbull MP
Deputy Leader—Hon. Julie Isabel Bishop MP
Chief Opposition Whip—Hon. Alex Somlyay MP
Opposition Whip—Mr Michael Andrew Johnson MP
Deputy Opposition Whip—Ms Nola Bethwyn Marino MP

The Nationals
Leader—Hon. Warren Errol Truss MP
Chief Whip—Mrs Kay Elizabeth Hull MP
Whip—Mr Paul Christopher Neville MP

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

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Members of the House of Representatives

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<td>Windsor, Anthony Harold Curties</td>
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<td>Zappia, Tony</td>
<td>Makin, SA</td>
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PARTY ABBREVIATIONS
ALP—Australian Labor Party; LP—Liberal Party of Australia;
Nats—The Nationals; Ind—Independent

Heads of Parliamentary Departments
Clerk of the Senate—H Evans
Clerk of the House of Representatives—IC Harris AO
Secretary, Department of Parliamentary Services—A Thompson
RUDD MINISTRY

Prime Minister          Hon. Kevin Rudd, MP
Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Education, Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations and Minister for Social Inclusion Hon. Julia Gillard, MP
Treasurer               Hon. Wayne Swan MP
Minister for Immigration and Citizenship and Leader of the Government in the Senate Senator Hon. Chris Evans
Minister for Defence and Vice President of the Executive Council Senator Hon. John Faulkner
Minister for Trade       Hon. Simon Crean MP
Minister for Foreign Affairs and Deputy Leader of the House Hon. Stephen Smith MP
Minister for Health and Ageing Hon. Nicola Roxon MP
Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs Hon. Jenny Macklin MP
Minister for Finance and Deregulation Hon. Lindsay Tanner MP
Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government and Leader of the House Hon. Anthony Albanese MP
Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy and Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate Senator Hon. Stephen Conroy
Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research Senator Hon. Kim Carr
Minister for Climate Change and Water Senator Hon. Penny Wong
Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts Hon. Peter Garrett AM, MP
Attorney-General         Hon. Robert McClelland MP
Cabinet Secretary, Special Minister of State and Manager of Government Business in the Senate Senator Hon. Joe Ludwig
Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Hon. Tony Burke MP
Minister for Resources and Energy and Minister for Tourism Hon. Martin Ferguson AM, MP
Minister for Financial Services, Superannuation and Corporate Law and Minister for Human Services Hon. Chris Bowen, MP

[The above ministers constitute the cabinet]
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<td>Hon. Alan Griffin MP</td>
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<td>Minister for Housing and Minister for the Status of Women</td>
<td>Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP</td>
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<td>Minister for Home Affairs</td>
<td>Hon. Brendan O’Connor MP</td>
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<td>Minister for Indigenous Health, Rural and Regional Health and Services Delivery</td>
<td>Hon. Warren Snowdon MP</td>
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<td>Minister for Small Business, Independent Contractors and the Service Economy, Minister Assisting the Finance Minister on Deregulation and Minister for Competition Policy and Consumer Affairs</td>
<td>Hon. Dr Craig Emerson MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Treasurer</td>
<td>Senator Hon. Nick Sherry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Ageing</td>
<td>Hon. Justine Elliot MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Early Childhood Education, Childcare and Youth and Minister for Sport</td>
<td>Hon. Kate Ellis MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science and Minister Assisting the Minister for Climate Change</td>
<td>Hon. Greg Combet AM, MP</td>
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<td>Minister for Employment Participation and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Government Service Delivery</td>
<td>Senator Hon. Mark Arbib</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government</td>
<td>Hon. Maxine McKew MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Support and Parliamentary Secretary for Water</td>
<td>Hon. Dr Mike Kelly AM, MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary for Western and Northern Australia</td>
<td>Hon. Gary Gray AO, MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Children’s Services and Parliamentary Secretary for Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction</td>
<td>Hon. Bill Shorten MP</td>
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<td>Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance</td>
<td>Hon. Bob McMullan MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary for Pacific Island Affairs</td>
<td>Hon. Duncan Kerr SC, MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and Parliamentary Secretary for Trade</td>
<td>Hon. Anthony Byrne MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary for Social Inclusion and the Voluntary Sector and Parliamentary Secretary Assisting the Prime Minister for Social Inclusion</td>
<td>Senator Hon. Ursula Stephens</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs and Settlement Services</td>
<td>Hon. Laurie Ferguson MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary for Employment</td>
<td>Hon. Jason Clare MP</td>
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<td>Parliamentary Secretary for Health</td>
<td>Hon. Mark Butler MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary for Industry and Innovation</td>
<td>Hon. Richard Marles MP</td>
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</table>
Leader of the Opposition
Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs and Deputy Leader of the Opposition
Shadow Minister for Trade, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government and Leader of The Nationals
Shadow Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy and Leader of the Opposition in the Senate
Shadow Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research and Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate
Shadow Treasurer
Shadow Minister for Education, Apprenticeships and Training and Manager of Opposition Business in the House
Shadow Minister for Infrastructure and COAG and Shadow Minister Assisting the Leader on Emissions Trading Design
Shadow Minister for Finance, Competition Policy and Deregulation
Shadow Minister for Human Services and Deputy Leader of The Nationals
Shadow Minister for Energy and Resources
Shadow Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
Shadow Special Minister of State and Shadow Cabinet Secretary
Shadow Minister for Climate Change, Environment and Water
Shadow Minister for Health and Ageing
Shadow Minister for Defence
Shadow Attorney-General
Shadow Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Shadow Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations
Shadow Minister for Immigration and Citizenship
Shadow Minister for Small Business, Independent Contractors, Tourism and the Arts

[The above constitute the shadow cabinet]
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>The Hon. Chris Pearce MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Treasurer</td>
<td>The Hon. Tony Smith MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Sustainable Development and Cities</td>
<td>The Hon. Bruce Billson MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Competition Policy and Consumer Affairs and Deputy Manager of Opposition Business in the House</td>
<td>Mr Luke Hartsuyker MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Housing and Local Government</td>
<td>Mr Scott Morrison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Ageing</td>
<td>Mrs Margaret May MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Defence Science and Personnel and Assisting Shadow Minister for Defence</td>
<td>The Hon. Bob Baldwin MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Veterans’ Affairs</td>
<td>Mrs Louise Markus MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Early Childhood Education, Childcare, Status of Women and Youth</td>
<td>Mrs Sophie Mirabella MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Justice and Customs</td>
<td>The Hon. Sussan Ley MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Employment Participation, Training and Sport</td>
<td>Dr Andrew Southcott MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Northern Australia</td>
<td>Senator the Hon. Ian Macdonald</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Roads and Transport</td>
<td>Mr Don Randall MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Development</td>
<td>Mr John Forrest MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance and Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Indigenous Affairs</td>
<td>Senator Marise Payne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Energy and Resources</td>
<td>Mr Barry Haase MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities, Carers and the Voluntary Sector</td>
<td>Senator Mitch Fifield</td>
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<td>Mr Mark Coulton MP</td>
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<td>Senator the Hon. Brett Mason</td>
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<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Justice and Public Security</td>
<td>Mr Jason Wood MP</td>
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The SPEAKER (Mr Harry Jenkins) took the chair at 2 pm and read prayers.

CONDOLENCES
Mr Peter Milton

The SPEAKER (2.00 pm)—I inform the House of the death on Saturday, 8 August 2009 of Mr Peter Milton, a member of this House for the division of La Trobe from 1980 to 1990. As a mark of respect to the memory of Peter Milton, I invite honourable members to rise in their places.

Honourable members having stood in their places—

The SPEAKER—I thank the House.

Private Benjamin Ranaudo

Mr Rudd (Griffith—Prime Minister) (2.02 pm)—I move:

That the House record its deep regret at the death on 18 July 2009 of Private Benjamin Ranaudo while serving with the second Mentoring and Reconstruction Task Force in Afghanistan and place on record its appreciation of his service to the country and tender its profound sympathy to his family and friends in their bereavement.

Private Benjamin Ranaudo was a fine young Australian soldier loved and respected by his family, his friends and his colleagues. He was a proud member of the second Mentoring and Reconstruction Task Force. As a member of this team, he was assisting in the development of the 4th Brigade of the Afghan National Army. This important work will enable, in time, the Afghan National Security Forces to assume responsibility for their own nation’s security. As the House knows, their work is critical for the future security of Australia and of Australians. Because our soldiers play an important role in preventing Afghanistan from again becoming used as a safe haven for terrorist groups, this work remains important for the future, and Private Ranaudo lost his life in pursuit of this mission. For this, the nation owes him an everlasting debt of gratitude.

Private Ranaudo—Benny to his mates—was a bright, warm-hearted, dedicated young man full of life and full of vigour who served his country with distinction. He exemplified the attributes of courage, mateship and perseverance that are core to the Anzac spirit. He was well liked and highly respected by his fellow soldiers, who described him fondly as a man who always put his mates first.

Mr Speaker, we regard him here in this place as an Australian hero. Private Ranaudo is the 11th Australian soldier to lose his life on operations in Afghanistan. His sacrifice and the sacrifice of those who have fallen before him will never be forgotten. I want to acknowledge that his fellow soldiers continue their important work today—with distinction—in Afghanistan.

On behalf of the Australian government and all members of this House, I wish to express my heartfelt condolences to Private Ranaudo’s family: to his mother, Jennifer, and his father Angelo; to his stepfather, Terry; to his partner, Haylee; and to his sisters, Amy and Hayley. We also offer our prayers and our support to Private Ranaudo’s extended family, his friends and all his fellow service men and women.

Mr Turnbull (Wentworth—Leader of the Opposition) (2.04 pm)—The opposition joins with the Prime Minister in expressing our profound sadness over the death of Private Benjamin Ranaudo on July 18. A loving family in Ferntree Gully has lost their boy in tragic circumstances in a faraway place and is the 11th defence family to endure this great sorrow since the deployment of Australian forces to Afghanistan. Private Ranaudo was a professional soldier who served with dedication and distinction. He died in the
campaign to ensure terrorist groups can no longer use Afghanistan as a base from which to mount attacks.

There is no greater sacrifice an Australian can make than to give his life in the service of his country. Our hearts go out to his parents and the entire Ranaudo family and the nation shares in their mourning. We were deeply touched to read the tribute to Private Ranaudo from his girlfriend, Haylee McCarthy:

There isn’t second that goes by that you aren’t on my mind bub.

She wrote:

Hasn’t been a day I haven’t cried …

Private Ranaudo was a member of the Townsville based 1st Battalion of the Royal Australian Regiment. He was on operations in southern Afghanistan with the Mentoring and Reconstruction Task Force when an improvised antipersonnel explosive device detonated. The blast left another of our brave soldiers fighting for his life and injured three civilians, including an eight-year-old boy. This tragedy reminds us all of the enormous dangers our forces are facing in Afghanistan every day.

Last month I had the privilege of visiting our Australian troops on the front line in Afghanistan together with our deputy leader, the member for Curtin, and our defence spokesman, Senator David Johnston. We had the chance to meet our troops and thank them personally on behalf of the opposition and all Australians for the wonderful work they are doing in difficult and dangerous conditions. We saw examples of these improvised explosive devices that are taking such a heavy toll on all the allied forces fighting in Afghanistan—one of which, of course, claimed Private Ranaudo’s life.

We were hugely impressed by the professionalism, the bravery and the dedication of the young men and women serving us there. They are doing a magnificent job in our name, under our flag, in the toughest of conditions. As Australians we should be and are immensely proud of the men and women of the ADF—of their service and their sacrifice. They are fighting in defence of liberty, of democracy and of freedom—the values on which our nation was founded and the values on which the new, free nation of Afghanistan is seeking to establish itself. Again, on behalf of the opposition, we extend our heartfelt sympathies and condolences to Private Ranaudo’s family and his loved ones at this extremely difficult time.

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

Honourable members having stood in their places—

Debate (on motion by Mr Albanese) adjourned.

JAKARTA BOMBINGS

Mr Garth McEvoy
Mr Craig Senger
Mr Nathan Verity

Mr RUDD (Griffith—Prime Minister) (2.08 pm)—I move:

That the House expresses its deep regret at the deaths on 17 July 2009 of Mr Nathan Verity of Western Australia, Mr Garth McEvoy of Victoria and Mr Craig Senger of the Australian Capital Territory, and tenders its profound sympathy to the families and friends in their bereavement.

On 17 July, at around 7.40 am Jakarta time, explosions ripped through the lower floors of the JW Marriott and Ritz-Carlton hotels in Jakarta. It has become clear that the explosions were caused by two terrorist suicide bombers. As a result of the explosions, nine people lost their lives, three of them Australians who were active in the Jakarta business community. Mr Nathan Verity, 38, ran his own human resources business in Jakarta;
Mr Garth McEvoy, 55, was a Thiess executive based in Jakarta; and Mr Craig Senger, 36, was an official with the Australian Trade Commission. Another Australian, Mr Scott Mirilles, was injured in the bombings. All were going about their normal business, attending a regular business breakfast meeting at the JW Marriott Hotel. We mourn the loss of each of these Australian lives.

I note that Craig Senger is the first Australian civilian official to be killed in a terrorist attack in the line of duty. Craig was a highly regarded trade commissioner at Austrade. Colleagues have spoken movingly of Craig as a man with an extraordinary spirit; in the words of Tim Harcourt at Austrade, a man who ‘was a joy to the world’; an official who worked tirelessly to build links between Australian businesses and overseas markets; and an Australian who made exceptional contributions to his local community whether he was in Canberra, Sydney, Jakarta, New Delhi, Moscow or Milan. I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Trade for their contributions to the memorial service for Craig that was held in the Great Hall here in Parliament House two weeks ago, and I recognise the presence today in the gallery of Craig’s mother, Joan, his sister, Cate, and his niece, Holly. Their presence brings home to us the full human impact of the events of 17 July and obliges us to recommit to the task of stemming the scourge of terrorism in our own region.

As we grieve for our own citizens, we also remember the devastating impact of the terrorist attack on our friends in Indonesia and those from other nations who were caught up in this violence. The Australian government extends its sympathy and condolences to the people and the government of Indonesia and the people and the governments of New Zealand and the Netherlands, who also lost citizens in these bombings. These terrorist attacks are attacks on us all. We are united in our efforts to counter them. Australia stands shoulder to shoulder with the government of Indonesia in its struggle against those who perpetrate these outrages.

In the days after the bombings, I spoke to President Yudhoyono to extend my personal condolences to the people of Indonesia and to offer all practical assistance in finding and bringing to justice the perpetrators of the bombings. The foreign minister, accompanied by the National Security Adviser and Australia’s Ambassador for Counterterrorism, travelled to Jakarta on 18 July and extended this offer in person to the Indonesian government. Indonesia has had success in recent years in bringing terrorists to justice. We have confidence that they will do so again. The government applauds the work of Indonesian authorities over the past weekend, which has resulted in the arrest of a number of alleged terrorists and the disruption of planned terrorist networks.

I spoke to President Yudhoyono again over the weekend to assure him of our continuing support and to discuss the Indonesian government’s operations of recent days. The President briefed me on the operations and told me that the government of Indonesia is unable to confirm at this stage whether Noordin Top, who is believed to be behind the 17 July attacks in Jakarta as well as a range of other terrorist attacks, was the person killed in the operation in central Java. The Indonesian police operations are ongoing, and it is important that Indonesian authorities are given the opportunity to announce their conclusions in their own time. It is best to await the outcome of these processes. These operations underline the valuable work being undertaken by Indonesia in countering the threat of terrorism, which the Australian government will continue to support at every level. We will further deepen our cooperation with Indonesia on counter-
terrorism to do all that we can to prevent similar attacks from occurring again.

As the House today reflects on the pain and destruction wrought on 17 July in Jakarta against innocent civilians going about their everyday lives, we think of the families of the three Australians who perished on that day. As a nation we stand with them today, and our thoughts and our prayers go out to each of them at this time of extreme and great sadness.

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Leader of the Opposition) (2.13 pm)—The gruesome events in Jakarta on the morning of 17 July were a wake-up call for any of us who had dared to hope or imagine that the threat of global terrorism was on the wane. These despicable attacks on two major hotels in the heart of Indonesia's capital claimed the lives of nine innocent people, including the lives of three of our own countrymen. These atrocities were the work of suicide bombers, almost certainly operating at the direction and behest of extremist ideologues linked to the Jemaah Islamiah movement.

Today, we join with the Prime Minister in extending our heartfelt sympathies to the families of all the victims. In particular, we express our sorrow to the loved ones of businessmen Nathan Verity and Garth McEvoy, and the Austrade official, Craig Senger.

By what twisted ideology could these talented, generous, well-motivated men, much loved by their family, friends and workmates, become the targets for these vicious attacks? They were Australians working in Indonesia to bolster business and people-to-people links between our countries. They were three among the many tens of thousands of Australians who took it upon themselves to travel our region and to build the bridges of commerce and culture so crucial to continuing stability and prosperity here in East Asia.

The appalling agenda of the extremists is of course to sabotage that sense of comity and cooperation in our region, in our world. Their aim is to drive a wedge between peoples of different cultures and faiths. They must not be allowed to believe that they can succeed. In this, I am reminded of the very touching and very brave words of Mr McEvoy's brother, Trent, and I quote:

Garth wouldn't have wanted people to stop working in Indonesia, or for Australians to think the worst of Indonesians because of a senseless act by a small minority.

He would have wanted everyone to continue working with the wonderful people in Indonesia. These bombings were a vicious assault on all of us who cherish the values of free societies. These events should harden our resolve to defeat the scourge of terrorism not only in our own region but across the world. The most vital priority is to do all we can to help the people of Indonesia deal with this menace in their midst.

Indonesia is a new and flourishing democracy, the world's most populous Muslim nation and one of Australia's most important friends and neighbours. Indonesia is also a vital example to the world of the great possibilities for fusion of the Muslim faith with the principles of an open, pluralistic and democratic society. The recent re-election of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono signified an explicit repudiation by a vastly overwhelming majority of the people of Indonesia of those who stand for religious intolerance and violent extremism. Tragically, however, these bombings indicated there remain those unwilling to accept the desire of the Indonesian people for a free, open and tolerant society.

It is paramount to the mutual interests of Australia and Indonesia that we work effectively together. Nowhere has the cooperation been closer than in efforts to wage the strug-
gle against terrorism in our region. Since the 2002 Bali bombings, in which 88 Australians were among more than 200 people to die, the Republic of Indonesia has been as resolute as any nation in the world in the fight to defeat the global network of extremists responsible for these callous and cold-blooded acts of mass murder.

Australia and Indonesia have jointly hosted key regional meetings on counterterrorism, including through the Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation. The attacks on Jakarta’s JW Marriott and Ritz-Carlton hotels are a reminder that the global struggle against terrorism is far from over, that much difficult work remains to be done. Indonesia, Australia and their friends and allies across the Asia-Pacific must remain vigilant and united in their determination to defeat those who would inflict these and other atrocities on innocent people.

In government, the coalition established close and extensive links with democratic Indonesia to ensure the two countries worked hand-in-hand to apprehend and bring to justice those responsible for terrorist acts. The federal opposition will wholeheartedly support the Australian government in providing whatever assistance is necessary to help Indonesia identify, hunt down and deal with those responsible for these latest attacks.

It is also important we work closely with Indonesia in supporting and upholding interfaith dialogue, to ensure that reasonable and compassionate people of all faiths unite in the struggle to rid the world of this poisonous strain of extremism. These terrorist attacks have become a curse of the early 21st century, with the cruel and brutal destruction of life and property in so many cities across the world. We have seen an intolerable loss of innocent life, including more than 100 Australians killed by terrorist action while either travelling or working overseas. We also know that our homeland is not beyond the reach of these extremists and it illustrates why it is imperative that we as Australians do all we can to help defeat the scourge of terrorism in Indonesia, as in Afghanistan, and indeed, wherever these psychopathic murderers seek to disrupt and destroy the values of free societies and to deny so callously the rights of innocent people.

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

Honourable members having stood in their places—

Debate (on motion by Mr Albanese) adjourned.

CONDOLENCES

Mr Edward (Ted) Kenna VC

Mr Rudd (Griffith—Prime Minister) (2.20 pm)—Mr Speaker, on indulgence, I wish to make a statement to the House to express sorrow at the death of Second World War veteran Edward (Ted) Kenna VC, who passed away on 8 July 2009, at the age of 90, in Geelong in Victoria. Ted Kenna was Australia’s last surviving Victoria Cross recipient from the Second World War. The Victoria Cross is Australia’s highest award for acts of bravery in wartime. Over one million Australians have served in wartime but only 97 have been recognised with this extraordinary honour. Ted Kenna was one of them. The courage he showed at war was the stuff of legend.

On 15 May, 1945, while posted to the 2nd/4th Battalion, Private Kenna’s company was given the task of clearing enemy troops from the Wirui Mission near Wewak in New Guinea. This was not an easy task. The Japanese army held strongly fortified positions on higher ground. As the Australians approached they were met with heavy machine gun fire. Many were wounded. The Austra-
lians could not close on the enemy positions, so Private Kenna stood up in full view of the enemy to get a better shot and fired until he was out of ammunition. The enemy were only metres away and their bullets, according to Kenna’s citation, passed between his arms and his body. Private Kenna then called for a 303 rifle and, still in full view and in an even greater danger, cleared the enemy gun position. Private Kenna’s extraordinary bravery made it possible for his company’s attack to succeed. Private Kenna’s Victoria Cross citation spoke of his magnificent courage and complete disregard for his own safety.

Three weeks after his action, Private Kenna was shot in the mouth. He spent months recovering in the Heidelberg repat hospital in Melbourne. It was there that he met nursing sister Marjorie Rushberry, whom he married in 1947—a story we have heard many times repeated in Australia’s engagements in war.

Ted Kenna was a genuine Australian hero. He was modest about his award. He said, as he spoke of the mates he had served alongside, ‘The boys of the time—it belongs as much to them as it does to me.’ Today we recall the modest man who made an outstanding contribution to his nation, our nation, Australia. We honour Ted Kenna’s service not only to his company that day in New Guinea but to all Australians in exemplifying the Australian values of courage, resilience and compassion.

I would like to extend my sympathies and that of the government and the House to his family. I wish to express my heartfelt condolences to Marjorie, to their sons, Alan and Robert, and to their daughters, Marlene and the late Annette.

Mr Turnbull (Wentworth—Leader of the Opposition) (2.23 pm)—The passing of Ted Kenna at the age of 90 marks the end of an era in Australia’s military history. As a nation we mourn the death and we honour the memory of the last of our Victoria Cross winners from World War II. Ted Kenna’s actions in the New Guinea campaign epitomised the Anzac spirit. He was among that great generation of Australians who fought to defend our freedoms in Europe, in the Middle East, in Asia and on our own doorstep here in the Pacific. Ted Kenna was certainly one of the bravest of the brave.

He was born in Victoria on 6 July 1919. He enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force in August 1940 and served in the 23rd/21st Battalion. In June 1943 his unit was disbanded and he was assigned to the 2nd/4th Battalion and embarked for New Guinea in October 1944. His courage in the face of great personal danger at Wewak on 15 May 1945 must never be forgotten. There is no greater act of courage than to risk your own life to save the lives of your mates. The Victoria Cross is awarded only for conspicuous bravery, and I quote, ‘a daring act of valour or self-sacrifice or extreme devotion to duty in the presence of the enemy’. Even by that lofty measure, Ted Kenna’s actions on that famous day represented valour of epic proportions.

Let me refer briefly to the citation:

On his own initiative and without orders Private Kenna immediately stood up in full view of the enemy less than fifty yards away and engaged the bunker, firing his Bren gun from the hip. The enemy machine gun immediately returned Private Kenna’s fire and with such accuracy that bullets actually passed between his arms and his body. Undeterred, he remained completely exposed and continued to fire at the enemy until his magazine was exhausted. Still making a target of himself, Private Kenna discarded his Bren gun and called for a rifle. Despite the intense machine gun fire, he seized the rifle and, with amazing coolness, killed the gunner with his first round.

A second automatic opened fire on Private Kenna from a different position and another of the enemy immediately tried to move into position...
behind the first machine gun, but Private Kenna remained standing and killed him with his next round.

Mates of Ted Kenna swear that as he stood there in full view of the enemy they watched bullets go straight through his shirt. Risking death in every one of those terrifying moments, this young man, known to his closest mates as Ned, literally stood up for his country.

On behalf of the opposition and together with the Prime Minister, I had the honour to attend the state funeral for Ted Kenna at St Patrick’s Cathedral in Melbourne. It was an occasion of great solemnity, but was also a warm and loving celebration of the life of a great Australian. It was an opportunity to salute one last time Ted Kenna’s courage and commitment to his fellow soldiers, and to salute the character and qualities demonstrated throughout his life by this humble man from western Victoria.

At his state funeral, we heard from his sons, daughters and grandchildren of the valuable lessons bequeathed to them. Despite being one of the most decorated war heroes in our history, Ted Kenna was never seduced by fame. After the war he returned to his home town of Hamilton. He was intensely competitive in all things, including as a local footy legend even into his 40s. He demonstrated in his own life the value of staying true to oneself. As one of his boys, Robert, told us ‘Kenna VC was no shrinking violet’—but VCs are not by their nature shrinking violets. And yet, he remained utterly unpretentious and authentic in the way of so many of the sons and daughters of rural and regional Australia. He was not given to airs and graces or to making a fuss of himself. He was a proud man, yet never boastful. With his wife, Marge—the nurse who had tended his war wounds back at the repat hospital in Melbourne—he also maintained throughout his life the centrality of a loving family. For all of these reasons, the heroism of Kenna VC to friends and family and to his mates from the military extended far beyond that amazing act of courage at Wewak. We express our condolences to Marge and to the whole Kenna family. The nation shares in their sorrow.

As much as this House mourns the passing of this great Australian, the death of Ted Kenna is also a time to reflect on the contributions of the surviving World War II veterans, who gave their all or put all at risk in the protection of our country. This is particularly so as we look forward to this Saturday’s commemoration of victory in the Pacific and remember all those who sacrificed so much to defend and protect this country in its darkest and most desperate days. The coalition remains committed to ensuring our World War II veterans receive the care and support to which they are entitled, in recognition of the debt owed to them by all of us Australians.

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

Honourable members having stood in their places—

Debate (on motion by Mr Albanese) adjourned.

MAIN COMMITTEE

Condonce: Private Benjamin Ranaudo
Reference

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler—Leader of the House) (2.29 pm)—I move:

That the order of the day relating to the resumption of the debate on the Prime Minister’s motion of condolence in connection with the death of Private Benjamin Ranaudo be referred to the Main Committee.

Question agreed to.
Jakarta Bombings
Reference

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler—Leader of the House) (2.29 pm)—I move:

That the order of the day relating to the resumption of the debate on the Prime Minister’s motion of condolence in connection with the Jakarta bombings be referred to the Main Committee.

Question agreed to.

Private Edward (Ted) Kenna VC
Reference

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler—Leader of the House) (2.29 pm)—I move:

That the order of the day relating to further statements on indulgence relating to the death of Edward (Ted) Kenna VC be referred to the Main Committee.

Question agreed to.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Emissions Trading Scheme

Mr TURNBULL (2.30 pm)—My question is addressed to the Prime Minister, and I refer the Prime Minister to the Frontier Economics report released yesterday. Frontier’s analysis shows that, under the government’s proposed emissions trading scheme, typical household electricity prices will cost up to $240 more per year than under Frontier’s proposed arrangements. Prime Minister, why do Australian households have to pay higher electricity costs because of the government’s unwillingness to consider greener, cheaper and smarter alternatives to its flawed emissions trading scheme?

Mr RUDD—On the impact of electricity prices flowing from the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme, I would draw the opposition’s attention to the government’s white paper of the end of last year and also to the provisions contained within it for compensation for lower income households when it comes to the impact of higher electricity prices for households. It follows quite plainly that, if you adjust the carbon price in a country, it flows through to the general economy. That is why the government’s response to this through the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme deals with the need to bring down greenhouse gas emissions in Australia. That is the first principle. The second principle is to provide adjustment arrangements for industry, who are most likely to be directly affected by this change in the carbon price. The third principle is a set of arrangements detailed in the government’s arrangements for providing assistance to households—in particular, pensioners, carers, seniors and other low-income households—as well as support for middle-income households and for motorists.

The question that the honourable member poses is: how do we deal with the impact on electricity prices for Australian households? The honourable member has also referred to a publication, which was apparently released yesterday, which goes to what might or might not currently constitute the opposition’s policy on climate change. When asked yesterday whether in fact the release of this document represented coalition policy, the Leader of the Opposition said no, it did not. Therefore we are left in the position—in this critical week when the Senate is due to vote on the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme, Australia’s response to the challenge of climate change—where the opposition, as of Tuesday of this week, two days before the vote is due in the Senate, has produced a document which it then, on the next breath, says is not coalition policy.

For 12 years those opposite stood in this place and did nothing when it came to emissions trading.

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr RUDD—There are interjections from those opposite that that is an incorrect claim
on my part. Perhaps someone could direct me as to where the emissions trading scheme is. Perhaps we have lost it somewhere. Perhaps it is simply in someone’s top drawer. Perhaps it is out there and no-one has yet discovered it. For 12 years there was no action from those opposite on climate change through the introduction of an emissions trading scheme.

The second point is that prior to the last election the opposition put their hand on their heart and said they would introduce an emissions trading scheme. That was their promise, and they said it would be a cap-and-trade scheme. Suddenly, we have produced yesterday something which is not a cap-and-trade scheme. That I find remarkable of itself. There has not only been a 12-year inaction record as far as the introduction of an ETS. Secondly, they promised to introduce a cap-and-trade scheme, yet yesterday they put out a document—a policy document which is not their policy—which says they are no longer going to have a cap-and-trade scheme.

Having got through the last election, we have identified seven sets of different reasons those opposite have put forward for not having a policy on an emissions trading scheme. And it goes on and on and on. Yet we get to today and, in the week that the parliament is required to vote on the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme—despite 12 years of inaction, despite seven sets of excuses as to why they needed one document or another to be publicly produced to have the basis for putting out their own policy on an emissions trading scheme—we have nothing.

The Leader of the Opposition poses a question about what I will not say is his ‘alternative proposal’, because it is a nonproposal. It is a nonpolicy, but he has nonetheless made reference to it. What is its core proposition? Its core proposition is along these lines: that you can increase your emissions target while requiring the electricity and emissions-intensive sectors of the economy to do less. These together represent some 56 per cent of total emissions in the Australian economy, so he says that on the one hand you can increase Australia’s emissions targets while requiring these two critical sectors of the Australian economy, representing 56 per cent of total emissions, to do less. That is the first proposition.

The second proposition is on the cost of the regime. That is that they will produce a scheme based on this model—perhaps, depending on what the policy ultimately is—which will actually cost less than a carbon pollution reduction scheme, and they say it will cost less than a carbon pollution reduction scheme despite the fact that they are going to provide more by way of financial assistance to the emissions-intensive trade-exposed sector and more by way of financial assistance to the coal industry as well. So it will cost less while paying more. This does not represent a policy on climate change.

This is the Liberal Party’s magic pudding—that is, you can actually claim to increase your targets while requiring the key sectors in the economy generating emissions to do less and saying at the same time that you can produce a system which will cost less while providing more direct financial assistance to two of the directly affected and most important sectors of the economy.

This is an absolute rolled gold, unreconstructed Liberal Party magic pudding from central casting. The reason why we do not have a policy, of course, is transparent. That is because there is no unity behind policy on their part, as far as the Liberal Party and the National Party are concerned. What we have had, therefore, is not an exercise in policy for the long term. It is an exercise in short-term politics aimed at one single objective: to paper over the enormous divide which exists
between the Liberal Party and the National Party within the coalition on an alternative approach to carbon pollution reduction.

The government’s policy is clear. We have a white paper. We have legislation. It is in the Senate. It is waiting for a vote. Those opposite have run out of excuses. The national interest demands that you come clean and put forward your policy once and for all.

National Security

Ms JACKSON (2.38 pm)—My question is to the Prime Minister. Would the Prime Minister update the House on recent counterterrorism operations in Australia?

Mr RUDD—I thank the member for Hasluck for her question. Last week the House may recall that I delivered the nation’s first National Security Statement to the parliament. In that statement I spoke about national security in terms of freedom from attack or the threat of attack, the maintenance of our territorial integrity and political sovereignty, the preservation of our hard won freedoms and the maintenance of our fundamental capacity to advance economic prosperity for all Australians.

Events of recent weeks demonstrate that threats to our national security are real and remain significant. We must therefore continue to be vigilant to ensure the safety of Australians and Australian citizens both at home and abroad. There is no greater responsibility on the part of an Australian government than to protect Australians from threats to our national security. In the current age, this becomes a more difficult proposition as time goes on.

Last week in Melbourne a number of people were arrested and charged with terrorism offences. This action was a culmination of an operation which I am advised commenced in January of this year. The operation involved extensive collaboration and the dedication of around 150 officers from the Australian Federal Police, the Victorian and New South Wales police forces, the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, the New South Wales Crime Commission and the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions. Nineteen search warrants were executed in and around Melbourne and several items, including computers and removable data storage, were seized. Five men have been charged with terrorism offences and remanded in custody.

I am advised that the charges against the five men relate to offences against the Commonwealth Criminal Code. Two of the men have also been charged with offences against the Crimes (Foreign Incursions and Recruitment) Act. Now that arrests have been made and charges laid, it is inappropriate to comment further on the individuals or the ongoing investigation. Those charged are entitled to the presumption of innocence. I would, however, like to acknowledge the work of our law enforcement and intelligence agencies in conducting this operation. The joint operation in Melbourne is testimony to the current levels of cooperation between the intelligence and law enforcement agencies of the Commonwealth, state and territory governments.

The national counterterrorism level remains at medium. It has been at that level since the September 11, 2001 attacks in the United States. The Australian government is committed to the task of combating terrorism. This requires a combination of an appropriate security response to individual incidents while broader strategies are also implemented to enhance community cohesion and lessen the appeal of radical ideology.

The government has a number of initiatives currently underway. First, the government is committed to ensuring the focus of Australia’s national security and counterterrorism laws remains on preventing a terrorist
attack from occurring in the first place. As I have said, this is a difficult challenge. We cannot adopt a position which involves us simply waiting to punish those who commit terrorist acts and related crimes after they occur. We must do whatever we can to prevent such attacks from occurring. The government will therefore shortly be releasing a discussion paper on amendments to the Australian national security and counterterrorism laws. The discussion paper will help to establish an effective legal framework, which is fundamental to our ability to manage and respond to the challenges we now confront in our increasingly complex security environment.

Second, the Attorney-General has recently announced measures directed at dealing with counterterrorism. The measures are designed to deepen our engagement with at-risk communities to support them in resisting extremism. In addition to influencing individuals who may be affected by radical ideology, a national approach to countering extremism is critical and will form an integral prevention mechanism in Australia’s national counterterrorism strategy.

Third, the Special Minister of State has introduced legislation to establish a national security legislation monitor. The monitor will review the practical operation, effectiveness and implications for national security of our counterterrorism legislation on an annual basis. The monitor will be independent and consider whether legislation adequately protects public safety without reducing public freedoms.

Furthermore, in last year’s National Security Statement I commented that the government would be developing a counterterrorism white paper. The white paper will respond to the continuing threat to Australia from terrorism. The white paper will include recommendations to adjust our current policy arrangements where required, with consideration to arrangements both at home and abroad. I expect to release the white paper later this year.

Beyond these measures it is of critical importance, of course, to maintain proper provisioning of resources for our security, police and intelligence agencies to ensure that the work that they confront on a weekly basis can be properly discharged. On that basis, the government maintains a close and continuing dialogue with our services about their future resourcing needs.

The events of recent weeks both in Melbourne and the tragic bombings in Jakarta are yet another reminder to us all that we face an enduring threat from terrorism both here in Australia and abroad. All Australians are rightly concerned. I wish to reassure Australians that the government and our law enforcement agencies and intelligence agencies will continue to work hard to exert every effort to combat terrorism and to respond to new threats as they arise in our security environment at home and abroad.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER (2.43 pm)—I inform the House that we have present in the gallery this afternoon members of the Primary Production Committee from the New Zealand parliament. On behalf of the House, I extend a very warm welcome to the members of the committee.

Honourable members—Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Emissions Trading Scheme

Mr ROBB (2.44 pm)—My question is to the Prime Minister. I refer the Prime Minister to the Frontier Economics report released yesterday. Frontier’s analysis shows that the government’s proposed emissions trading scheme will destroy 68,000 jobs in regional Australia compared with Frontier’s propos-
als. Prime Minister, why does regional Australia have to bear the brunt of job losses because of the government’s unwillingness to consider greener, cheaper and smarter alternatives to your flawed emissions trading scheme?

**Mr Rudd**—Again I would note in my response to this question what I said in response to the last question, which was that the government finds itself two days before a vote in the Senate responding to a non-policy. Those opposite were asked yesterday, ‘Was the document produced by Frontier Economics representative of coalition policy?’ The answer was, ‘No, it is not coalition policy.’ We seem to be again having this debate in a policy vacuum.

The honourable member raises a question about the impact on employment. Treasury modelling shows that Australia can continue to achieve strong trend economic growth while making deep cuts in emissions through the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme and that almost all industry sectors across the Australian economy will continue to grow. I would also draw the honourable member’s attention to the fact that, consistent with this, national employment is projected to increase by 1.7 million jobs from 2008 to 2020 and by 4.7 million jobs by 2050 while carbon pollution allocation levels are projected to fall by at least 60 per cent from 2000 levels in 2050. Furthermore, average income is projected to increase by at least $4,300 per person over the 12 years from 2008 to 2020 with strong real trend GDP and GNP growth.

The Treasury modelling also points out that by 2050 the renewable energy sector will be 30 times larger than it is today. Furthermore, a 2009 study by the Climate Institute shows that there are some $31 billion worth of clean energy projects already underway or planned in response to the government’s climate change policies. This will generate around 26,000 new jobs, mostly in regional areas: 2,500 permanent jobs, 15,000 construction jobs and 8,600 indirect jobs in supporting sectors.

I would also draw to the honourable member’s attention—given his recent interest in climate change, because I cannot recall many questions from the honourable member up until now on this matter—to what Treasury modelling also said in October 2008: that economies that defer action on climate change face long-term costs around 15 per cent higher than those that take action now. The honourable member will be familiar with the impact of climate change on critical regions like North and Far North Queensland vis-a-vis the amount of employment which is generated out of the Great Barrier Reef. There are 50,000 people whose employment derives from the Great Barrier Reef with $5 billion in tourism revenue, not to mention the 90,000 people who are employed in agriculture in the Murray-Darling Basin. Therefore, in terms of the employment impacts, I would draw the honourable member’s attention to what we have said through the Treasury’s modelling of the employment impact of the CPRS. Furthermore, can I draw the honourable member’s attention to what would happen if we simply continued the policy of those opposite for the previous 12 years, which was to do nothing. That is the consequence of inaction and the cost to the economy and to jobs and income.

The honourable member also in his question again makes reference to this document produced by Frontier Economics. I would draw the honourable member’s attention and the House’s attention to the fact that the BCA, the Business Council of Australia, through its spokesman has said:

The BCA is concerned that a baseline and credit model will bring additional uncertainty over time as such an approach may require changes to the
baselines to achieve emissions targets and quantity and timing of such changes is unknown.

I would also draw the honourable member’s attention, given he has raised the question of Frontier Economics and their report—which is their report but not opposition policy—to the Energy Supply Association of Australia, which also says:

A baseline and credits scheme would also be enormously administratively complex.

That is the response of the Business Council of Australia and the Energy Supply Association of Australia. Can I also say that when you look at other analyses which have been put forward in relation to this proposed alternative there is not an enormous chorus line of support for it.

Mr Robb—Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order to do with relevance. The Prime Minister is referring to comments—

The SPEAKER—The member for Goldstein will resume his seat. The Prime Minister is responding to the question.

Mr Rudd—The comments from the BCA are dated 10 August. I just draw that to the honourable gentleman’s attention. Can I also say that there is a wider problem which those opposite have—if it is their policy, depending on what day of the week it is—because they would be embarking upon a model which has not been embraced by the G8 economies. The G8 leaders in July specifically endorsed cap-and-trade schemes and committed to increasing cooperation to expand carbon markets and to align trading schemes.

I also say to those opposite that they would be embarking upon a course of action whereby you have this Liberal Party magic pudding scheme on the one hand and then Australia, the United States, New Zealand, the European Union all moving in the other direction when it comes to a cap and trade. So you have the G8 come out and specifically endorse a cap-and-trade approach. You have the major economies of Europe, the United States, Australia and New Zealand—our part of the world—moving in the direction of a cap and trade, and this is of vital importance because you need international connectedness between systems. Those opposite perhaps have not thought about that as well.

I go back to a fundamental point, which is called consistency of policy. Those opposite are now embarking upon this alternative model, it seems, if in fact it is their policy, but prior to the last election we had this statement from the Leader of the Opposition: Speaking on behalf of the Liberal Party—

and I assume he was the Liberal Party environment minister at the time—we have committed to a cap and trade emissions trading scheme.

That is what the Liberal Party committed to prior to the last election and then the gentleman who has just asked the question, the member for Goldstein, said on 9 November 2008:

We support a cap and trade scheme.

Member for Goldstein, if you said on 9 November 2008, ‘We support a cap-and-trade scheme,’ how could you therefore stand up in the House today and support a non-cap-and-trade scheme?

Mr Robb—It is a cap-and-trade scheme.

Mr Rudd—I see. They are saying it is a sort of cap-and-trade scheme—maybe—except that no-one else actually embraces that. I also quote the member for North Sydney, who said in July 2009:

The Liberals in Parliament today are ready to sit down with the Prime Minister and negotiate a cap and trade scheme that delivers the best outcomes for Australian jobs …

So you have the Liberal Party prior to the election and subsequent to the election say-
ing that they are going to have a cap-and-trade scheme. You have the rest of the world as far as the developed economies are concerned adopting cap-and-trade schemes, but now in an attempt to paper over the massive divisions which exist on their part we have instead those opposite pretending that they have an alternative model of sorts which, if you subject it to any analysis, is nothing more than a massive magic pudding.

Can I say to the member for Goldstein, who now it seems has some responsibility in this area, given that we have not seen a lot of him at the dispatch box on debates on climate change so far, that there are two days to go before the Senate votes on the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme. It would be wonderful for the nation if two days before that vote we actually saw the final detail of Liberal-National Party policy on an emissions trading scheme. Instead, we have a continued excuse for inaction. The country deserves better.

Economy

Ms NEAL (2.53 pm)—My question is to the Prime Minister. Will the Prime Minister update the House on recent developments in the Australian economy and the impact of the government’s nation building on the recovery strategy?

Mr RUDD—I thank the member for Robertson for her question. I would report to the House today the NAB’s monthly business survey shows a strong increase in business confidence. Business confidence increased by six points to a reading of plus 10. This is the best reading since August ’07. The National Australia Bank also noted the importance of the second phase of the government’s stimulus package, medium-term infrastructure and improving confidence in a number of sectors. To quote the NAB business survey:

It was notable that particularly strong gains were made in manufacturing and construction. These sectors have previously lagged and—

I draw the attention of members of the House to this point—

are now benefiting from the infrastructure phase of the Government’s stimulus package.

This comes on the back of strong results in the June quarter. The NAB’s business survey recorded business confidence rising sharply—in fact, up 20 points. In particular, the NAB noted that confidence in retail, property and the construction sectors was supported by the government stimulus. Again, I quote the NAB in its survey produced then. It said:

Retail, reflecting government stimulus packages reported confidence readings as did property and construction with the latter two sectors benefiting specifically from the first home owners package and low interest rates.

Furthermore, today’s D&B business confidence survey presents a positive picture of business confidence and expectations. Sales and profit expectations have recorded their biggest one quarter increase since the survey began in 1988. Forty-four per cent of businesses expect an increase in sales and 31 per cent expect an increase in profits.

This is in response to the government’s nation building for recovery plan but also in response to the actions and decisions taken by individual businesses large and small across the country and the great efforts made by Australian employees in what has been an extraordinarily difficult time for the Australian and the global economy. The government’s nation building for recovery plan is built on three phases: initially, cash payments for pensioners, carers, veterans and families to provide that much needed injection into the economy in the last quarter of last year and the first two quarters of this year when, frankly, the global economy was falling through the floor; secondly, the phase which
is now underway through the investment in medium-term infrastructure, in particular the largest school modernisation program the country has ever seen; and, thirdly, the long-term infrastructure investment which will include also the rollout of the National Broadband Network. On that point, I note with some pride, as I was recently in the great state of Tasmania, having played a part in the ceremony which saw the beginnings of that rollout happening across Tasmania, and it was good to see the response from those individual local communities who will be connected first through this particular rollout.

That is the government’s nation building for recovery plan. It is underway. We are implementing it systematically, but it is important also to note for the House and for the country at large that we are by no means out of the woods yet. The global economy is still taking an enormous battering from the impact of the global financial crisis and, therefore, the road to recovery for Australia and the global economy will have many twists and turns and it will be a road where we experience many bumps along the way. The challenge for us all is to make sure that we are laying down the building blocks for the future, the foundation stones for long-term, sustainable growth for the Australian economy. Nation building for recovery is important for the here and now.

I acknowledge the fact that there are going to be bumps in the road, as the path to recovery, including rising unemployment, as employment is a lagging indicator, will be with us for quite a while yet, but also it is important to lay in place the building blocks for long-term economic growth, and that means productivity growth. We cannot simply afford to return to the boom and bust economic cycle of the past. We must instead build an alternative model for economic growth for Australia’s future. That means investing radically in the long-term drivers of productivity growth. If you dovetail so many of the measures that we have taken—investing in our schools, investing in our universities, investing in our research institutes as well as the other initiatives contained in education, skills and training, the other investments in infrastructure all designed to lift productivity growth and the other work being done by the Minister for Small Business, Independent Contractors and the Service Economy and others in reducing over time the regulatory burden faced by Australian business as we draw together the different regulatory environments of the Commonwealth, the state and the territories—this is part and parcel of building a strategy of long-term sustainable economic growth for Australia which is anchored in raising productivity growth for the long term. The global economy, I believe, faces a very rough period ahead. We cannot simply assume a return to the growth models of the past. Therefore, Australia is going to have to work harder and more effectively and with greater productivity growth to carve a greater slice out of what may be—

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER—The House will come to order. Could the chamber show a degree of maturity while the lights are out. I am urged by some to say that because the microphones are not on it might help if people just sat there quietly. I will yell and I will clear the chamber of those who appear to be frightened of the dark. I see no reason why the chamber cannot continue with its business if members of the chamber show a degree of forbearance and maturity.

Mr RUDD—I gather that outside this place there is currently storm and tempest. Can I just say that it pales into insignificance compared with the storm and tempest which rages within the ranks of the Liberal Party and the National Party—and, Mr Speaker,
there is more light in this chamber now than is currently being brought to bear on the policy on climate change on the part of those opposite.

The question I was asked dealt with the confidence data which was out today and its impact on our nation building for recovery plan. My point to the House was this: nation building for recovery is being implemented; we intend to get on with the job of doing that. Secondly, we have to be prepared as a nation and as an economy for the fact that it will be a rough and difficult road ahead and, thirdly, if we are being responsible about it we will also put in place the long-term building blocks for a sustainable economic growth model for Australia for the future.

The reality we confront with the global economy is this: we cannot assume that the world will continue to grow for the next decade as it has for the last, because so many of the underpinning assumptions in the global economy for the previous decade will no longer be present in the future—in particular, the global financial imbalances which have underpinned so much of the activity that we have seen over the last decade. Therefore, how do you build a new model of economic growth for the future? The responsible course of action for Australia, the only sure answer to that, is productivity, productivity, productivity. That is the cornerstone of this government’s long-term economic development strategy. It is the one we went with to the last election; it is the one we have continued to implement since the election and it is the one that we will now embrace with full vigour going forward to the future as well. It is the right strategy for Australia. We are encouraged by the data which has been released today, but this country is by no means out of the woods yet.

**Emissions Trading Scheme**

Mr CIOBO (3.04 pm)—I refer the Prime Minister to the Frontier Economics report which was released yesterday. Frontier’s analysis shows that, under the government’s proposed emissions trading scheme, the increase in typical small business power bills will be 90 per cent higher than it would be under Frontier’s proposals. Prime Minister, why will small businesses have to pay higher power bills because of the government’s unwillingness to consider cheaper, greener and smarter alternatives to its flawed emissions trading scheme, or will it be ‘lights out’ for small business under Labor as well?

Mr RUDD—If we are going to deal with the challenge of climate change it means we have to deal with the price of carbon. Dealing with the price of carbon affects the price of electricity. I draw the attention of those opposite to a statement by my predecessor, the former member for Bennelong and former Prime Minister, who said as much when standing at this dispatch box about the introduction of an emissions trading scheme. For those opposite to pretend that those consequences do not flow frankly suggests they are engaged in politics rather than a real debate about policy.

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr RUDD—Those opposite scoff at the notion that they may be engaged in a debate about politics at the moment. When it comes to climate change, we have been in this House for a long time now and we have not received a single question from those opposite on climate change. Why? Because they could not organise themselves in a unity ticket in a brown paper bag, let alone come to the dispatch box with an agreed position on climate change. Therefore, for the honourable member to stand at the dispatch box and say that there will be no impact when it comes to electricity prices as a consequence
of a CPRS simply is a flight from economic reality which the former Prime Minister of Australia himself embraced when he spoke about the need for this country to move in the direction of an emissions trading scheme—also, I would have thought, a position which those opposite embraced when they themselves, at least it seemed, embraced the need for action on climate change through a cap-and-trade scheme.

But those opposite again have intervened on the question of politics. Again, the climate change deniers and the climate change sceptics of the Liberal Party and the National Party are running policy. That is why they cannot reach a concluded position on climate change. For example, remember that one of the leadership aspirants on the part of those opposite, the shadow minister for health—I refer to Mr Abbott—said on 27 July:

The point I made about an emissions trading scheme is that I don’t like it one little bit.

I would have thought that the shadow minister speaks with some authority in terms of the shadow cabinet—but it seems not. And then, of course, we have the member for Goldstein, who has been on his feet this morning. He said that, instead, we should be putting more into proving up the science on climate change. This is the shadow minister whom I thought responsible for bringing forth policy on climate change. His response is that we should be putting more money into proving up the science.

Mr Rudd—I am reliably informed it is the shadow minister for families. But I do recall him recently standing up and launching a book about his future leadership aspirations, among other things. On 27 July he said:

The point I made about an emissions trading scheme is that I don’t like it one little bit.

One would have thought that the shadow minister for families speaks with some authority in terms of the shadow cabinet—but it seems not. And then, of course, we have the member for Goldstein, who has been on his feet this morning. He said that, instead, we should be putting more into proving up the science on climate change. This is the shadow minister whom I thought responsible for bringing forth policy on climate change. His response is that we should be putting more money into proving up the science.

Mr Ciobo—Mr Speaker, on a point of order: the Prime Minister has been waffling on for three minutes and there has been not one mention of small business by the Labor Party. There has been not one single mention of 2.4 million small businesses—

The Speaker—Order! The member for Moncrieff will resume his seat, and he is warned. He can make his point of order but he cannot then debate it in that manner.

Mr Rudd—And then we have that extraordinary statement to the Sydney Morning Herald, which is one of my favourites. On 28 July, when asked about an emissions trading scheme, a Liberal source said to Phil Coorey:

We were staring at an electoral abyss. We had to pretend we cared.

And then, of course, we have the member for Tangney’s real position. He says global warming has been exposed as a massive fraud which the public has been duped into believing. His ultimate solution is: ‘Why
don’t we put a shade cloth into orbit?’ I believe that says it all.

Economy

Mr SULLIVAN (3.09 pm)—My question is to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer update the House on the important recent assessments of the global and domestic economies and of the impact of the government’s efforts to stimulate the economy?

Mr SWAN—Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I do thank the member for Longman for his question. We have had two important reports out in the past week. We have had a report from the International Monetary Fund and we have had the Reserve Bank’s Statement on monetary policy. Both of those reports acknowledge and point to the impact of our economic stimulus strategy, which has helped cushion this economy from the worst global recession in over 75 years. The IMF notes:

The authorities’ timely and significant macro-policy response cushioned the domestic impact of the global financial crisis.

They went on to say this:

Quick implementation of targeted and temporary fiscal stimulus is providing a sizable boost to domestic demand in 2009 and 2010.

Indeed, IMF staff estimate that the government stimulus will raise GDP by about three per cent in 2009 and 2010 relative to what would have happened if the country had sat around and done nothing.

The RBA points not only to the government’s stimulus as a key factor in supporting the economy and jobs but also to the strong state of our financial system, monetary policy stimulus and the strong recovery in China. The RBA goes on to make a number of very important points about the impact of our stimulus measures. It says household consumption in Australia has been stronger than in a number of other countries, with disposable incomes boosted by government transfer and tax payments. They have been very important in supporting employment and keeping customers going through the door to small businesses, particularly in places like Longman. The RBA says that recently there has been a pickup in spending on some types of plant and equipment, partly in response to temporary tax incentives.

And might I say that, as I have moved around the country, those investment allowances have been particularly appreciated by small business, particularly in Lismore, Grafton and a number of other places I visited during the break. They understand the importance of those allowances, even if those opposite do not. Of course, there has also been the impact on housing. Dwelling activity and increased public sector infrastructure spending are also supporting private demand, given the impact of the global recession. You can see it in retail sales, which are up 5.2 per cent since November last year. Finance approvals for new houses are up 55 per cent since last October and public investment expenditure in the pipeline is now at record levels.

The IMF goes on to make a very important point. It says that shift into deficit was justified in current circumstances and that Commonwealth government debt is projected to remain low compared with other advanced economies, leaving Australia in an enviable fiscal position by international standards. They go on to say that the government’s commitment to return to surpluses and achieve a positive budget balance on average over the medium term is commendable. That is the conclusion of the IMF. Of course, this knocks down the argument, particularly mounted by those opposite, that because the stimulus has been so successful it should be withdrawn. An early withdrawal of stimulus would pull the rug right out from underneath recovery.
Both of these reports and their growth estimates are calculated on putting forward the fiscal stimulus that this government has put out there through phase 1, phase 2 and phase 3. The outcome of this is that we have the strongest growth and the second lowest unemployment and lower debt and deficit than any other major advanced economy. As the Prime Minister was saying earlier, this has been possible not just because of economic stimulus but because the country has pulled together—employers and employees. The outcome of that is the strongest growth of any advanced major economy in the world, and we should all take great pride in that.

**Emissions Trading Scheme**

Mr HOCKEY (3.14 pm)—My question is to the Prime Minister. Prime Minister, I refer to the fact that Frontier Economics found that, with some amendments, a greener and smarter emissions trading scheme would be $49 billion cheaper than the government’s proposed scheme. Prime Minister, why won’t you even consider the Frontier Economics detailed proposal to save the Australian economy $49 billion?

Mr RUDD—I thank the member for North Sydney for his question. He asks me about the government’s response to this report produced by Frontier Economics. The first response to his question is: those opposite have not adopted it as policy—and they have not adopted it as policy 18 to 20 months into this government’s term, having set already some seven precedents as to that which needed to be met before those opposite would frame a policy. In December 2007 they said they had to wait for the Garnaut report to come down before releasing their policy. Then in September 2008 they said they would wait for the Treasury modelling. In September 2008 they then said they would wait for the white paper. In December 2008 they said they would wait for the Pearce report—I wonder what happened to that one. In April 2009 they said they would wait for the Senate inquiry. In May 2009 they said they would wait for the Productivity Commission, forgetting that the Productivity Commission had already made a submission on emissions trading to the Howard government’s Shergold report—and remember it dealt with the matter in the previous government. Now they say they have got to wait for Copenhagen and for President Obama’s scheme. That is seven separate delaying tactics, and now we have an eighth. Of course, it actually goes to the core politics of those opposite. The reason they are not engaged in long-term policy for the nation is they cannot organise their short-term politics for the Liberal Party.

The second answer I would give to the member for North Sydney in response to his question goes back to this proposal, this non proposal, from the Liberal Party—this Liberal Party magic pudding which says you can produce a scheme which costs less than the CPRS while at the same time providing more by way of financial assistance to the emissions-intensive trade-exposed sectors and to the coal industry. That is the magic pudding economics which underpins those opposite—and they ask this parliament why we fail to take their propositions seriously! I believe that those opposite might command some respect if they could organise a position, act in the long-term national economic interest of Australia, provide the Australian business community with the certainty that they ask for and vote for the legislation which currently languishes in the Senate, where they left it to languish as of the last sitting week of the last session of the parliament.

**Climate Change**

Ms SAFFIN (3.17 pm)—My question is to the Minister for Defence Personnel, Material and Science and Minister Assisting the
Minister for Climate Change. Will the minister please advise the House of any challenges facing the government in taking action on behalf of the Australian community against climate change?

Mr COMBET—Australia’s national interest is tied to taking strong global action on climate change and taking effective domestic action to reduce greenhouse emissions. The government’s Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme does just that. It serves the national interest. As the Prime Minister has indicated, in two days time it will be voted upon in the Senate. That time is approaching very rapidly for the coalition. The CPRS is underpinned by the compelling international scientific evidence, by numerous reports, by reports produced by the previous government and produced by this government, by the white paper, by the Garnaut review and by the enormously detailed work that has been carried out in developing the CPRS legislation. Two days out from the vote, the coalition are still looking for a miracle solution. They are still peppered with climate change sceptics. The member for O’Connor has been very vocal about this issue in recent days. They are still disunited on the policy and they are still grasping at straws.

Only several weeks ago, the Leader of the Opposition issued nine very vague principles on the opposition’s approach to dealing with climate change. The opposition then urged the government to mimic the steps being undertaken in the United States in the Waxman-Markey legislation. Now, several weeks later, a completely different position emerges. The nine vague principles have been replaced by the presentation of another report, one in which, importantly, the electricity generation sector, which produces about 40 per cent of Australian greenhouse gas emissions, is exempted from the scheme and would operate under a different emissions-intensive scheme. That is as we understand the position. The proposal is riddled with problems and complexity. It is not transparent modelling. The assumptions are not made available. But most telling of all, in the one-hour-and-five-minute press conference that took place yesterday conducted by the Leader of the Opposition, there was one telling moment, and that was the moment when the question came: ‘Is this coalition policy?’—and the answer was no.

The report is not coalition policy. That is because no unity can be achieved on that side of the parliament about the approach to be taken to deal with climate change. The fact is that, with the vote two days away in the Senate, we are on the cusp of voting on the most significant environmental and economic reform ever undertaken in this country by any government. That side of politics does not know what its position is. It does not have a policy response and it cannot present detailed amendments. It cannot do so. There is chaos and confusion on the Liberal Party side of politics on this issue. Not an iota of policy emerged from the coalition party room meeting today, and we are two days out from the vote. The fact of the matter is: they are too weak, they are divided, they are disunited on this important public policy challenge, and the Leader of the Opposition lacks the authority and lacks the judgment to deal with this issue.

The report they released yesterday does not add up. Just consider some of the key elements of it. They say it can deliver 100 per cent free permits to the emissions-intensive trade-exposed sector of the economy—100 per cent for the EITE industries, 100 per cent protection for all coalmines for their methane emissions—and twice the level of assistance proposed under the CPRS for electricity generators. They propose also to exclude emissions from the energy sector from the scheme and to exclude emissions from agriculture for an indefinite period of
time. Those two together are over 50 per cent of our greenhouse gas emissions. They can do all of this while electricity prices are lower and while they double the unconditional target to 10 per cent by 2020.

It is not a credible proposition, it is not transparent, it is fundamentally flawed and, importantly, it shifts the risk for achieving Australia’s target reductions in emissions onto households, small businesses and taxpayers to meet the targeted cuts through the purchase of international permits. Just this morning, the member for Goldstein conceded that, even were the government to adopt the Frontier report, the Liberal Party could not guarantee that they could vote for it. That is what he said on radio this morning. It is time, two days out from the vote, that the coalition took responsibility for this position and voted for the CPRS in the Senate.

Emissions Trading Scheme

Mr HUNT (3.22 pm)—My question is to the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts. I refer the minister to the overwhelming support from the BCA, the Clean Energy Council, the Aluminium Council and solar producers for the government to decouple the renewable energy target from its flawed emissions trading scheme, a scheme which will increase power bills by up to $240 a year per family, as opposed to cleaner, greener systems. Will the government therefore stop delaying its own renewable energy legislation and deliberately holding solar businesses hostage and decouple the renewable energy target from the emissions trading scheme?

Mr GARRETT—I thank the honourable member for his question, because never has an opposition been so exposed on their inability to deliver a consistent position on climate change. Here we are in the very week that the Australian public is waiting for this coalition to bring forward a consistent position on climate change in relation to an emissions trading scheme, and the best that the shadow minister can come up with is a question about a renewable energy target.

Mr Pyne interjecting—

The SPEAKER—Order! The Manager of Opposition Business has obviously not referred to the standing orders, especially 65(b), in the break. He can decide whether he stays in the chamber or not by actually paying attention to those things. If his advice to those that are asking questions is inadequate about what should be asked, he cannot remedy that by interjection. He is warned.

Mr GARRETT—How ludicrous is it for the shadow minister to put a question about delaying passage of legislation when they themselves cannot bring themselves to even have a policy about this particular issue? All the failures and the weaknesses of the Leader of the Opposition and the chaos and confusion of the Liberal Party have been in evidence in this past week and are in evidence in this parliament today. They do not even have a policy position on an emissions trading scheme. The predominant public policy debate in this parliament for the last decade about how to deal with climate change has been to have a price in the marketplace through an emissions trading scheme which will enable industries to get on with investing in low-emissions technology, drive the jobs and employment and bring emissions down. They did that work on that side of the House, and the Leader of the Opposition was a part of the process of doing that work when he came into this parliament. Yet, despite all of that, there is no authority whatsoever—

Mr Dutton—Mr Speaker, I raise a point of order. I know you were about to make a ruling, because clearly this is not relevant. The minister was asked a question about a policy of decoupling two bills in the Senate—
The SPEAKER—The member for Dickson will resume his seat. The minister should relate his answer in response to the question.

Mr GARRETT—Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am actually doing just that. I make the point to the House that the member for Flinders on 1 May said that the coalition would announce a more ambitious renewable energy policy than the government’s 20 per cent target by 2020. We never saw that. Then on 4 February, as they lined up to oppose the government’s energy efficient homes package, the largest rollout of energy efficiency in Australia’s history, he said:

… we will come back with more details of an energy efficiency package.

We have not seen that one either. So the opposition has not got a policy on renewable energy, which is what this question was about, it has not got a policy on energy efficiency and it has not got a policy on an emissions trading scheme. We have got the ETS; they have got the MPS—the magic pudding scheme.

Mr Hunt—Mr Speaker, I raise a point of order on relevance. The question was about whether the government would decouple the renewable energy legislation from the emissions trading scheme.

The SPEAKER—The minister should relate his remarks to the question.

Mr GARRETT—Mr Speaker, the fact is that this government had a mandate to take comprehensive action on climate change, which included an emissions trading scheme and a renewable energy target, which have been brought into this parliament to be debated and voted on. It is time that the opposition stopped being the flat-earthers of the 21st century and got on with the job of supporting these policies.

Pacific Islands Forum

Mr TURNOUR (3.28 pm)—My question is to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Will the minister update the House on climate change outcomes from last week’s Pacific Islands Forum leaders meeting in Cairns?

Mr STEPHEN SMITH—Last week Australia successfully hosted the 40th Pacific Islands Forum leaders meeting in Cairns. Can I thank the member for his question and thank him for joining with the mayor of Cairns to welcome delegates to that conference in Cairns, the capital of tropical North Queensland. I thank him for the hospitality he displayed to delegates from the Pacific region.

There were important outcomes achieved at the successful forum in economic resilience and development assistance so far as coordination and effectiveness are concerned. Progress was also made on regional economic growth and trade with the agreement to start negotiations on PACER Plus, and Fiji’s continuing suspension from the forum was reaffirmed unanimously.

A key feature of the forum, of course, was climate change. Pacific island countries have contributed little to the causes of climate change but are amongst the most vulnerable to the worst adverse effects of climate change. Any sea level rise or increase in extreme weather poses real threats to our colleagues in the Pacific islands. If anyone still needed a reason to be concerned and to be urged to act so far as climate change is concerned, then the potential adverse circumstances for our neighbours and the adverse implications for Australia as a consequence of that should be more than a sufficient spur. The forum issued the Pacific leaders’ call for action on climate change—and I table that. Consistent with Australia’s policy, the Pacific leaders’ call for action on climate change called upon world leaders:
to urgently increase their level of ambition and
to give their negotiators fresh mandates to secure
a truly effective global agreement…
Pacific leaders also called on developed
economies to:
… strengthen the seriousness and credibility of
their claims at Copenhagen by putting in place
domestic policies and legislation now to achieve
emission reduction targets.
The Leader of the Opposition could learn a
few things from the Pacific leaders and their
call to action on climate change. He could
learn about putting in place domestic poli-
cies, he could learn about the importance of
having legislation in advance of Copenhagen
and he could take a lead from the Pacific
island leaders. He does not need more advice
from us. Follow our colleagues in the Pa-
cific.

Mr Dutton interjecting—

Mr STEPHEN SMITH—We also heard
plenty of free advice to the Leader of the
Opposition at the forum not just from Pacific
leaders but from other distinguished gentle-
man there. For example, the Executive Di-
rector of the United Nations Framework
Convention on Climate Change Secretariat,
Yvo de Boer, said:
I think it helps Australia’s credibility to say this is
the target Australia is willing to commit to and
this is how we are going to achieve it. That would
be good for the country’s credibility.
You could learn a bit from Yvo de Boer as well. You could also learn a lot from your
conservative colleague—and I choose my
words carefully, Malcolm—John Key, the
New Zealand Prime Minister.

The SPEAKER—Order! The minister
will refer to members by their titles and he
will refer his remarks through the chair.

Mr STEPHEN SMITH—The Leader of
the Opposition could learn a lot from his
conservative colleague John Key, the Prime
Minister of New Zealand, who said, “In re-
spect of targets and legislation, I think it
helps. I think it shows that you’re serious.’
So the message from our part of the world,
the message from the leaders of the Pacific
to the Leader of the Opposition is: have a
domestic policy and legislate to set targets
before Copenhagen. Stop standing in the way
of much needed action on climate change.
That might actually make a substantial con-
tribution to the Pacific islands.

Emissions Trading Scheme

Mr TURNBULL (3.32 pm)—My ques-
tion is to the Prime Minister. I refer the
Prime Minister to his previous answers
where he has referred to the United States
emissions trading legislation, the Waxman-
Markey bill, which has passed the United
States House of Representatives but has not
yet passed the US Senate. Will the Prime
Minister advise this House of the differences
between his emissions trading scheme, his
CPRS, and the approach of Waxman-Markey
to agriculture and why he considers his own
CPRS’s approach to agriculture to be supe-
rior to that pursued in the United States?

Mr RUDD—The honourable member
will be familiar with the arrangements which
are outlined in the government’s white paper
and the statements made since the introduc-
tion of the government’s legislation. In the
government’s legislation concerning agricul-
ture, one question goes specifically to our
treatment of agriculture, which is that after a
period of review we will consider the intro-
duction of agriculture into the scheme in a
few years time—I think 2015 is the option
we have laid on the table. Secondly, the hon-
ourable member asks about the contrast be-
tween the Waxman-Markey bill and its
management of agriculture and other matters
and what we have done here. They have con-
stantly said across the board that the US
scheme offers greater benefits for industry.
Can I simply draw the honourable member’s
attention to this: the Waxman bill caps free permits at 15 per cent of total permits and the share of free permits will decline over time and, secondly, under the CPRS we will give around 25 per cent of total permits free to emissions-intensive trade-exposed and that share will rise as the sector grows. That is the first point.

The second is that those opposite constantly talk about the relative generosity of the Waxman-Markey scheme. The thresholds for assistance are substantially higher under that scheme than they are for the CPRS—2,500 tonnes per US$1 million of revenue—meaning assistance in the Waxman bill is concentrated to a narrow range of industries and is actually contemplated under the Australian legislation. He should really know what he is talking about when he phrases these questions.

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER—Order! Has the Prime Minister concluded?

Mr RUDD—Yes.

Health

Mr DEBUS (3.35 pm)—My question is to the Minister for Health and Ageing. Will the minister update the House on the final report of the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission and on any response to the publication of the report?

Ms ROXON—I thank the member for Macquarie for his question, because I know in the complexity of his seat, both the urban parts and the rural parts, that health is a top order issue for him on many occasions and that he and his electorate will have welcomed the final report of the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission, which was released on 27 July 2009. Members will remember that the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission was established by the Rudd government because we knew that the health system was really struggling after a decade of neglect from the previous government. We inherited from the Howard government a legacy of bed shortages, doctor shortages, nurse shortages and long surgery and dental waiting lists, and we tasked Dr Christine Bennett and her team of experts with conducting a root-and-branch review of our health system and gathering evidence.

But we did not just sit back and put up our feet while this work was being done by the commission. We actually rolled up our sleeves and got to work straightaway, investing $64 billion into our public hospitals, an increase of 50 per cent from the previous government’s funding. Our work includes $275 million for 31 superclinics across the country—24 of those contracts have been signed and construction is underway on many of those sites; $600 million for an elective surgery waiting list blitz, with 41,000 procedures delivered in the first year—and we now have 109 hospitals across the country with construction and new equipment being put in place to deliver on long-term improvements for elective surgery; $750 million for our public hospitals in emergency departments, relieving pressure; particular works going on in more than 35 hospitals across the country; and, of course, $3.2 billion from the Health and Hospitals Fund for 32 projects across the country.

After 18 months of hard work, the Health Reform Commission has made clear that our health system is now at a tipping point, something that I know many members will be acutely aware of in their electorates, and that the health system is struggling to adapt to the needs of an ageing population and a community which is becoming more prone to chronic disease. So the report makes clear that business as usual is no longer an option for the way we deliver health care into the future. We need to reshape our health system to put more effort into keeping people...
healthy, stabilising and managing illnesses in the community and strengthening our hospitals for those who need acute care.

The report made 123 recommendations; the House will be pleased that I do not intend to read each of them to you. However, there were some key recommendations. They include recommendations such as the Commonwealth takeover of all primary care services, the introduction of an electronic health record for individuals, the strengthening of subacute care, the greater separation of elective and emergency services, national access targets for clinical service delivery and recommendations such as Denticare to completely reform the way dental services are provided in this country.

Taken together, the report’s recommendations are an opportunity for us to introduce the most fundamental reform to our health system since the introduction of Medicare by Labor 25 years ago. That is why the Prime Minister and I and the government’s health team have been crossing the country to consult with health professionals, stakeholders and members of the community and to get their feedback on these recommendations. Six consultations have been held so far, with more to come. The Commonwealth then intends to convene a special COAG meeting to deal with health issues by the end of the year and to report to the states and territories and will then present a reform plan to the states and territories by early 2010. Our preference, of course, is that the states and territories will join us in this work, but, if they do not, we will go to the people seeking a mandate to take over full funding control of our health system.

So the scale, scope and importance of this reform underline why we are not going to rush decisions in this health reform debate. We must get these decisions right. It is useful to ask the question: does the Liberal Party, the opposition, have anything to contribute to this health debate? Let us just look very briefly at the evidence we have about the Liberal Party’s health policy. Firstly, we know that $64 billion would not have been put into our public hospitals, according to the member for North Sydney, who thought that that was a waste of money. There is no support in the Senate for dental health, which is being blocked by the Liberal Party, and the shadow health minister has made clear that he does not support Denticare, improving access for people to dental services. We have seen flip-flopping, of course, all over the place on prevention issues like our alcopops measure, which the opposition still has not allowed to come on for a vote in the Senate. And, of course, they are opposing the very reasonable positions that we have put to ask those who have more resources to contribute more to their own health care via sensible changes to the Medicare levy surcharge and the private health insurance changes. So not much has changed since 2007, when the Liberal Party went to the election without a health policy; it still does not have one.

There is, however, one thing that the member for Dickson has recently said which makes sense. I know it is unusual for me to say there is anything that the member for Dickson has said that makes sense, but there is one thing which, in fairness, I think I should repeat to the House. He, in his modest contributions to the health reform debate, has called on the government not to:

… repeat the same mistakes over the next decade that we’ve repeated over the last decade.

Indeed, and on that point we actually agree. We have a blueprint for reform—

Mr Dutton—Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order. On indulgence, to clarify, I was talking about state Labor governments—the hopeless state Labor governments.
The SPEAKER—No, the member for Dickson will resume his seat. He knows that there are other ways that he can—

Mr Dutton—She should tell the truth.

Mr Adams—Can I do that? Can I stand up and shout?

The SPEAKER—No, the member for Lyons cannot. I think that the member for Dickson has been here long enough to know that there are other ways that he can achieve the outcome that he wished to achieve. He cannot do it by going to the dispatch box, and he is warned.

Ms ROXON—I think that, when the member for Dickson is big enough to admit—and I am quoting from his interview with Lateline—that they did indeed make many mistakes over the last decades and that they are calling on us not to repeat their mistakes, we can agree on that point. We are going to make sure that we get the decisions right and that we implement health reforms that will improve things not only now and for the next decade but for generations to come. That is what the Rudd government have committed to doing. We have a blueprint for reform. We are absolutely committed to taking and making the tough decisions that will be required. We believe that the public, the clinicians, the nurses and the doctors across this country should have an opportunity to give us their views on these recommendations, and we look forward to making sure that the decisions we make will not be committing the same mistakes as were committed in the decade before.

Emissions Trading Scheme

Mr TRUSS (3.43 pm)—My question is to the Prime Minister. As the Prime Minister has no idea about the impact of his CPRS on agriculture, can he tell the House how much a litre of milk will increase in price for Australian householders under his CPRS?

Mr RUDD—I thank the honourable member for his question. He comes from that party of renowned climate change believers, the National Party, led by Senator Barnaby Joyce, who was right out there in his full, wholehearted support for the current Leader of the Opposition! I will come back to the question of the impact for household goods and services in a minute. It must have been a doozy of a party meeting this morning. I am just reading from—

Mr Pyne—Mr Speaker, I raise a point of order. The Prime Minister has just admitted that he is not even going to get to the question for a minute. I would ask him to come to a very specific question about the cost of a litre of milk and not to go off on some tangent of his own.

The SPEAKER—Order! The member for Sturt can resume his seat. The Prime Minister will resume his seat. The Leader of the National Party led with a preamble that probably was out of order because it was argument, and I think that that then opens up the response.

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER—I take it that those brave souls who think that they can just talk over the Speaker by way of interjection would like me in future to rule out argument in questions and really restrict a number of the questions that have been asked today. But when a question starts with such words as ‘the Prime Minister has no idea what his CPRS does’ et cetera I think that it is open to a wider response than the specific question that was the point—as I understand by the point of order—of what the Leader of the National Party thought he was asking.

Mr RUDD—As I said before, it must have been a doozy of a party meeting this morning, because I am just reading an online report about what actually transacted in the rolling saga of war and peace. It says:
MALCOLM Turnbull has failed to convince doubters in the Coalition partyroom to support his plan for an emissions trading scheme.

Then it says:

The Opposition—

but they are united in one thing. Remember what the member for North Sydney always said: ‘One thing that unites the Liberal Party is their hatred of the Labor Party.’ They are not united by a policy on climate change; they are united in their opposition to our policy on climate change.

Mr Pyne—Mr Speaker, I raise a point of order. With due respect, Mr Speaker—

Mrs Hull interjecting—

The SPEAKER—Order! The member for Sturt will resume his seat.

Mrs Hull interjecting—

The SPEAKER—If the member for Riverina is finished, I can give the member for Sturt the call. The Manager of Opposition Business.

Mr Pyne—Mr Speaker, with due respect to the remarks you made before—and I hear what you say about the question—I do not see how the Prime Minister’s answer can now be relevant to the question in any way. He is commenting on internal matters of the Liberal Party that he could not even have been present for or know anything about.

The SPEAKER—The Manager of Opposition Business will resume his seat. I will listen carefully to the Prime Minister.

Mr Rudd—The problem is that they are not internal matters of the Liberal Party; they are now external matters of the Liberal Party because they are canvassed extensively in a piece written by our friend from the Australian upstairs there. It says here:

The Opposition will vote against the Rudd Government’s ETS legislation in the Senate but it is no closer to finalising its policy position on an emissions trading scheme.

It then goes on to say:

The spokesman said Mr Turnbull’s announcement of the vote was greeted by “a gratifying grunt of approval”.

Mr Speaker, the next time we have a division in this place, let us see how this ‘gratifying grunt of approval’ which is referred to by those opposite is manifested! The report says:

There would be further discussion of the Frontier Economics paper by the Coalition, the spokesman said, but indicated “general support” for its proposal.

Did it have the general support of the National Party? Because that is what the spokesman for the Leader of the Opposition said.

Honourable member interjecting—

Mr Rudd—It did not, apparently. And then the report goes on to say:

This is despite a briefing at the start of a marathon meeting today and yesterday’s big bang release by Mr Turnbull of the Frontier Economics modelling of—

Mrs Bronwyn Bishop—Mr Speaker—

The SPEAKER—Order! The member for Mackellar will resume her seat. The Prime Minister will relate his material to the question. I think that he has had his long run-up.

Mr Rudd—Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. On the question of the impact of the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme on the price of carbon and the flow-through impacts on fuel and on energy prices and therefore onto other goods and services in the economy, that is why the Australian government, in releasing its white paper on this, detailed a complete schedule of assistance for low-income families and for middle-income families to assist with adjustment prices for families impacted by the introduction of the scheme. Those opposite pretend that the scheme that they would support would not have an impact on prices in the economy. Is
that really what those opposite are arguing, or is that simply a piece of opportunistic politics?

Mrs Bronwyn Bishop—Mr Speaker, I raise a point of order. I would refer you to page 553 of *House of Representatives Practice*, where it says:

The interpretation of ‘relevant’ has at times been very wide …

However, it has been ruled that it must be ‘relevant in some way’ or ‘in part’ to the question—that is: how much will the price of a litre of milk go up? I would ask you to refer the Prime Minister back to the question.

The SPEAKER—The member for Mackellar will resume her seat. The member for Mackellar has assisted by reading the very generous definition of relevance that has been used. I think that now the Prime Minister is fulfilling the intent of the paragraph read out.

Mr Rudd—I draw the honourable member’s attention, as he is engaged on the policy dimensions of this, to what we said at the time that the white paper was released about what we would do to support households in general; pensioners, carers, seniors and other low-income households; middle-income households; as well as motorists. That was clearly outlined in our policy, which we put out in the white paper, a policy which is now legislated—and in a piece of legislation which currently languishes in the Senate.

The honourable member also asked the question about the price of milk. I would have thought that, being from the National Party, he might appreciate the fact that, in recent times, we have seen the withdrawal also of the previous government’s dairy industry adjustment levy. As a consequence, I am advised by the minister for primary industries, the impact on the price of milk is about 11c a litre, and that is in the other direction. I draw the honourable member’s attention to what we have done in terms of our white paper.

But what can I say about those opposite? We have seen more discipline in your average riot than we have on the part of the Liberal Party today. Frankly, the country deserves better. As the Minister Assisting the Minister for Climate Change and Water said, rightly, in parliament today, we have before the Senate one of the most significant pieces of economic and environmental legislation that the parliament has had to engage in, as all sober minded legislatures are around the world. We have a policy; it is in legislation. Those opposite are simply looking for any excuse, any excuse whatsoever, to prevent them from taking a policy position in terms of what this nation needs for emissions trading for the future. Our policy is clear; those opposite have become a rabble.

Small Business

Ms Campbell (3.53 pm)—My question is to the Minister for Small Business, Independent Contractors and the Service Economy. Will the minister advise the House of the results of recent business surveys and what they mean for small business? Are there any obstacles to building on these outcomes?

Dr Emerson—I thank the member for Bass for her question, which is the third question that she has asked me in this parliament on small business issues. I would contrast that with the time that has elapsed since the shadow small business minister last asked me a question. Not 100 days, not 200 days, not 300 days, not 400 days but 439 days—439 days since I last had a question from the shadow minister for small business. Such is his disinterest in the fortunes of small business in this country.

The fact is that recent surveys are showing some positive signs, and those signs are emerging in our economy for business in general but for small business especially. I
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draw the attention of the House to three surveys; one has been mentioned by the Prime Minister and the Treasurer today—the Dun and Bradstreet survey. Christine Christian, the CEO of Dun and Bradstreet, says:

The improvement in key indices such as employment and sales expectations is a sign that the economic stimulus has been successful in encouraging household spending.

What she is referring to are the sales and profits expectations, which have recorded their greatest increase in the survey’s 21-year history. So that is good news—good news for business confidence, good news for small business.

There is another survey out today also: the National Australia Bank’s Monthly Business Survey and Economic Outlook for July. It says, in part, that business confidence jumped to what is actually the best since August 2007 and is now approaching long-run average levels. So that is good news too—that is very good news.

Another survey on small business particularly was released on 6 August, just a few days ago, and was headed ‘Small business profitability outlook moves into positive territory for the first time since September 2008’. It says that SMEs are faring better than their larger counterparts, and goes on to say:

It’s clear that the recent improvement in consumer confidence and actions taken by Federal and State governments has aided the economy and in turn had a flow on benefit to SMEs.

That is all good news and, as the Treasurer has indicated, the International Monetary Fund has endorsed the nation-building stimulus package of this government, 70 per cent of which is investment in nation-building infrastructure.

As I have said before, confidence is absolutely paramount to our economic recovery. Yet, time and time again, the opposition continues to talk down the economy; indeed, going so far as to claim falsely 154,000 job losses. But since the government was elected total employment has grown by 146,000. So that, too, is good news.

We know that there are challenges. We know that the unemployment rate is likely to rise; but the fact is that small businesses are doing a great job in Australia in this respect. They are saying to their staff: ‘We want to hold on to you as staff members because you are being loyal to us. You have been loyal to us in the past and we are being loyal to you. When the recovery comes we think that loyalty will be repaid.’ That is a great social achievement—and a great economic achievement—for the four million Australians who work in small businesses.

We know that the road to recovery will be long and bumpy, but the journey is not helped by the opposition constantly talking down the economy. The government will continue to support small business on the road to recovery and into the building decade. We are all in this together: small business, larger businesses, everyday Australians and the Rudd government. That is everyone—well, almost everyone; the coalition is not in it. The coalition talks the economy down, day in and day out. Get on side, join the Australian people: everyday Australians, large business, small businesses and the Rudd government, and stop the whinging, carping negativity that has characterised every day in opposition by this miserable mob.

Emissions Trading Scheme

Mr BALDWIN (3.58 pm)—My question is to the Prime Minister. Prime Minister, would you advise the House exactly how much more the cost of bus, taxi and rail fares will increase under your emissions trading model?

Opposition members interjecting—
Mr Rudd—Those opposite, at least up until recently—and based on interjections today, perhaps still—support an emissions trading scheme. In response to my earlier statements that they had backed away from a cap-and-trade, those opposite said that no, they had not.

What is the feature of a cap-and-trade? It is that the carbon price changes, and if the carbon price changes—set by the market—accordingly the flow-through impact to the economy changes over time as well. That is the first point, which the honourable member should be familiar with, as I know he is a critical contributor to these deliberations in the shadow cabinet.

The second point I would make is that if the honourable member were serious about the measures that we put in place to compensate households, particularly those at the lower end of the income spectrum, for the flow-through impact on goods and services, I would draw his attention to what we have said for the lowest income earners and for middle-income earners and for motorists. It is made explicit in our policy on this matter, and I would draw his attention to it.

Emergency Management

Mr Hayes (4.00 pm)—My question is to the Attorney-General. Is the Attorney-General aware of today’s release of the report by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute into Australia’s emergency management arrangements? Will the Attorney outline what actions the government has taken in respect of emergency management policy and practices?

Mr McClelland—I thank the honourable member for his question. The Australian Strategic Policy Institute has, as we would expect of them, published a very solid piece of work and it will make a significant contribution to emergency management policies and practice in Australia. What the report does at the outset is highlight in no uncertain terms that climate change poses a clear and present danger to the national security interests of Australia and Australians. It indicates the extent to which Australians will be exposed to risks to their personal safety and, of course, the risks to the infrastructure of our nation. The report specifically notes that, in his National Security Statement of December 2008, the Prime Minister mentioned that climate change represents a most fundamental risk to national security. Indeed, in large part, that was the basis of the government, in that National Security Statement, adopting an all-hazards approach to national security—an approach which, regrettably, has been shown to be valid because of recent tragedies that we have seen unfold late last year and this year.

To deliver on that long-term strategic focus the emergency management sector in my department has been restructured into three divisions. The first division will focus on long-term planning and policy development; the second will focus on training and equipment acquisitions; and the third, the traditional Emergency Management Australia, responds to an immediate crisis. The new structures are assisting in moving beyond what has been described in that report—I believe validly, at least in part, when I took office—as something of a reactive capability to emergency management situations rather than a long-term planning and forward-thinking approach. Many of the other recommendations in the report are also being addressed. For instance, the Ministerial Council for Police and Emergency Management is currently developing a climate change action plan, and that is going to be considered at the November meeting of the council. Also, in April of this year, the Council of Australian Governments, under the leadership of the Prime Minister, agreed on an urgent need for governments around Aus-
tralia to re-examine Australia’s arrangements for managing national disasters. The task force charged with improving oversight and coordination of that natural disaster policy and response arrangements will report to the September 2009 meeting.

In the meantime, the Commonwealth and state governments have agreed to implement a national emergency warning system. That was the subject of some deliberation, of course, during the recent royal commission into the Victorian bushfires, again, under the leadership of the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth has contributed $26 million to establish that national emergency warning system, which we are hoping will be in place in October-November for the start of the bushfire season. At this stage it will focus on the capability of sending messages to billing addresses and to fixed lines, but we have allocated funds to improve that capability in due course and to have it specific-location based. We are also working with Telstra and other interested groups to look at what we can do to show national leadership in the area of triple-0 response capability. Telstra is under an obligation to provide that capability to link those suffering distress to state emergency responders. Also, the Commonwealth and state governments are currently in the process of developing a national catastrophic disaster plan, and indeed a national exercise will be conducted next month as part of the development of that plan. Also, the Attorney-General’s Department have been negotiating a national partnership agreement on the disaster resilience program. For the 2009-10 year we have allocated $79.3 million for that purpose.

A considerable amount has been undertaken to engage in national security reform at a government level, but in addition we are engaging with the private sector by expanding the role of the trusted information-sharing networks which were developed under the period of the former government, primarily to focus on engaging the private sector to assist in protecting private infrastructure. We are expanding the role of those trusted information-sharing networks to specifically focus, again, on an all-hazards approach and specifically on emergency management. Finally, the report notes the crucial importance of volunteers and that a lot of work is being undertaken at a federal and state level to look at what we can do to encourage, to train and to retain our volunteers. We will shortly be having something to say about that.

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

MS ANNE WEXLER

Mr Rudd (Griffith—Prime Minister) (4.06 pm)—Mr Speaker, on indulgence: it is with great sadness that we mark today the passing of Anne Wexler, a true friend of Australia. There are few people who have played such a critical role in developing ties between Australia and the United States. Anne was responsible for many successes in this vital relationship, but her role in the establishment of the American-Australian Free Trade Agreement Coalition and in the American Australian Leadership Dialogue are particularly noteworthy and worthy of the attention of the House.

The coalition was the central vehicle for promoting the bilateral free trade agreement between Australia and the United States. Anne mobilised her network of contacts across the breadth of the US political and business spectrum to deliver wholehearted support for the FTA when it came up for consideration by the United States congress. The coalition grew to well over 200 members and undertook a systematic advocacy campaign in congress that helped persuade both the house and the senate to pass the final free trade legislation with handsome ma-
Anne also played a decisive role in establishing the American Australian Leadership Dialogue. As a forum that creates and builds contacts between so many influential Australians and Americans, the dialogue is an essential element of the bilateral relationship. It would not have been capable of achieving this success were it not for Anne’s enthusiastic personal commitment and work. The dialogue has its 17th meeting this week in Melbourne and I know many members of this place will be attending. Anne had wanted to attend that meeting and we will all miss her involvement this year as we honour the role that she played in making the dialogue possible in the first place. Beyond these formal achievements, Anne played a key role in introducing many leading Australians to Washington, its people and its corridors of influence. For example, my own understanding of America and Americans is richer because of her support, and Therese and I will miss her guidance and support greatly.

Anne’s personal energy, her drive, her sophisticated understanding of how to make things happen, as well as her wit, humour and toughness when it was needed, were evident to all who worked with her. She is being remembered in the United States for her contribution to several generations of American politics and for the remarkable example that she set as a successful, progressive, powerful female figure in Washington in occupations largely dominated by men. Anne Wexler was awarded an honorary appointment within the Order of Australia in 2002 for her outstanding service to Australian-American relations.

We pass on our sincere condolences to Anne’s husband, Joe Duffey, and to all of her family. We trust that as they grieve they will take a measure of comfort from the many friends that she and they have made in Australia and from the significance of her work for all of us. Anne took every opportunity to generate goodwill between Australia and the United States. Today we honour her contribution to strengthening the official and the personal relationship between Australians and Americans and her role in keeping our alliance strong.

Mr Turnbull (Wentworth—Leader of the Opposition) (4.10 pm)—Mr Speaker, on indulgence: I associate the opposition with the Prime Minister’s remarks about Anne Wexler. In a lifetime of achievement Anne did so much to advance the Australia-US Free Trade Agreement, the American Australian Leadership Dialogue and the relations between our two great countries. The leadership dialogue will, as the Prime Minister noted, convene again this weekend in Melbourne, sadly without Anne. She was a dynamic Washingtonian, as only Washington, DC can produce. She was an honorary officer in the Order of Australia, a very rare honour for a foreign citizen. Most importantly, she was a great friend of our nation and a friend whose passing will be deeply regretted on both sides of the Pacific.

Papua New Guinea: Aircraft Accident

Mr Stephen Smith (Perth—Minister for Foreign Affairs) (4.10 pm)—Mr Speaker, on indulgence: in the course of question time today I was advised that Airlines PNG has informed the relevant PNG authorities that Airlines PNG flight CG4684 from Port Moresby to Kokoda today, 11 August, has failed to arrive at its destination and is now considered missing. I am advised flight CG4684 was due to arrive at Kokoda today at 11.15 am Australian Eastern Standard Time. A search is now underway for the aircraft. I am advised that weather conditions are making that search very difficult. That search in-
cludes checks of other airfields in the vicinity.

The Australian high commissioner and his officers in our commission in Port Moresby are now urgently liaising with PNG authorities, doing everything they can to determine the whereabouts of the aircraft. Airlines PNG has advised that 13 people are on board flight CG4684: two crew and 11 passengers. We are, of course, concerned for all of the passengers and the crew but, given the destination, our fear and concern are that Australians may have been on board.

We will do everything we can to ascertain details. I will be in direct contact with our high commissioner after question time and I will do everything I can to inform the House of further details as they come to hand. I thank the shadow minister for foreign affairs for allowing me to give this advice to the House.

AUDITOR-GENERAL’S REPORTS

Report No. 48 of 2008-09 and Report No. 1 of 2009-10

The SPEAKER (4.13 pm)—I present the Auditor-General’s Audit report No. 48 of 2008-09 entitled Performance audit—Planning and approval of Defence major capital equipment projects: Department of Defence and report No. 1 of 2009-10 entitled Performance audit—Representations to the Department of the Treasury in relation to motor dealer financing assistance: Department of the Treasury; Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Ordered that the reports be made parliamentary papers.

DOCUMENTS

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler—Leader of the House) (4.13 pm)—Documents are presented as listed in the schedule circulated to honourable members. Details of the documents will be recorded in the Votes and Proceedings. I move:

That the House take note of the following documents:

- Foreign Investment Review Board—Report for 2007-08;

Debate (on motion by Mr Hartsuyker) adjourned.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Economy

Mr SWAN (Lilley—Treasurer) (4.14 pm)—by leave—From the earliest months of this government I have provided regular updates to the House on the unfolding global recession and its impact on our own economy.

In a March 2008 ministerial statement I warned that ‘the deteriorating global outlook does present a significant risk to the Australian economy.’ In June that year I cautioned that ‘much of the impact on the real economy is yet to be felt’. And in September I described ‘a challenging time for the Australian economy and the global economy’, adding that ‘if we engage and work on the challenges we face, we will come through this difficult time better placed to enjoy and secure the long-term prosperity this government is committed to delivering’. This last point is what the Rudd government has been focused on—getting Australia through difficult times while building long-term prosperity.
On the first day of this new parliamentary session, it is appropriate that I again update honourable members, and through them the Australian people, on global economic conditions, how the Australian economy is faring, the performance of our stimulus, our prospects for recovery, and the challenges that lie ahead.

It is now more than two years since the first signs of the global financial crisis emerged, and next month will mark the anniversary of the collapse of Lehman Brothers. Back then, few were predicting the full severity of the global recession that has now unfolded—a recession that is expected to claim up to 60 million jobs globally by the end of this year.

The most striking feature of this downturn in both developed and developing nations has been the blinding speed with which it has unfolded. The financial institutions and real economies of many nations have been crushed by its brutal and uncompromising force.

The Australian story has been quite different, for three main reasons. Our communities and businesses and workers have all pulled together. Among our inherent strengths are our geographic location and our more secure banking system, bolstered by very effective bank guarantees. And in tandem with monetary policy, we acted quickly and powerfully with three waves of stimulus that we now know have supported thousands of businesses, saved thousands of jobs and prevented a deeper downturn.

We knew extraordinary times called for extraordinary actions. We knew the conditions were unprecedented, and so our response had to be as well. We of course ignored those opposite who said do nothing, instead delivering two major stimulus packages, a budget and a MYEFO, a guarantee of our banking system, and other important measures—all in the last 10 months.

I am proud to say these measures have helped the Australian people withstand, for now, the worst the world could throw at us. But I remain conscious of the ongoing impact of a global recession that will continue to wash through our economy, altering forever the world’s economy and presenting us with a new set of imposing challenges.

Today Australia finds itself countering the worst impacts of the global recession while simultaneously reaching for the fantastic opportunities presented by recovery in this Asian century.

I remind honourable members that conditions in the global economy are still very difficult. Even after upgrading its forecasts last month, the International Monetary Fund still expects world output to contract by 1.4 per cent in 2009. This will be the first contraction of the world economy since World War II. For advanced economies, the situation is even worse, with the IMF forecasting a massive contraction of 3.8 per cent for this year alone.

Australia was one of only two advanced economies to grow in the March quarter. The average contraction across all advanced economies was 2.1 per cent. Eight of Australia’s top 10 trading partners have fallen into recession or contracted over the past year. And the United States and United Kingdom have continued to record falling output into the June quarter.

Despite all of this, we are beginning to see some encouraging signs that the pace of contraction in the global economy is slowing. The IMF now expects world output to grow by 2.5 per cent in 2010—an increase on its April forecast of 1.9 per cent. In our region, we saw Chinese growth of 7.9 per cent in the year to June. And the extraordinary actions of governments and central banks around the
world to support their economies are beginning to have an impact.

These improvements to the global outlook are, of course, welcome. But there is still some way to go before we can say confidently that a sustainable recovery has taken hold. We agree with President Obama that encouraging signs are “little comfort if you’re one of the folks who have lost their job and haven’t found another”.

Even after the crisis abates, it is likely that world output will grow by less than it has in the past, as economies adjust to the effects of greater risk aversion, increased capital requirements in the financial system, and of course lower leverage.

In the face of the worst global recession in 75 years, the government acted early and decisively to cushion the Australian economy. We intervened to ensure stability in our financial system, to support demand in our economy and to put in place the Jobs and Training Compact.

We moved quickly in October last year to secure the savings of 15 million Australians. As Governor Stevens and others have clearly stated, the bank guarantee has been vital to maintaining the stability of the Australian financial system at a time when financial systems were collapsing in other economies.

The government’s guarantee of wholesale funding has allowed Australian banks to raise $110 billion. This money is ensuring banks continue to lend to businesses and households, providing vital support for jobs and growth. Without these funds, our banks would have had no choice but to ration lending to households and small businesses, including through higher interest rates.

In the face of the most severe contraction in global economic activity since the Great Depression, the government moved to support demand in the Australian economy through fiscal stimulus. That stimulus came in three stages—attracting praise from international and local analysts for the speed of its implementation and the foresight of its design.

The first phase provided timely, temporary and targeted income support for pensioners, low-income families, carers, veterans and primary producers. The second phase is delivering investment in shovel-ready infrastructure projects across the country from now until 2011—upgrading schools, homes and communities as part of the $42 billion Nation Building and Jobs Plan. This year’s budget delivered the third phase of our stimulus strategy—larger and longer-term nation building infrastructure projects—the roads, rail, ports, energy efficiency projects and broadband that we need for the future.

Seventy per cent of total direct investment under the nation building for recovery strategy is investment in medium- and long-term infrastructure. Construction is already underway in every community and Australians are hard at work on more than 30,000 separate projects right across the country. We also understand many could still lose their jobs or will enter the labour market but not be able to find work as a result of the global recession. Unemployment will rise, and we have always been upfront about that. Our responsibility is to avoid the mistakes of earlier recessions, intervening early to prevent jobs being lost in the first place while working with those unemployed Australians to build skills for when the economy recovers. We refuse to contemplate a generation of wasted talent. That is why we are delivering a $1.5 billion jobs and training compact, comprising initiatives for young and retrenched Australians and for our local communities.

I am pleased to report to the House that there is now substantial evidence that the government’s measures to soothe financial markets and support the economy are work-
ing, helping to steer Australia through the most difficult period in the global economy since the Great Depression. In the March quarter, Australia’s growth of 0.4 per cent was the strongest of any advanced economy and was one of only two advanced economies to grow in the quarter. Without the economic stimulus, Treasury estimates our economy would have contracted by 1.1 per cent in the December quarter and a further 0.2 per cent in the March quarter. That would have resulted in an economy around one per cent smaller today, translating into more business closures and more Australians out of work.

Recent data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics showed very strong growth in retail turnover in the June quarter. Retail sales are now 5.2 per cent higher than they were in November last year, just before the government’s first stimulus payments to households. In contrast, over the same period retail sales have fallen by 1.6 per cent in the United States, 2.2 per cent in Canada, 2.3 per cent in the euro area and 2.5 per cent in Japan.

The government’s first home owner boost has also provided important support to activity in the housing sector. Finance commitments for the construction and purchase of new dwellings have increased by 59 per cent since October, just before the boost was introduced, and the number of first home buyers has almost doubled.

The second phase of the government’s stimulus plan—investments in shovel-ready infrastructure, education and social housing projects—is also providing significant support to non-residential construction activity. The value of non-residential building approvals almost doubled in June and the recent Access Economics Investment Monitor showed 104 new public sector projects in the June quarter compared with just 14 new private sector projects.

This support for economic activity is also providing support to the labour market. Our unemployment rate, at 5.8 per cent, is lower than any of the major advanced economies bar one. We do expect further increases in the unemployment rate, but Treasury estimates that 210,000 more Australians would be out of work and unemployment would be 1½ percentage points higher if not for the stimulus package. As a consequence, Australia’s unemployment rate is expected to peak well below the double digit rates forecast for many of the major advanced economies.

The success of the stimulus is also helping to support confidence. Consumer and business confidence are now back to pre-crisis levels. Consumer confidence has increased by 23.2 per cent over the past two months, the largest two-month gain since the survey was first conducted in 1975, and business confidence has bounced back to its levels of mid 2007, before the worst of the global financial crisis had become evident.

Just this morning we have seen a significant rebound in the latest business expectations surveys from Dun & Bradstreet and the National Australia Bank. The D&B survey showed that sales and profit expectations recorded their biggest one-quarter increase in the history of the survey and capital investment plans are at their highest point in six years. Business confidence in the NAB survey jumped back to around historical norms. All of these developments will have obvious implications for our economic forecasts, which we will update in the usual way at the time of the Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook.

It is important to remember that the positive signs we have seen in our economy and the recent upward revisions to forecasts by the IMF and the RBA are predicated on our
temporary stimulus being fully implemented. That is why, to those who suggest we should wind back stimulus, I say that would be pulling the rug out from underneath the recovery—not to mention an attack on the small businesses and tradespeople relying so heavily on stimulus to build recovery and employ more workers.

All Australians should be encouraged by these early signs that the economic stimulus is working, but we should be very cautious as well. The external environment remains very difficult, and the events of the past year show just how volatile the global economy can be. Just as it has pushed almost every developed economy into recession, the global recession has savaged the budgets of governments worldwide.

Increased public borrowing is the necessary consequence of falling tax revenues and the implementation of critical economic stimulus packages. In Australia, the effects of the global recession have stripped $210 billion from expected tax revenues, driving the budget into deficit.

In the face of this savage hit to budget revenues, the only responsible course of action is to borrow to finance the temporary deficit. The alternative—massive spending cuts or tax increases—would have resulted in a deeper and longer downturn and much higher unemployment. And those opposite know it, which is why they have still not uttered one word of an alternative fiscal strategy.

Our budget deficit is expected to peak at 4.9 per cent of GDP in 2009-10. In comparison, the 2009 budget deficit in the US is expected to be 13.6 per cent of GDP, in Japan 9.9 per cent and in the UK 9.8 per cent. Net public debt in Australia will rise to 13.8 per cent of GDP in 2013-14 before falling in subsequent years. This leaves Australia in a much stronger fiscal position than any major advanced economy. In contrast, by 2014, net government debt is expected to rise to 75 per cent of GDP in the euro area, 83 per cent in both the UK and the US and 136 per cent in Japan.

As the IMF said of its recent forecasts, this ‘would leave Australia in an enviable fiscal position by international standards’. Despite our position of relative strength, the recovery will be long and tough, with bumps along the way. The fall in global commodity prices is forecast to take up to $50 billion from our economy in 2009-10 and with it tens of thousands of jobs. Private investment has retreated. In the coming months and years, there will inevitably be positive and negative data on the economy. This includes the possibility of future negative quarters of growth.

Unemployment will continue to rise for some time, even after the recovery gets underway. It is inevitable that global interest rates will rise from their current historical lows and, as the Reserve Bank has indicated, domestic rates will eventually rise as well, and the government will have to ask Australians to accept more tough decisions to bring the budget back to surplus.

Global economic growth will be weaker than over the past decade. The IMF forecast of global economic growth of 2.5 per cent next year is significantly lower than the global growth rate of 5.1 per cent in 2007.

Growth is being supported today by the extraordinary actions taken by governments right around the world, and as we move into 2010 I expect growth to be increasingly supported by the global rebuilding of inventories. How the world sustains growth beyond 2010 remains the key challenge.

Not only will we see weaker global growth as we emerge from the global recession but the very structure of the global economy is changing dramatically. No
longer will we be able to rely so heavily on the American consumer as the primary driver of global growth. Emerging economies, in particular in our region, will increasingly need to generate their own internal demand.

While it will bring challenges, this rebalancing of global growth toward our region could make Australia one of the biggest beneficiaries of the recovery, if we are bold enough to grab the opportunities of this Asian century.

These adjustments will need to be facilitated by sound global policies that deal with the aftermath of the global recession and ensure the world economy is placed on a more stable path. That is also why we are working through the G20 to ensure a coordinated global response to these issues.

Over the coming months, the Prime Minister and I will be working at summits in London and Pittsburgh to ensure the G20 delivers on its commitments to reform the global financial system and ensure that efforts to support growth and jobs over the year ahead are fully implemented.

Consistent with this, we will work with our G20 colleagues to map out an appropriate time frame and processes for the coordinated unwinding of the extraordinary measures taken by governments to stabilise the global economy and support recovery.

At home, we are also building a sustainable growth model for our future. This challenge begins with the recognition that the source of Australia’s future growth cannot simply be the same as for our past growth. In the past, Australia has relied too much on the rollercoaster of mining and stock market boom and bust for our prosperity. Instead, Australia needs to build more stable foundations for growth for the future, by reforming the economy to boost long-term productivity growth. Though the path to global economic recovery will be tough, this does not mean that we must accept the inevitability of lower growth in Australia.

We have a great opportunity to take stock of where we want to go as a nation and how we seize the opportunities presented by the global recovery. If one lesson is clear from the last year it is that tomorrow’s prosperity will turn on policy choices that we make today.

Our task is to maintain the focus on investment in the drivers of productivity at the same time as we pay off the debt that was forced on us by the global recession’s impact on revenue. That means implementing a broad and ambitious agenda that encompasses:

- tax and welfare reform;
- a surge in nation-building infrastructure investment;
- an education revolution;
- a CPRS and investments in energy efficiency;
- a national broadband network;
- fixing the health system;
- working through COAG to create a seamless national economy; and
- tireless regional and global engagement.

The way our communities, our businesses and our workers have pulled together during the worst global recession in 75 years shows this reform agenda is not beyond us. We have faced the toughest global conditions in living memory yet still moved forward with confidence. This is what makes the stimulus greater than the sum of its parts—the impact it has had on confidence. Almost everybody in the Australian community has had a role to play in building that confidence in each other and working together to meet these massive global challenges.

Unfortunately, that does not include those who sit opposite. Having voted against the
stimulus that they know is working to support jobs, their focus now is on a con job on debt and an argument that the stimulus is now actually too successful and should be wound back. For these reasons, many Australians would probably share our suspicion that the Liberal Party would prefer to see the country fail than the stimulus succeed.

In contrast, this side of the House agrees with the assessment of the Governor of the Reserve Bank last week. He said:

The fact that we have managed to get through the past nine months in reasonable shape ought to give us some quiet confidence in our capacity to meet the current set of ‘crisis’-related issues.

Having demonstrated our capacity and resilience in the face of a global recession, I know Australians have the commitment and determination necessary to finish the job on stimulus and meet the big challenges of a new, post-crisis global economy. For our part, the government is investing in productivity and long-term growth and focusing on carving out for Australia a bigger share of global wealth than we enjoyed before the crisis, because that, in turn, means a new generation of prosperity for our people, built on sturdier and more enduring foundations than ever before.

I ask leave of the House to move a motion to enable the member for North Sydney to speak for 22 minutes.

Leave granted.

Mr SWAN—I move:

That so much of the standing orders be suspended as would prevent the member for North Sydney speaking for a period not exceeding 22 minutes.

Question agreed to.

Mr HOCKEY (North Sydney (4.37 pm)—On behalf of the opposition I would like to respond to the Treasurer’s statement. We are pleased to acknowledge the better news which has recently been released on the performance of the Australian economy. It now looks as if this downturn, thankfully, may not be as severe as was forecast in the May budget papers. In fact, this downturn may not be as deep as the recession of 1990-91 under Treasurer Paul Keating. This will place Australia as one of the best performing economies in the developed world, an outcome which all Australians should justifiably be proud of.

The one area of economic performance which remains of significant concern to the coalition is the state of the labour market. Although recent data suggest that employment is holding up well, the pool of unemployed potential workers continues to swell. Unfortunately the situation in the labour market is forecast to get worse before it gets any better. We need to have policies that create full-time jobs for all Australians who want them.

The Treasurer has made much of the government’s stimulus packages helping to insulate Australia against the global financial and economic downturn. The Treasurer wants to claim all the credit for himself, but we believe his emphasis on the importance of the government’s measures is ambitious and misplaced. The Reserve Bank, in its recent monetary policy statement, identified five factors that have helped to maintain Australia’s economic activity through the crisis. These include, firstly, the strong state of the Australian financial system. I would argue that this is in no small part due to the regulatory reforms introduced by the former coalition government, which provided for separate and stringent regulatory supervision of deposit-taking institutions. That included, when I was the Minister for Financial Services and Regulation, the establishment of ASIC and APRA. This was a contentious issue at the time because different financial systems had different types of supervision. It was rather contentious to take prudential su-
pervision away from the Reserve Bank, but it was exactly the right thing to do, particularly in the face of a global financial crisis.

The second factor is the significant monetary stimulus arising from a 4¼ per cent reduction in the cash rate since September last year. I note that that is the second largest reduction in the cash rate of any major Western economy. It is second only, I think, to that of New Zealand. But even though that flowed through significantly to home borrowers because of the large number of Australians who have variable home loan rates, the IMF stated that only 150 basis points flowed through to business lending. Under those circumstances it certainly has not had the same impact.

The third factor is the fiscal stimulus. It was a massive fiscal stimulus. The combined packages represent, as a percentage of GDP, one of the largest fiscal stimulus packages in the developed world. The opposition was concerned about the scale of those stimulus packages, particularly when aligned with the massive reduction in interest rates and what the Reserve Bank calls the ‘transmission factor’ of that money flowing through into households because so many Australians have variable rate home loans.

The fourth factor is the depreciation of the exchange rate last year, which provided a massive stimulus to domestic activity and helped to deliver real benefits in the terms of trade, which flowed through in the national accounts.

Finally, the fifth factor is the strong recovery in China, which has boosted commodity prices and demand for Australia’s exports. As the Treasurer knows, the terms of trade since the election of this government have become more favourable for the government than they were under the previous coalition government. Having said that, they have come off reasonably significantly in the last few months. But, even so, commodity prices remained relatively strong in particular areas because of the massive fiscal stimulus in China and their consumption of, in particular, iron ore.

On the fiscal stimulus, while the Reserve Bank does give some credit to the government’s spending, I want to make two observations. The first is this: if you throw enough money at a problem then of course it must have some impact. Our concern with the government’s spending is that, in part, there is enormous waste and mismanagement in their reckless level of spending—building school halls where a school hall is not needed, building facilities in schools that are about to be closed and using centralised contracting where local suppliers could have done it sooner and for much less. The government’s so-called Building the Education Revolution has delivered too little for too much money—and it is all borrowed money.

The second point is that this government was able to engage in the massive fiscal stimulus because the opposition left the Labor Party with a very strong budget. We did so after having paid off $96 billion of the previous Labor government’s debt, leaving in excess of $60 billion in net assets in the Future Fund. Significantly, we left a surplus, not the suggested fiscal deficit that some have been running with—particularly the odd media commentator. We left the government with a significant amount of money. So the government inherited fiscal strength that was pretty much unmatched anywhere in the developed world. This provided the government with enormous capacity to use fiscal policy to offset the cyclic downturn in the economy without jeopardising the structural integrity of budget policy over the longer term. This government seems reluctant to acknowledge the hard work and fiscal discipline exercised by the coalition in government.
The Reserve Bank seems to recognise that the specific stimulus measures put in place by itself and the government were only intended to provide support during the time of crisis. Now that crisis appears, thankfully, to be passing, although I do note a word of caution. There is continuing evidence that some western European banks have to deal with major credit risk over the next two months. That is one of the areas where this crisis may well reappear in a dramatic fashion, which we and everyone else need to be very mindful of.

In preparing its growth and inflation forecast out to the end of 2011, the Reserve Bank has done something quite extraordinary. Instead of assuming the cash rate will remain unchanged over the forecast horizon, as is its usual practice, the bank has explicitly assumed ‘a return to a more normal setting of monetary policy over the forecast horizon’. It says:

… it is not particularly realistic to assume that the cash rate remains at the historically low level of three per cent out to the end of 2011.

It is very interesting the Reserve Bank should say that. We ask ourselves: why would the Reserve Bank have felt the need to explicitly signal that it will unwind its very stimulatory monetary policy settings over the forecast period? The answer may be that it believes the economy no longer requires that degree of support. Well, terrific; it is saying the economy is going to perform better than it was expecting. Moreover, it may feel, I think, that the dangers in continuing to run such an expansionary policy stance—which was conceived and implemented when the outlook was far darker and uncertain—are of concern.

The government is not heeding the Reserve Bank’s warnings. Even in the Treasurer’s statement which he just concluded, he insisted he would implement his stimulus package in full. He said:

… the positive signs we have seen in our economy … are predicated on our temporary stimulus being fully implemented.

The Treasurer intends to continue with what we believe to be his irresponsible deficit and debt strategy, despite the Treasurer himself acknowledging that there are signs of economic recovery underway. In the May budget papers, the Australian economy was forecast to remain below trend for only three years. The Treasurer indicated in his statement today that the outlook is likely to be revised in MYEFO to account for the better economic news in recent months, and yet the Treasurer plans to continue to run significant budget deficits and to progressively increase government debt for seven consecutive years—seven consecutive years of deficits for what may be three years of below trend growth. The accumulated debt load will be higher by Australian standards. Gross debt is still expected to peak at around $315 billion, and the interest on that is somewhere in the order of $17 billion a year.

There are several risks in continuing to run expansionary policies when the economy no longer needs them. The first is that it can lead to higher inflation and higher interest rates. Using a motoring analogy, both the Reserve Bank and the government have the pedal to the metal. This was done to accelerate the car out of a slow spot. But now the economy is accelerating nicely again it is sensible to ease off the accelerator; otherwise there is a danger of overshooting, of breaking the speed limit, of approaching the next curve far too rapidly.

Underlying inflation in Australia is still at levels which are high relative to history. Over the year to the June quarter, the Reserve Bank’s preferred measures of core inflation increased by 3.9 per cent, down from
the peak of 4.7 per cent in the September quarter 2008 but still well above the target band of two to three per cent. The Reserve Bank forecasts that core inflation will return to the bottom of the target band by the end of next year but on the proviso that the bank itself returns monetary policy to what it calls a more normal stance—that is, an increase in interest rates.

Higher interest rates make it more difficult for the private sector to service and repay debt. They make it more difficult for households to purchase their own homes. They make it more difficult for business to invest and create jobs. And higher interest rates are to the detriment of ordinary households and businesses in this environment, particularly as unemployment continues to rise. I want to emphasise this: we are facing a period of rising interest rates while unemployment continues to rise. So unemployment continues to rise and interest rates are rising at the same time, which is quite a cocktail for the average Australian family.

The second concern with the government’s deficit and debt addiction is the danger of what is called crowding out the private sector from the capital markets. The Minister for Finance and Deregulation scoffed at me and said crowding out does not exist. It is well recognised that Australia is in fact capital deficient. We do not save enough money as a nation to finance all our investment needs. The pool of domestic savings is actually small, so to make up the shortfall we are a large importer of capital from offshore. This has been the case since white settlement began in Australia. We have always imported money, particularly for investment in mining and infrastructure, and our access to offshore markets is not unlimited. It depends on the willingness of offshore investors to provide the funds. This is particularly important to recognise at a time when most major Western economies are running large fiscal deficits and, to fund these deficits, they are tapping the same global capital markets as Australia is for funds.

We saw the dangers inherent in Australia’s reliance on overseas funding as the global financial crisis unfolded in 2007 and particularly in 2008. Access to offshore capital markets for some corporates and institutions became very difficult and, as a consequence, there were some business failures. Other businesses had to rely on their traditional domestic banking relationships to replace the lost funding. Access to funding for the economy as a whole became much tighter. I believe it is unrealistic for government to assume that its borrowings will never compete with or displace private sector borrowings. It is extraordinary that this government believes that its unprecedented borrowings will not crowd out the private sector’s own demands for capital, particularly as the Australian economy begins to grow again.

Let me illustrate the point by examining the government’s proposed borrowings against the expected availability of capital from offshore. The budget forecast that Australia will run a current account deficit of $5.4 per cent of GDP this year and $5.3 per cent of GDP in 2010-11. This is estimated to equate to around $62 billion this year and $70 billion next year. In 2009-10 the government proposes to borrow $57.6 billion and in 2010-11 it proposes to borrow $57.1 billion. So if the federal government were to finance itself entirely from offshore borrowings, it would vacuum up 93 per cent and 82 per cent of the expected available offshore funds. Overwhelmingly the government would be borrowing from offshore to fund what would be its budget deficits. On top of that we will have capital hungry state governments borrowing in the markets for their own significant infrastructure programs, state government and utility borrowings that will rise to a conservatively estimated $230 billion by
June 2013. That will give a total public sector debt of around half a trillion dollars.

My point is that the federal government and the state governments will be placing enormous significant additional demands on global capital markets at a time when the outlook for the Australian economy is improving. So when Australian small businesses, Australian farmers and large Australian corporates are desperately trying to raise money to buy the machinery, to invest the money that is going to create jobs and to take advantage of the growing economy, the cost of funds—the cost of borrowings for those small businesses, those farmers and those manufacturers—will be incredibly high, unnecessarily high. The 800-pound gorilla in the market, which is the Commonwealth government with its AAA guarantee, and so many other organisations enjoying the AAA guarantee, will be competing directly with those small businesses, those farmers and those larger businesses for desperately needed capital.

That does not take into account the massive borrowings of the United States, which are of increasing concern to me and I think are of increasing concern globally. The sovereign debt of the United States is reaching extraordinary levels, in excess of 80 per cent of GDP. That of the United Kingdom is heading towards 100 per cent of GDP, and obviously Japan and a number of other countries are in excess of that. The net impact is that Australia is competing for scarce money and the biggest player in Australia, being the government, is competing with the smallest businesses to borrow money. Who is going to win? Obviously the government does, and business pays a heavy price.

Private sector businesses will want to take advantage of a more optimistic environment as the economy recovers. They will want to increase their borrowings to finance the investment that will underpin growth today and tomorrow and they will want to increase borrowings to create the jobs that Australia so desperately needs. I know that those businesses have been turning full-time jobs into part-time jobs at a rapid rate over the last few months. But if they cannot get the investment to seize the opportunity of a growing Australian economy then those part-time workers will become unemployed people. There is not much room the government is leaving for the opportunities at hand.

I have outlined the dangers of continuing with an irresponsible program of deficit and debt. It runs the risk of driving up inflation and certainly driving up interest rates. It runs the risk of denying much-needed capital to private businesses and, because of the reckless commitment of the government to run deficit and debt, it runs the risk of choking off the economic recovery just as we start to see some benefits flow through. I note that the Treasurer in his address talked about improving productivity. We look forward to the tax and welfare reform initiative of the Henry review. We look forward to seeing that. But I ask the Treasurer: what is the productivity benefit of building school halls, $14 billion in school halls, in what the government has called an education revolution? The government says it has got a surge in nation-building infrastructure investment. Well, the government has in fact handed out more in cash to individuals than it is spending on infrastructure that it says is going to improve productivity in the economy.

On a national broadband network, Senator Conroy does not know whether he is Arthur or Martha in relation to the National Broadband Network, when anyone who takes a cursory glance at it will know that his ambitions of it being completed in a short period of time are simply that, unachievable ambition. On fixing the health system, there is a grab list of initiatives in relation to health,
but, similar to the Obama plan, no plan to pay for it. How is it going to be paid for? There is mention of working through COAG to create a seamless national economy. I thought the economy was actually performing pretty well. I thought it was in pretty good shape and that one of the reasons why we have come through this is that it is in good shape. But I do not think having the states simply thrust their hands into the till is going to improve the performance of the economy without actually getting some real outcomes from the states.

On a tireless regional and global engagement, I say to the Treasurer this: there is a very real risk of capital protectionism, and we are at one with the government in being opposed to that capital protectionism which is emerging. That is exactly one of the reasons why you have to try not to spend as much money as it may be tempting to do when you have an unlimited credit card thanks to the hard work of the coalition. The danger for the government is that, at the time when money will become most scarce, the time when so-called quantitative easing—that is, the printing of money—comes to a dramatic end because of rising inflation and rising interest rates, it will be too late, because the money will not be in the bank. Then you will not be able to spend the money so necessary to build the infrastructure, to build the economy, to build the enterprise that is going to create and protect jobs for generations of Australians.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Emissions Trading Scheme

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

The failure of the Government to consider changes to its Emissions Trading Scheme which would result in greener, cheaper and smarter outcomes.

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

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Leader of the Opposition) (4.59 pm)—The Prime Minister was plunged into darkness today as the lights went out in question time. I am afraid that he wants the lights to go out in small businesses all around Australia. So indifferent is he to the consequences of his poorly designed emissions trading scheme—the one that he demands we must vote for on Thursday—that he does not even know what impact it will have on the price of milk. When the question was asked by the Leader of the Nationals, ‘What impact will the scheme have on the price of milk?’ it was greeted with laughter and derision from the members of the government. That is how little they care for the challenges of Australians meeting higher prices as a consequence of a poorly designed scheme. He was asked too about the impact on taxis, buses and rail—again, no idea. One begins to wonder whether the Prime Minister really knows what he is asking the Senate to vote for this week. Does he have any idea?

So we asked him a very straightforward question about the differences between the way in which his scheme deals with agriculture and the way the Waxman-Markey legislation deals with agriculture in the United States. Virtually anybody with any interest in this topic, keeping up to date with the coverage in the press in Australia, would know that, under the Rudd scheme, emissions from agriculture will be included in the future but not in the near term. But there is little or no availability to agricultural offsets and little or
no availability for green carbon, whereas in the United States agricultural emissions are excluded but there is enormous availability for agricultural offsets and, indeed, a very long list is written into the legislation. That is a very significant difference. The Prime Minister did not have a clue. He had no idea what we were asking him about; he was completely clueless.

Here we are a great agricultural nation. It is a vital part of our economy. If we go along with the Prime Minister, we are about to vote for a scheme that will put Australia’s farmers—just looking at the farm sector for one minute—at a massive disadvantage to their competitors in the United States or in Europe because their competitors will have access to revenue from agricultural offsets, from improving soil carbon and from all manner of differing tillage practices that will result in generating carbon credits in the United States and in Europe, but not here. That is a fundamental question, a vital issue of design and just one of many. We have a Prime Minister who demands indignantly that we must vote for his scheme and he had no idea what we were talking about. He had no idea what ‘Waxman-Markey’ was or who that was; he was clueless.

At 11 o’clock yesterday, the coalition, together with Independent Senator Xenophon, released a Frontier Economics modelling study that demonstrated why Labor’s emissions trading scheme—which they have named in true Orwellian style the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme, overlooking the fact that we are all made of carbon and carbon is in fact the source of life—is not just flawed but friendless. The Frontier research showed that an emissions trading scheme can be made to be greener, cheaper and smarter. What was the reaction of the government to this scheme?

This was not a Liberal Party publication or a Senator Xenophon publication. Speaking on behalf of the coalition, we had gone earlier in the year to another leading economics consultancy, the Centre for International Economics, and sought advice on the government’s proposals. David Pearce, the executive director there, came back and said, ‘The government has failed to model alternatives to its scheme.’ It has failed to do that. We begged the government to do that. ‘No way,’ they said. As always with the Rudd government, there is no way but their way. They are absolutists. So we asked Frontier Economics, who is a leading firm—probably the leading consultancy in this area and the firm that designed one of the world’s first carbon trading schemes, the New South Wales Greenhouse Gas Abatement Scheme—to do that work.

We commissioned the work that the government was not prepared to do. This very eminent firm, whose professionals are just as competent and just as skilled as anybody working at the Treasury or anybody working in the Department of Climate Change, came up with a report that showed that, with changes to the design of the scheme, we could achieve a cheaper scheme, a greener scheme and a smarter scheme—cheaper, greener and smarter.

What was the Rudd government’s response? At 9 am, a full two hours before the Frontier study was released—that is a full two hours before he could have had any idea of the details of the report—the Minister Assisting the Minister for Climate Change, on the other side of the table here, went out and did a doorstop interview and said, ‘It won’t work.’ He did not have to read it.

Mr Hartsuyker—He is a psychic!

Mr TURNBULL—He is a psychic. Hours before he could even know, he just rejected it perfunctorily and completely. The
honourable member behind me said, ‘He is a psychic.’ Well, he actually is the climate change minister’s sidekick, not a psychic. The sidekick’s senior minister, Senator Wong, addressed the National Press Club a little bit later. By now, the Frontier report was public. Of course, there was no time to have done anything more than quickly scan it. She may have scanned it—we do not know—but she certainly could not have absorbed it. What was her report? Just think about this. This is the most important piece of economic reform, the most momentous reform this parliament has considered for many years and possibly in our lifetime. It is a huge change to our economy and we all know it has enormous risks. The issue of the design is a crucial one that has been debated in many forums. Every single country has got a somewhat different scheme. There are great debates about design. It is a critical, crucial issue to the survival of many Australian industries and to the jobs of thousands of Australians.

And so, presented with a report from this expert group that has done many reports and studies and work for other governments, including other Labor governments, what does this enlightened, open-minded, thoughtful climate change minister say? She just says, ‘It’s a mongrel.’ All I can say is that she may well say it is a mongrel but that, by dismissing it so recklessly, she just underlines what a dog of a scheme she has in the Senate this week.

The fact is that the Australian people expect the government to do its work thoroughly on this. They expect a government to listen, discuss, consider and negotiate, especially when it comes to matters that affect their weekly budgets, their ability to get a job, their ability to make their small business successful and their ability to live in a growing and sustainable economy and environment—especially when it concerns this vital matter, the biggest, most significant policy-driven structural change to the Australian economy in our lifetimes. But this arrogant Labor government will not listen. It is determined to go ahead and implement its own flawed and friendless emissions trading scheme regardless of the costs and consequences. It sees no alternatives, hears no alternatives and certainly will not speak of any alternatives.

The government like to talk about climate change deniers. Let me say that the only denial at the moment is that being practised by the government. They are denying that there is any wisdom other than in themselves; they are denying that there are any designs that are valuable or useful to consider other than their own. We have a Prime Minister who, when asked about the legislation that will doubtless in some form become the benchmark and template for emissions trading schemes around the world—the American legislation—had no idea what we were asking him about. He was clueless.

The government will not shift from its ideological hang-ups: big government, high taxes, heavy spending and excessive regulation. Part of the genius and wisdom behind the Frontier Economics proposal is the fact that, because it results in dramatically lower electricity prices in the near and medium term, you do not require that enormous churn of money—that enormous tax grab by the government which the government then recycles. It is a vastly superior approach.

Of course, the government tries to pretend that it actually has a scheme that is complete, and it says to the opposition, ‘Well, where are all your detailed amendments?’ The government has not even finalised its own scheme. What it is asking the Senate to vote on is a coathanger. It is asking the Senate to vote on a coathanger that the government will then choose to hang whatever coat or
jacket it wants to on. It is still designing its own scheme, and the assistant minister knows this better than anybody. Negotiations are still underway with the coal industry, led by the assistant minister opposite. That is Australia’s largest exporter. The coal industry and the assistant minister know that this scheme will destroy thousands of jobs and cancel billions of dollars of investment, including in the assistant minister’s own electorate. He is currently trying to negotiate, caught between the coal industry, the unions working in that industry and his ideological, left-wing colleagues on the other side, and he is trying to find some changes. They are not going to be agreed between now—

Mr Combet interjecting—

Mr TURNBULL—He is smiling; he knows I am dead right. So what he is seeking to do is to get the Senate to agree to a framework for a scheme that is actually a work in progress.

What about another big industrial sector? We have talked about agriculture; we have talked now about coal. What about the electricity generators? There they are; that is about half the emissions. They have been offered compensation that is clearly, plainly inadequate. It is going to devastate the balance sheets of the generators. So the government has asked the investment bank Morgan Stanley to examine these balance sheet effects and come back and report on what additional compensation or changes to the scheme design could be made. With coal the whole scheme is in negotiation, so the senators do not know what they are voting for there, and with the generators it is all under negotiation again and subject to this report from Morgan Stanley. Most of the detailed regulations governing how various industrial activities are defined and compensated under the emissions trading scheme remain unreleased. Rules for fewer than a dozen of what could be up to 100 sets of sector-specific regulations have been finalised.

Yesterday, by contrast, we presented a proposal from Frontier Economics that would see average annual household power bills only $44 higher rather than $280 higher, as under the Rudd ETS. It presented much smaller and more gradual increases in power bills, and that, of course, dramatically decreases the need for compensation to households, eliminating or dramatically reducing the fiscal churn. Of course, another very profound benefit of the approach recommended by Frontier is that hundreds of thousands of small businesses will also experience a much lower increase in their electricity bills. Under the government’s proposed scheme, many households would be compensated for the large and abrupt hike in their power bills, but no such compensation is envisaged for businesses even though they consume more electricity than households. Rather than the loss of 26,000 regional jobs revealed by the modelling of the CPRS, Frontier’s proposed changes would lead to net gains of 42,000 in employment in regional Australia. The Frontier proposal will see an improvement in employment in regional Australia; the Rudd government’s CPRS will see the devastation of regional and rural Australia.

As I said, this is not something that has been worked up by a policy committee of the coalition; this is the work of one of the leading firms—arguably the leading firm—in Australia, the firm that designed one of the most successful and earliest greenhouse gas abatement schemes in the world, the New South Wales GGAS scheme. That work, instead of being treated with the respect, attention and consideration of thoughtful men and women concerned about the future of Australia and Australians’ jobs, has been treated with contempt, and that speaks volumes for the arrogance and the indifference of the Rudd Labor government.
Mr COMBET (Charlton—Minister for Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science and Minister Assisting the Minister for Climate Change) (5.14 pm)—You would think, listening to the Leader of the Opposition, that the opposition is seeking to debate a piece of coalition policy. But what was released yesterday by the coalition was a report by a consultant that adds to a whole host of reports that have been published in relation to climate change and the development of an emissions trading scheme. In fact, it is not coalition policy, as confirmed by the Leader of the Opposition, and it means that the only substantive piece of policy work advocated by a political party in this place that is in the form of detailed legislation that has followed many, many months of detailed preparation and work and extensive consultation—the only piece of substantive policy work—is represented in the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme legislation which has been passed by this House and which is currently before the Senate. That is the only piece of detailed work that is the subject of consideration and relevance here. In two days time in the Senate a vote is due upon that scheme, and it is important—given that it is the only detailed policy work, it is in the form of legislation passed by this House, and it is currently before the Senate—that we do revisit exactly what that legislation is founded upon, and what it intends to do from an environmental and economic standpoint.

The underpinning foundations for the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme are the science. The science is unequivocal. It is the overwhelming consensus view of international scientists—represented in the fourth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, involving 1,250 scientists with peer reviewed work from 130 countries—which tells us that the climate system is warming, and that human-induced emissions of greenhouse gases are responsible for that warming. The science is also telling us that the impacts of climate change are unavoidable and, if we are able to stabilise emissions at present levels, warming of at least 0.6 degrees Celsius will occur. However, if no action is taken—if there is no cogent policy response by this government and others around the world—we will see, on the basis of the scientific evidence, temperatures rising by up to five or six degrees Celsius above 1990 levels by the year 2100.

We must therefore dramatically reduce emissions, or serious consequences for society, for the economy and the environment will be the result. With increased ocean temperatures and acidity, our own Great Barrier Reef—which contributes to important biodiversity and, on an economic front, about $5 billion and around 60,000 jobs to Australia’s economy—will be prejudiced by these climate change events. A study released this week, for example, by Oxford Economics showed that total bleaching of the Great Barrier Reef would cost approximately $38 billion.

So we are confronted with a hugely important and serious challenge, and there is no excuse for inaction. The cost of inaction on every possible front, environmentally, socially and economically, will be far greater than the cost of taking action to combat climate change, and the government is committed to that action. We have set ambitious targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in this economy, and, of course, as this place is well familiar with, we have set a minimum, unconditional, targeted cut of five per cent in domestic emissions by the year 2020 if no other action is taken internationally in the context of an internationally negotiated agreement. But we have also set a medium-term target of cuts of up to 25 per cent in greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2020 in the context of a comprehensive, international agreement. This government will play
its part internationally to help shape a global agreement consistent with stabilising carbon dioxide equivalent gases in the atmosphere at 450 parts per million, and our targets are consistent with that goal.

The Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme will work by putting a price on carbon to help transform our economic structure to a lower carbon future. In partnership with that initiative, the other great institutional change that this government supports that is in legislation before this House is contained in renewable energy target legislation. This government proposes to increase the renewable energy target to 20 per cent of our electricity supply by the year 2020. In partnership with that, we are making huge investments in energy efficiency: $3.8 billion alone to install domestic insulation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, we are supporting significant investment in carbon capture and storage technology to try and commercialise that technology to the benefit of the coal industry and lower-cost power generation, and we are supporting up to a $19 billion estimated investment in renewable energy sources by the year 2020.

The CPRS has been developed following many years of debate that go right back to earlier years in the Howard government. Eventually, under great pressure, the former Prime Minister, John Howard, commissioned Dr Peter Shergold to prepare a report and ultimately the coalition adopted an emissions trading scheme as its policy—but that was about the end of any action we saw from them and it was, of course, very late in the day. They never signed Kyoto. They are populated with climate change sceptics. They never took concrete action.

This government committed to the Kyoto protocol, in one of the first acts of the government. We are on track to meet our targets under that particular international agreement in the period 2008 to 2012. We have commissioned Professor Ross Garnaut to do comprehensive work. We have prepared a green paper and a white paper. We have consulted extensively with industry. We have prepared draft legislation. There has been months to consider it. Significant changes were announced to our policy position on 4 May in the context of the global financial crisis. And at every point along the way we have been cognisant of the economic issues that are pertinent to this policy issue, and we have acted to support jobs in the economy and to help provide a buffer against the impact of the global economic recession in the context of introducing the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme.

What have we seen from the other side? Nothing but chaos and delay—every attempt made to grasp at straws to try and delay consideration. As the Prime Minister said in question time today, on at least seven and now on eight occasions excuses were found for delayed policy responses in this context. There are climate change sceptics on the other side: the member for O'Connor has been extremely vocal; the leader of the National Party in the Senate has been no less vocal in challenging any policy response by the coalition in relation to this issue.

The underpinning principles of the CPRS are absolutely sound and have been worked through very thoroughly. It is a cost-effective cap-and-trade scheme that will meet hard targets, and we need to have a scheme that will meet targets. It will drive a carbon price through the economy. It has broad coverage, and cost effectiveness and equity across different sectors of the economy because of its broad coverage. In fact, 75 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions in our domestic economy are covered by the scheme.

Agriculture has been the subject of some debate. Of course, we have committed that
agricultural emissions will be excluded from the scheme—at least until the year 2015—with a decision on their ultimate inclusion or otherwise due by the year 2013. And we have provided for credits to be created in relation to forestry activity under the CPRS. This furphy that has been put forward that agriculture is somehow being disadvantaged or included here in relation to the emissions is demonstrably false, of course. There will be adequate opportunity for all of the interests in the agriculture industry to continue to advance their opinions and do the detailed work that is necessary in partnership with this government.

There has been some talk about jobs and the impact of the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme on jobs in the regions and in what are termed emissions-intensive trade-exposed industries. This government has acted very carefully, in consultation with industries like aluminium smelting, cement manufacturing, zinc smelting, alumina refining and a whole host of others that I think we can adequately describe as both emissions intensive in their production processes and trade exposed, where we need, of course, to be cognisant of their competitive position in the international marketplace. We have done an enormous amount of detailed work to support those industries during the introduction of the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme, and to support the jobs of people in those industries.

The Leader of the Opposition is alert to the fact, of course, that I am a representative from the Hunter region. I can tell you that I am very, very conscious of the impact of the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme in my region. I am in consultation with the aluminium smelters in the region, with the coal miners in the region and with the electricity generators in the region. The Hunter is the heartland of coal-fired electricity generation for New South Wales. Eraring Energy, in my own electorate, produces 25 per cent of baseload electricity in New South Wales, and to suggest that these matters have not been considered carefully by the government is completely and utterly absurd. We have put on the table $750 million in transitional assistance over five years to support jobs in the coal industry in relation to those mining operations which have the most methane-intensive coal seams—a feature of the geology of our coal deposits within this country.

In relation to the issue of the price of milk and the CPI impacts—endeavoured to be raised in the clumsiest conceivable fashion by those opposite during question time today and in the Leader of the Opposition’s contribution—the government has done and published a detailed analysis of the price impacts in the most extensive Treasury modelling ever undertaken in this country in relation to a reform such as this. And we have put on the table a $6 billion assistance package that will ensure that low- and middle-income households are shielded from the price impacts of the introduction of the CPRS.

Let us come to the electricity generating sector. This is the sector that in the Frontier report—which is not coalition policy—I think it is fair to say receives the most assistance. It is proposed, under this Frontier report, to carve the electricity generation sector out. It produces up to 40 per cent of the country’s greenhouse gas emissions, but we will carve it out and we will put it under the operation of an emissions intensity arrangement. This is not a new arrangement. I was in a perfectly sound position at 9 am yesterday morning to respond, given the leaks that have emanated from the coalition side of politics about the Frontier report over the last week. From the media reports, our own experience in speaking to Frontier Economics, in listening to the advocacy of Mr Danny Price—who was running the press conference yesterday for the coalition—and in
speaking to Mr Price, this emissions intensity concept is not a new concept. It has been around, it has been considered in all the formulation of the CPRS, and we were in a very sound position to know exactly what was coming.

The fundamental problem with an emissions intensity system as advocated in relation to this issue is that you cannot be certain about the delivery of hard targeted reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. When you add to it the coalition’s wish list that all emissions-intensive trade-exposed industries get 100 per cent free permits, we bring in the coal industry’s fugitive emissions—the methane emissions I alluded to earlier. They are all going to get 100 per cent free permits. Agriculture is going to be excluded for all the foreseeable future—that is 16 per cent of Australia’s greenhouse gas emissions.

What we have here is a magic pudding—you are putting all these things together. Double the assistance to the electricity generators, as well as take them out of the scheme, and we are going to have lower electricity prices as well—withstanding all of the costs that are added to the economy—and double the unconditional target. This is just a completely implausible proposition—lacking feasibility, not credible. The modelling is not transparent, the assumptions are not available for proper consideration and it is not even coalition policy. Who knows if it ever will be?

The proposition that is being put forward is not credible. It is not greener to put forward cuts of 10 per cent by 2020 when our proposal will achieve up to 25 per cent cuts in greenhouse gas emissions. It is not cheaper to increase uncertainty across the economy by having two schemes operating somehow in parallel and exempting all of these areas of emissions from the operation of the scheme. In fact, it opens up opportunities for the generators to have windfall gains.

It is not smarter, either, to avoid a decision today to continue to let carbon emissions rise. It is irresponsible for the coalition to advocate this position when it is not even their policy. They have got two days to make up their mind, and they should do the right thing in the national interest and in the environmental interest internationally, and vote for the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme.

Mr ROBB (Goldstein) (5.29 pm)—For 2½ years, since the member for Griffith became leader of the Labor Party, on climate change we have been regaled in the most sanctimonious of terms, with endless references to the great moral challenge of the 21st century—the need for Australia to provide global leadership, the need for political courage, the need for resolve and good policy in this area. Our new Prime Minister basked in the glory of Bali and hinted at 25 per cent cuts in emissions by 2020. No greenhouse gas mountain was too high for our new Prime Minister. Clearly, here was a man of character, a man up to that challenge, a man who would do whatever it took to get the policy response right. Yet, when presented with a proposal to modify their emissions trading scheme, which could be twice as green at 40 per cent of the cost and save 70,000 regional jobs in the process, this Prime Minister dismissed it out of hand. We heard it today ad nauseam: total dismissal. A man who said, ‘This is the great moral challenge of the century’ has turned a deaf ear and a blind eye to any suggestions which contradict his view of the world.

Yet this is not a back-of-the-envelope proposal. The authors developed the first mandated carbon emissions scheme in Australia. In fact, it was the first carbon emissions scheme mandated in the world: the greenhouse gas abatement scheme, introduced by
Premier Carr. The authors of this Frontier proposal are experts in these schemes and in the practicalities of the electricity sector. The authors used the same model and the same assumptions that the government used in the government modelling, which the member for Charlton just talked about with pride. The Frontier Economics people who authored this report used the same model and assumptions as the government models. It is comparing apples with apples. It is a 100-page study which warrants detailed examination. It is a very serious contribution, and the outcomes suggested by Frontier’s work are not incremental. They are huge improvements, and the responsible thing to do would be to consider this work thoroughly and constructively. That is what the government should be doing. It should have the courage, the responsible attitude, the wherewithal and the wit to take advice, to seek advice and to get this scheme right.

As far as the coalition is concerned, the work has been done in good faith. It is the modelling that we had asked for for months and months and months. It is the modelling recommended by the Centre for International Economics in the report we commissioned to advise us on the deficiencies in the white paper. That report, you might recall, said that the Centre for International Economics did not differ with the long-term view of the government for 2050. But that report said that the transition period, the first 20 to 30 years, is a black hole and that there could be all sorts of unintended consequences if the rest of the world did not engage. It said that there were alternative approaches, alternative emissions trading schemes and alternative modifications to an emissions trading scheme which could overcome many serious unintended consequences—that that modelling should be done, could be done and could be done quickly. That was the modelling that the government refused to undertake, the modelling that we have commissioned at our own expense with Senator Xenophon.

We on this side of the House are concerned about getting this scheme right. This is the biggest deliberate structural change in our history. In its current form it will see several key regional centres shrink over the next 20 to 30 years. That is the result of the modelling. To the member opposite, the member for Corio, your area has the biggest carbon footprint in the country. It is estimated that the Geelong region will shrink by 20 per cent over the next 20 to 30 years if you stay with your flawed scheme. This is unacceptable. Things must be done to this scheme. The government must have an ear and an eye to recommendations and to proposals which can overcome the deep flaws and the great disruption that will occur in regional Australia. Yet the member for Charlton inexplicitly dismissed that before it ever got released. How embarrassing. We saw it again today. At nine o’clock, two hours before we put it on the website, he had dismissed it. It is ignorance and it is political game playing. Minister Wong dismissed it in the most derogatory of terms, without any opportunity to study it, an hour after it was released. The Prime Minister today clearly displayed total ignorance of Frontier’s proposal—total ignorance of what is a cap-and-trade scheme. The member for Charlton did the same. They do not understand.

The Frontier proposal is a cap-and-trade scheme. The intensity target across generators, which are 50 per cent of the emissions, tracks down to zero over 20 to 30 years as is proposed in the Frontier report. When it reaches zero it is identical to the government’s CPRS system. It is a cap-and-trade scheme. The GGAS scheme in New South Wales was a baseline in credit. This is a cap-and-trade. There are fundamental differences in the schemes. The government do not understand. They have not read it, they have
not studied it, they do not want to hear of any alternatives and yet, as an aside, the Rudd scheme is littered with intensity targets. All of the free permits being allocated to trade-exposed entities rely on intensity targets that have been established by the government. In fact, the way they treat fuel in this scheme is identical to the way Frontier Economics have treated the generators. But the Prime Minister is unaware of this; he is ignorant of this.

The arrogance of the government is palpable. There has not even been a pretext of consultation. The smell of politics in this is putrid. The government want to use this scheme for a political exercise. You almost feel they are willing us to vote against it. They are trying to create a scheme which we will find deeply damaging, especially to regional centres. They are egging us on to vote against this scheme for purely political purposes. It is a take it or leave it approach not only with us but with all the stakeholders. Greens and industry alike have come to us for months saying they get humoured at these meetings but never get any action on their proposals.

In its current form the government’s scheme will export jobs and emissions because of the massive tax on electricity, which will make key regional industries uncompetitive. It must be addressed. It is a design flaw in the scheme. It is a design flaw which in many respects is designed to maximise the revenue that the government will receive—tens and tens of billions of dollars over the next 10 or 20 years. They are running so hard to dismiss this proposal because it removes their capacity to generate tens of billions of dollars which they could use at their own discretion, much of it to go into consolidated revenue in the years ahead to pay off the unprecedented levels of debt that they have imposed on this economy. This approach of the government is purely politically motivated.

Rather than an abrupt 40 per cent jump in power bills, the changes proposed by Frontier would mean a small and gradual increase, giving households and businesses time to adjust. The onus now is squarely on the government to sit down and discuss this alternative approach. The work also adds much further weight to the argument that Australia should not finalise legislation until we see the outcome of developments in the United States and at Copenhagen. There is no necessity to pass this legislation now. It is a phoney deadline created by the government for purely political purposes. The government must stop playing politics with this vital area of policy, stop the take it or leave it approach and come back, sit down and discuss this with us and others to get a reasonable outcome. (Time expired)

Mr MARLES (Corio—Parliamentary Secretary for Innovation and Industry) (5.40 pm)—Human caused climate change is the great issue of our age. It represents one of the greatest challenges which have been faced by humanity. It represents one of the greatest challenges faced by public policy makers. So there has never been such an important time for people in this building, for people in this place, to conduct their affairs in such a way as to pursue the national interest. History will judge us on what we do here or what we do not do here, whether we like it or not. History will surely condemn the coalition for failing to rise to this challenge and instead allowing itself to slip into the indulgence of its own political interest.

The challenge which is faced by the globe is stark. We have heard that if we were to stabilise emissions right now there would be an increase in global temperatures of 0.6 per cent. If we do nothing and continue on a business as usual approach, we face global increases in temperatures of five to six per cent. The effect that that would have on the delicate balance of the global ecosystem is
hard to completely comprehend, but what we absolutely know is that the effects will be drastic. Garnaut says that we will face a 34 per cent increase in the cost of supplying water to our urban communities. He says that we will face an additional 4,000 heat related deaths every year in Queensland alone.

The Rudd government has approached this challenge with seriousness and with clarity. The very first thing we did was take this issue to the people at the 2007 election and seek their mandate, a step in the democratic process which, if we are to judge our opponents opposite on the way in which they brought Work Choices into this place, is a very novel step indeed. We then commissioned Professor Garnaut to provide us with a report, which he did in the middle of last year. We put in place a consultative process, with a policy proposition in the green paper presented to the Australian people in July of last year. Then in the white paper a government position was presented to the Australian people in December of last year.

What that position contained was a cap-and-trade scheme, the kind of scheme which is being embraced by economies around the world, tailored to Australian circumstances—a scheme which will deliver an unconditional reduction in greenhouse emissions of five per cent by 2020 but as much as a 25 per cent reduction, depending on the pace of the rest of the world; a scheme which will place a price on carbon across the broad breadth of our economy, covering 75 per cent of emissions in the economy; a scheme which will provide assistance to those sectors of the economy which are most dependent upon carbon, such as aluminium, where 90 per cent of the permits to that sector would be provided free; and a scheme which would provide assistance to low- and middle-income earners so that they can deal with any increase in household costs associated with the scheme.

Then in May of this year, with the global economic crisis having an impact upon our economy, we changed the proposition in these respects: we delayed it by a year, we put in place a fixed price of $10 a permit in the first year and we increased the assistance to those sectors dependent upon carbon. That proposition was put to this place in May, it was passed by the House of Representatives in June and it stands before the Senate for a vote in two days time. This has been a considered and measured approach.

Far from there being a failure to consider changes to the ETS, as is proposed in this matter of public importance today, there has in fact been a consideration of thousands of submissions and representations which have been made by all sectors of our society to the government. I doubt there has ever been more consultation for a government proposition as we have seen in relation to the CPRS—and rightly so, given how significant the CPRS is to our economy. We have seen participating in this great national discussion the AiG and the BCA; the ACTU and unions across the country; the Aluminium Council and companies like Alcoa; the cement industry and companies like Blue Circle cement; the automotive industry and companies like Ford; and the environmental sector and groups such as the ACF. But there is one group which has been absent, and that is the coalition.

Whilst this great national discussion has been underway, the coalition have treated us to a practical demonstration of chaos theory. They have been hopelessly split on this issue. We are told that the Leader of the Opposition is in favour of an emissions trading scheme, and yet the member for Warringah said on 27 July this year that he thinks the science behind climate change is ‘contentious, to say the least’. The member for Goldstein is on the record as saying that we should be putting more into proving up the
science. How do you reconcile that with the position taken by the coalition to the election last year, as famously disclosed to the Australian people through the Liberal source to Phil Coorey in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 28 July last year when he said that the reason that the coalition supported an ETS was that ‘We were staring at an electoral abyss. We had to pretend we cared’?

Despite all that disunity, the coalition have been unified on one thing. Far from dealing with the national interest, they have been completely unified on the fact that the way to deal with this issue is to pursue their own political interests. Trying to reconcile that with the extraordinary divisions amongst their own side has led to inertia and procrastination. We have been asking for a policy from the coalition and what we have got back from them is: ‘We’ll tell you after the Garnaut report’, ‘We’ll tell you after the Treasury modelling’, ‘We’ll tell you after the white paper’, ‘We’ll tell you after the Pearce report’, ‘We’ll tell you after the Senate inquiry; in fact, why don’t we have a Productivity Commission inquiry’—even though the Productivity Commission has already stated a position on this—and finally, in May of this year, they said, ‘We’ll wait until after Copenhagen.’

Given what we know to be the position of the Leader of the Opposition, his failure to put a position on the part of the coalition represents his greatest failure of leadership. The Leader of the Opposition now is the coalition’s own wheel of fortune. Every time he walks into a party room meeting, at the beginning of that meeting the party room gives him a big spin—and it is anyone’s guess as to where he will end up. Yesterday he ended up with the Frontier report: ‘greener, cheaper and smarter.’ It is greener, we are told, even though the Frontier report, if it were to become policy, would mean forgoing tens of millions of tonnes of greenhouse emissions compared with the CPRS by 2020. It is cheaper, we are told, even though it would certainly give rise to an increase in uncertainty. You do not have to believe me on that; listen to the BCA. They say:

The BCA is concerned that a baseline and credit model will bring additional uncertainty over time as such an approach may require changes to the baselines to achieve emissions targets and the quantum and timing of such changes is unknown...

And it is smarter, we are told, even though the rest of the world is embracing a cap-and-trade scheme and, were we to go down the path the opposition wants us to take, we would be isolated from the rest of the world. This is a proposition which does not add up. It gives 100 per cent exemptions to emission-intensive industries. It gives 100 per cent exemptions to methane emissions from coalmines. It doubles the assistance to the electricity industry. It does not cover the agricultural sector or the energy sector, even though they represent half the emissions equation in this country. And yet, magically, what has been proposed is a doubling of the emissions reduction target by 2020. If the coalition go down this path, then Malcolm Turnbull will become the David Copperfield of this debate: the great illusionist—and make no mistake, this is a great illusion. But what it is clearly not is opposition policy. That is one thing on which Malcolm Turnbull has been very clear.

We still have not seen a single amendment from the opposition in relation to this scheme. All we are told this represents on their part is a grunt. The reality is that in May of this year the Liberals left this great national debate. What this country knows is that it has to change in relation to climate change. What this country wanted was a say in how we get there, and they got that through the procedure that the government has delivered. The Australian people want
the two great parties to work together on this issue, but the fact that the coalition walked away from this issue in May of this year is something for which they will stand condemned by history. What the people of this country want is certainty. They want it from the coalition, they want it from the government, and they want it from this parliament—and it can be given to them if the coalition votes for the government’s legislation in two days in the Senate.

Mr HUNT (Flinders) (5.49 pm)—On what we are told is the greatest moral challenge of our time, it might lead—just perhaps—to five minutes of the government’s time to consider the Frontier report, and not reject it before it has been put. It might lead to five minutes of the government’s time to meet face to face to discuss a proposition which is greener, because it offers twice the baseline savings that the government propose; cheaper, because it offers $49 billion of potential savings over the life of the program for the next 20 years—or $9,000 per Australian family of mum, dad and two children—and smarter, because it would save 68,000 regional jobs.

We are told that this is the greatest moral challenge of our time, and yet the government’s legislation is for three years hence. With legislation which has an effective start date of three years hence, they are not willing to spend five minutes now to double the baseline for emissions, reduce costs by up to $9,000 per family, and save 68,000 rural jobs. They are not willing to meet to consider and assess; nor will they even allow discussion with what the member for Corio refers to as one of the two great parties of this majestic democracy. We are in agreement on that assessment, but we are in disagreement on the fact that, if this is the greatest moral issue—and I happen to agree—we should talk, we should meet, we should negotiate and we should seek to improve legislation, make better savings and do it at a cheaper cost and in a way which will create more jobs. If those jobs do not matter to the people in the government, then it should be on their heads. If those savings of $9,000 per family do not matter, then it should be on their heads. And if those emissions reductions of double their baseline proposal do not matter, then that truly shall be upon their heads.

This brings me to my second major point. After the unwillingness to talk, discuss or improve, against the background that they are holding the great renewable sectors hostage, they should decouple this day, this hour, this moment, the renewable energy legislation from a scheme which could be improved in terms of the emissions trading scheme. We offer a greener, cheaper, smarter scheme. But they have made the renewable energy legislation hostage to a fundamentally flawed emissions trading scheme. The great solar energy prospects of the mirror fields that we see in California and Nevada could be real in Australia. The great geothermal fields of the Cooper Basin and of Western Australia and Victoria could be real in Australia. Tidal, wave and algae energy are all enormously prospective, but the government are holding those sectors hostage. So the second point is: decouple the renewable energy target, the majestic vision of a 20 per cent clean and renewable energy sector. Decouple that legislation right now, and we will help you pass it. You want real action from us? We offer renewable energy jobs today. Let us preserve the solar sector, which is in disarray because they have abolished the rebate, and let us give the renewable energy sector a real investment pipeline.

Firstly, talk; secondly, decouple; and, thirdly, let us offer the agricultural sector a real future. The government cannot say whether the agricultural sector is in or out. On the one hand they say to them, ‘You’re not really there,’ and on the other hand they
admonish us for not including it. We will not be making burping cows subject to a tax under our regime. It is not just whacky; it also out of line with what is the case under the Waxman-Markey bill in the United States. We will, however, offer the great prospect of green carbon as the biggest single source of carbon emissions reduction in Australia. If you care about carbon reduction, you need to include green carbon in your system—soil carbons, biochar, algae energy. These things are real and powerful—revegetation of mallee and mulga, reafforestation and avoiding deforestation. Include green carbon, decouple the legislation and sit down and talk with us. (Time expired)

Ms REA (Bonner) (5.55 pm)—I rise this afternoon also to talk to this matter of public importance. I stress that that is the segment of today’s proceedings that we are speaking under—matters of public importance. When we hear from the opposition that what they want us to do around this very, very important public debate is simply talk about their report and look at issues around decoupling the renewable energy legislation from the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme, you can tell that they do not take this issue as a serious matter of public importance. They take it more as a diversionary tactic over their leadership troubles. We know that climate change is real. We know that the science is there, that the evidence is there and that this is, as I said, a fundamental matter of public importance. In fact, it is so important that it requires us to completely rethink the way that we as a community, as a nation, indeed as a global society, do business.

We have had at least 10 years of debate about how we as a planet can address this and about how we as human beings can start to reverse in some way the impact that we have had on our atmosphere and on pollution. We have had 18 months of the government putting out green papers and white papers and engaging, as the member for Corio said, in probably one of the most detailed public debates we have ever seen in this country. But what do we get from the opposition? Two days before this vital legislation is being voted on, we get a consultant’s report that is not even endorsed by them as a party policy. It has been cobbled together in six weeks—as I said, not to seriously address the issue of reducing emissions and pollution but in fact to divert the public’s attention away from their leader’s appalling approval ratings and continuous drop in the polls.

It is a report which has been cobbled together and which has no real substance at all. It has nine vague principles. There is this wonderful scheme that is going to completely exempt those industries which contribute most to carbon emissions in this country. It is not going to really deal with the energy sector at all. They want us to decouple and support renewable energy. At the same time, it is going to deliver an even bigger reduction in emissions than what is proposed in the government’s legislation! This is not a magic pudding; it is a half-baked magic pudding. It is a furphy that has been put up by them, and that shows no real intent to debate or address these very fundamental issues.

The opposition claim that our legislation is an attack on farmers. It is not. In fact, if you speak to people in regional and rural Australia, they will tell you that they are some of the biggest victims of climate change and that they are desperate for the government and the community to address this very critical issue. If you actually talk to people about what the challenges are on this particular issue—

Mr Hunt interjecting—

Ms REA—We hear from the opposition again that it is an attack on jobs. I think it is really interesting that they would actually
argue this point. It sounds a bit like the doomsayers who talked about the introduction of technology—in particular, computers—and how it was going to destroy our way of life, how people would lose jobs and how the whole of our society would fall apart. We are now fundamentally dependent on computers. We now have many, many wealthy people who have made a lot of money out of computers. We now have a whole different approach to the way that computers support our industry and our basic needs. This is the same sort of debate. This is about looking at how we can protect the future, create a sustainable environment, create a sustainable economy and not have this head-in-the-sand attitude to what is of fundamental importance.

This issue is also of great concern to our neighbours. I was talking at a human rights conference recently to members of the Pacific Islands. This is not an academic debate for them about a consultant’s report; this is about whether they have fresh, clean water in their creeks, rather than salt water because of rising sea levels. This is about land being reclaimed.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. DGH Adams)—Order! The discussion is now concluded.

COMMITTEES

Intelligence and Security Committee

Membership

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. DGH Adams)—Mr Speaker has received a message from the Senate informing the House that Senator Coonan has been discharged from the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security and that Senator Trood has been appointed a member of the committee.

COORDINATOR-GENERAL FOR REMOTE INDIGENOUS SERVICES BILL 2009
MIGRATION AMENDMENT (PROTECTION OF IDENTIFYING INFORMATION) BILL 2009
PRIVATE HEALTH INSURANCE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2009
CAR DEALERSHIP FINANCING GUARANTEE APPROPRIATION BILL 2009
SOCIAL SECURITY AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (PENSION REFORM AND OTHER 2009 BUDGET MEASURES) BILL 2009
APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENTARY DEPARTMENTS) BILL (No. 1) 2009-2010
APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1) 2009-2010
APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2) 2009-2010

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

RURAL ADJUSTMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2009
FAIR WORK (STATE REFERRAL AND CONSEQUENTIAL AND OTHER AMENDMENTS) BILL 2009
FAIR WORK (TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS AND CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS) BILL 2009
NATION BUILDING PROGRAM (NATIONAL LAND TRANSPORT) AMENDMENT BILL 2009
INTERNATIONAL MONETARY AGREEMENTS AMENDMENT (FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE) BILL 2009
HEALTH WORKFORCE AUSTRALIA BILL 2009

Assent

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

COMMITTEES

Economics Committee

Membership

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. DGH Adams)—Mr Speaker has received advice from the Chief Opposition Whip that he has nominated Mr Morrison to be a member of the Standing Committee on Economics in place of Mr Hockey.

Mrs ELLIOT (Richmond—Minister for Ageing) (6.01 pm)—by leave—I move:

That Mr Hockey be discharged from the Standing Committee on Economics and that, in his place, Mr Morrison be appointed a member of the committee.

Question agreed to.

NATIONAL GREENHOUSE AND ENERGY REPORTING AMENDMENT BILL 2009

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 25 June, on motion by Mr Combet:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr KELVIN THOMSON (Wills) (6.01 pm)—The National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Amendment Bill 2009 has been introduced in order to enable the development of a third-party audit framework robust enough to support the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme. That is one of the key objects of the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Amendment Bill. Around Australia and around the world there is a hunger to tackle climate change, a hunger to tackle global heating. It is the greatest moral chal-
The development of uniform standards for trading in the greenhouse gas emissions market represents one of the global community’s best opportunities for worldwide consistency and comparability. However, according to Deloitte, the industry is currently fraught with variations in rule making and has varying requirements as to the assurance provided by an independent audit. It would be useful, they say, to have a consistent approach to measurement and audit. Emissions reporting standards and the respective auditing standards for emissions related assurance statements are still rapidly evolving. Until such time as standardisation is reached, companies wishing to capitalise on this market opportunity are left with assurance providers that span the spectrum of capabilities. Some assurance providers may lack financial and technical know-how on emissions verifications, while others have little experience in the provision of independent attest services to financial markets. What is needed to move the industry forward are standardised emissions verifications derived from both the regulatory side as well as consistency and professional standards for auditing. That is one of the reasons that we need the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme.

The opposition and some in industry seem intent on blocking the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme in the Senate. Where would we be then? We would be back in the Howard years, with the states setting up their own schemes. If the Australian parliament is incapable of tackling the carbon problem, it is entirely foreseeable and appropriate that the states will move to do so. In my view, that would be better than Australia going naked to the Copenhagen negotiations at the end of the year. But it is not the most desirable outcome for business. Business would be better served by national uniformity and by certainty. The coalition’s approach to this issue is not really helpful to business at all.

The markets should ultimately be a global solution to a global problem. Therefore, it is essential to have a consistent approach to measurement and audit. There is an analogy to the current drive to have consistent accounting and auditing standards in all capital markets around the world. Companies listing their securities in several jurisdictions understandably want to produce only one set of financial statements. Investors trading different securities in different markets want consistent measurement bases so that they can properly compare performance. But these concerns are minor in comparison to those where a unit for carbon trading may have different measurement and assurance bases depending on the market in which it trades but is fundamentally considered to be the same property right. This issue is already a concern for those trying to manage their global emissions exposure and it will become more significant as carbon markets develop and link.

Around the world there are a number of existing emissions trading schemes in place, but we are all still learning what works best. This will be an ongoing process of refinement. We have to deal with the inherent variability in emissions estimates and corresponding compliance imposts to liable parties, including resource allocation for verification of fuel composition and/or emissions sampling. The determination under the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Scheme estimates uncertainty for fuel energy content of up to 50 per cent and emissions between four per cent and 26 per cent.

Emissions reporting standards and the respective auditing standards for emissions related assurance statements are still evolving rapidly. The World Resource Institute and the World Business Council for Sustain-
able Development have developed the Greenhouse Gas Protocol ISO 14040 and ISO 14044. These standards establish current best practice in emissions footprint measurement and reporting. The European Union ETS has developed guidelines for the monitoring and reporting of greenhouse gas emissions. That Carbon Footprint Measurement Methodology is an open standard being developed by the Carbon Trust in the United Kingdom. All of these are consistent in direction but have differences of scope and detail. The existence of multiple standards can give rise to uncertainty. That is why legislation like this is important.

The National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Amendment Bill 2009 makes a number of enhancements to strengthen the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act of 2007. This bill will strengthen the audit framework established by the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act. It will clarify audit arrangements by making a number of other administrative amendments. It imposes no burdens on industry beyond those which originally had been canvassed and intended by the act. I remind the House that the objectives of the original act were to provide a single, cooperative, streamlined reporting system for greenhouse and energy data across all jurisdictions that imposes the least cost and red tape burden needed to maintain the integrity of existing national data collections; to provide for the removal of current, and the avoidance of future, duplicative reporting requirements; to provide greenhouse and energy data that are nationally consistent, robust and comparable across jurisdictions to inform decision making on greenhouse and energy policy and actions by government and business; to make information on the greenhouse and energy related performance of companies available to the public while maintaining the confidentiality of commercially sensitive information; to inform government policy formulation and the Australian public; to meet Australia’s international reporting obligations; and to assist Commonwealth, state and territory government programs and activities.

This legislation makes minor changes to the act to better reflect the original policy intent of the act and better facilitate its administration. In particular, the bill will clarify the definitions of a number of terms relating to greenhouse and energy audits to be conducted under the act; require that results of greenhouse and energy audits be included on the register established under section 16 of the act; extend the secrecy requirements to also cover audit information; and allow for decisions made by the Greenhouse and Energy Data Officer not to register an auditor under the act to be reviewed by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. The amendments will give the data officer authority to audit entities who report under section 20 of the act; expand the scope of the legislative instrument to be determined under section 75 of the act to include requirements for the preparation, conduct and reporting of audits and allow for these requirements to be determined by the minister rather than by the data officer; and require potential auditors under the act to apply to the data officer for registration and allow for detailed requirements on auditor registration to be provided in regulations and in a legislative instrument determined by the data officer. The legislation will make a number of administrative amendments consequential to the substantive amendments and it will also repeal the requirement for the data officer to publish corporate-level energy production information.

The bill allows for regulations to be made requiring the results of greenhouse and energy audits to be published. This will provide transparency and assist the public to ascertain the reliability of a corporation’s published greenhouse and energy information.
point out to the House that the amendments relating to audit are based on feedback from stakeholders received during consultation in October of last year. The majority of stakeholders agreed that the audit framework would need to be strengthened in order to better support the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting System and underpin robust reporting for the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme. I think all of us who have been debating these issues understand the need for data accuracy. We understand the need to get it right.

Auditing processes are dependent on the qualifications and competence of highly ethical engineers, environmental scientists and technical experts in a specific industry as well as on practitioners in corporate law, business management and financial accounting, and the processes depend on their ability to perform and collaborate in a multidisciplinary environment. In addition to leadership and management skills, we need lead auditors who possess broad process and industry knowledge and experience and a deep understanding of audit structures to trace data along process flows of engineering systems for different periods and levels of business activity and a deep understanding of sources of error, variability and uncertainty—for example, emission factors, fuel quality, calibration, transcription, data corruption et cetera. They will also understand risk assessment methodologies, including the ability to apply risk filters on large and complex data samples and also compliance frameworks.

There is a requirement for the implementation of a single, transparent, consistently and universally applied, international emissions reporting program with complementary guidelines, training and case studies based on harmonised standards for greenhouse gas emissions, fuels and energy auditing, assurance, quality control and reporting procedures, including accreditation criteria for the lead auditor and independent verifier registration. The reporting program will also have harmonised methodologies for the estimation of fuel and energy production and consumption and for emissions and corresponding uncertainty assignments with clearly defined terms. That will serve to improve the quality, accuracy and consistency of facility, company, corporate, sectorial and/or aggregated emissions estimations.

So what we are trying to do is ensure that on an international level a tonne of carbon reported from China is equivalent to a tonne of carbon reported from Australia or anywhere else. We need to give company CFOs or financial statement auditors the necessary confidence that their emissions calculations, permit allocations and assessments of financial risks and liabilities are credible, reliable, robust and defensible in keeping with the high standards of public financial accounts reported under the Corporations Act 2001. We also need to streamline the repetitive energy and emissions reporting across all mandatory government schemes and programs, including international ones, in order to reduce compliance costs.

I said earlier that emissions reporting standards and the respective auditing standards for emissions related assurance statements are still rapidly evolving. The development of uniform standards for trading in the greenhouse gas emissions market represents one of the global community’s best opportunities for worldwide consistency and capability. The markets will ultimately be a global solution to a global problem, but it is essential to have a consistent approach to measurement and audit. I also note that there is an opportunity at the Copenhagen climate change talks in December for the Australian government and others to formulate an agenda item seeking that signatories to the Kyoto protocol implement an appropriate strategy for the implementation of an inter-
nationally harmonised set of energy and greenhouse emissions auditing standards for universal application. From an international political diplomacy perspective, this initiative could be a stimulus for greater international collaboration and participation.

I noted in late June an Obama administration report into the impact of climate change on the United States. This report was produced by 30 scientists, working across 13 government agencies. It was quite striking, I think, in the context of the current debate about climate change because it said, ‘Americans have already been living with 30 years of heavy downpours, rising sea levels and blistering summer heatwaves caused by rising greenhouse gas emissions.’ The report is titled Global climate change impacts in the United States. Releasing the report, the head of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Jane Lubchenco, said its key message was that climate change was: … happening now … in our own backyard.

She said:

I really believe this report is a game-changer. I think that much of the foot-dragging in addressing climate change is a reflection of the perception that climate change is way down the road in the future and it affects only remote parts of the world.

In fact, the report said that average temperatures in the United States have risen by about 0.8 degrees over the past 50 years. Rainfall in major storms has increased 20 per cent over the past 100 years, while the sea levels have risen up to 20 centimetres along parts of the east coast. The consequences were rippling through every region of the United States—from the disruption of salmon stocks and a shift in butterfly migrations to rising incidence of asthma, and signs such as increasingly deadly hurricanes and melting ice caps in the Arctic. Failure to reduce emissions could mean catastrophic consequences for human health and the economy, with ferocious hurricanes in coastal regions, punishing droughts in the south-west and increasingly severe winter storms in the north-east and around the Great Lakes.

As this and so many other reports have made clear, the science on this issue is in. Industry and this parliament have been on notice for many years now. If we do not act to deal with these issues, if we do not act to put a price on carbon and tackle the issue with the seriousness and the urgency that the science demands, we will be rightly condemned by future generations for our selfishness and our short-sightedness. I commend this bill to the House.

Mrs MOYLAN (Pearce) (6.17 pm)—I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak on the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Amendment Bill 2009. It was a couple of years ago that I spoke on the original National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Bill. I am pleased to see that important progress was made through that 2007 bill and that we are continuing to review the operation of this bill under the current government.

It is fair to say that we have not had to face these issues before and that it is a bit of a movable feast in trying to establish a process. I was a bit perplexed by the comments from the member for Wills in terms of his criticism of the former Howard government on this because this bill was originally introduced by the Howard government. In this day and age with so much opinion and speculation surrounding the best way forward to tackle greenhouse gas emissions, it is fundamentally important that we get the groundwork right. This is precisely what this bill in its original form sought to do, and I believe the amended bill going to the Senate inquiry has strengthened the operation of those measures.
In 2007, the Howard government set to work on establishing a national framework for reporting and dissemination of information about greenhouse gas emissions, greenhouse gas projects and energy use and production by corporations. The information collected was intended to be used as a basis for future emissions reduction policies. One of the biggest factors considered was how best to minimise red tape but maximise the efficiency of the system. That is a very important point. We do not need to continue to overly burden our industries with red tape. So that was an important part of the brief in establishing the groundwork for this reporting system.

Today, the Australian parliament is looking to further refine the system that is in place by making a number of amendments aimed at improving the function of the act and strengthening the audit framework of the act. This bill fundamentally highlights that when you have a good idea, some good original legislation, and both parties are willing to work cooperatively to better it, we can end up with a world-leading initiative or, as the parliamentary secretary for climate change has said, as a world leader in the collection of emissions data. I think it is a great pity, as we debate this framework, this bill which sets the important groundwork for a carbon pollution reduction scheme, that we do not apply the same principles of working together to get the best possible outcome. That certainly is not the principle that is being applied to the forthcoming introduction of the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme bills into this place. It is such an important issue and it is incredibly important to the Australia public that we work together to get this right because there is a great deal at stake. I think it is a great pity that the government have seen fit to play fairly crude politics on this particular matter that is yet to come before this place.

On the other side of the spectrum, we have seen the Labor government pick up on some very good emissions reduction policy from the previous Howard government but, rather than working constructively, they have played politics again with those initiatives. You hear platitudes all the time from those on the other side about the importance of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, yet they have set about dismantling many of the programs that were set up by the coalition to achieve the reduction of greenhouse gases and, importantly, to allow every citizen to participate in the reduction of greenhouse gases.

The playing of politics is doing none of us any good in this place in terms of public perception. What we are ending up with is a very poor emissions trading scheme which deals the public out of the equation. Making a change to improve Australia’s environment is not something that can be done unilaterally, I do not believe. This is a very, very major issue. It is something that the world is struggling to come to terms with. There is a lot of confusion, there are a lot of different opinions, but I think it is something that requires a bipartisan approach to produce the very best outcomes that we can. The actions of individuals must count and we must do everything we can to actively engage individuals in the process of finding a solution to our environmental problems.

The first key change to be implemented by this bill is some clarification of the terminology used. Previous references to external audits and auditors have been amended to remove any confusion. Taking responsibility for improving Australia’s environment and lowering emissions of greenhouse gases should fall to each and every individual, as I said before, as well as all companies and organisations. Every legislative instrument aimed at improving Australia’s environmental future must be clear and comprehen-
sible to everyone so that we can move forward with a clear plan.

This bill will also establish a new register of greenhouse and energy auditors from which audit team leaders must be drawn. We can then be confident that audit team leaders all have a guaranteed level of competence, expertise and independence. A decision by the Greenhouse and Energy Data Officer not to register an auditor will be reviewable by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. It is enormously important in this foundation legislation that we make sure there is public confidence in what is being done and in that audit process in particular. As I mentioned, we need to do everything we can to empower individuals to make changes in their lives that, en masse, will make a change to their local environment by allowing the Greenhouse and Energy Data Officer to make public certain audit results. There will be greater transparency and reliability in the emissions data and its public availability. While transparency is essential, we must also recognise that in many cases full disclosure of audit reports may compromise commercially sensitive information, and for this reason the bill broadens the secrecy provisions so that the audit team leaders and members who disclose information from the audit process may be liable for two years’ imprisonment.

We need to make sure that this bill is as flawless as possible because it is, after all, the groundwork for perhaps the most significant pieces of environmental legislation in Australia’s history—the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme. There have been a couple of unresolved issues that were raised during the consultations, and the first issue concerns the definition in the bill of operational control. This is especially relevant for contract mining corporations because they would become liable for reporting emissions directly associated with a resource such as fugitive emission in addition to operating liability such as emissions produced during extraction and haulage of a resource. According to Leighton Holdings, who made a submission in this regard, this places contract miners under an unfair burden that should properly fall to the financial operators of mines. One-third of work in the mining sector is undertaken by contractors.

This is not just an issue that will affect the greenhouse and energy reporting framework. The law firm Allens Arthur Robinson has noted that it has also had ramifications on the liabilities under the proposed Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme legislation as well. The correct direction for this legislation is to amend the definition of operational control so that the responsibility for calculating emissions will rest with mine owners as a default position where there is no contrary contractual advice. In this respect, I understand that my colleague Senator Johnston will be introducing in the Senate an amendment to this effect when this bill reaches the Senate. It is a wise amendment that will ensure the smooth operation of this scheme in the mining industry, and I hope that the government take that advice on board and make that change.

The second unresolved issue relates to submissions from PricewaterhouseCoopers and CPA Australia regarding the independent requirement for an auditor at the time of registration with the Greenhouse and Energy Data Officer. These submissions suggested that the independence of an auditor be ascertained at the outset of an audit rather than at the time of registration because they note that independence is relative to the corporation being audited. Again, I hope the minister will consider these issues when the subordinate legislation is being designed.

Reporting schemes are only one part of a move to a comprehensive greenhouse emissions program. Clearly, lowering greenhouse
gas emissions is a vital element to environmental policy and to a carbon pollution trading scheme, but it is not the only means. I think the government have established an incredible record watching things. They have watched fuel and they have been watching grocery prices—and both these policies I might say, despite all that watching, have failed—and they sometimes get so transfixed watching these levels that they limit their vision and can only see limited solutions. This bill will further strengthen the framework for watching greenhouse gas emissions. It is crucial to Australia’s environmental future in this case that we have an effective framework in which greenhouse gas emissions can be monitored and can be watched, but this system should not cloud the view to other aspects of environmental degradation that the community expects us to address.

I think I have said before in this place that we are at a crossroads and we can move forward blindly or we can look all ways and proceed with reasonable caution. By not looking further than an emissions trading scheme the government is driving the nation straight through this intersection, I think, without care or regard for what might hit us. Australia does face a much wider ambit of environmental problems than energy use and greenhouse gas emissions, and it only makes sense that we consider the full ambit of available solutions.

In my home state of Western Australia—and I divert momentarily from the content of the bill—salinity is a major environmental concern, with 70 per cent of Australia’s dryland salinity in Western Australia. The numbers are indeed disturbing. In 2000 over a million hectares of land in the south-west agricultural region was affected by salinity. The research suggests that this number is continuing to rise. According to statistics published by the ABC in an article on its website called ‘Salinity: Australia’s silent flood’, by 2050 over 450 plant species will have become extinct and about $400 million will have been lost in agricultural production as a direct result of salinity.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australia is one of the highest producers of waste in the world. We generate 2.25 kilograms of waste every day per person. Addressing our resource consumption and waste production is surely a universally attractive goal. More needs to be done to focus on the efforts of individuals and not just the big, polluting corporations if we want to make a real difference right here in Australia. Corporations will respond ultimately to the demands of consumers.

I believe in the climate change science. I am not a denier, but I accept that there are still many people who are yet to be completely convinced. If we seek to make a real difference in the environment then we should start from the ground and work up by asking, ‘How can we protect our environment?’ Tackling environmental issues like salinity, waste production, energy and resource consumption, and air and water quality are projects that not only have widespread appeal but also will make a real difference on the ground.

Not so long ago I had a forum in the electorate of Pearce called ‘Our Patch, Our Planet’. It was very popular. We had a very good attendance and some excellent speakers. It was really to try to engage the public generally to look at what we can do individually to improve our patch and our planet. I believe that most Australians, including many children, are willing to make changes to their lifestyles in order to improve the environment. I see this all the time when I am visiting schools. It is the young kids in our community who are really the drivers of changes to the way we live. They are show-
ing great initiative, and I commend many of the schools and many of the teachers who are really inspiring young people to be more environmentally aware.

During ‘Our Patch, Our Planet’ I found the overwhelming desire of the people from the electorate who attended—and there was a wide variety—was to be dealt into this. They do not want a carbon pollution reduction scheme that is just focused on the big corporations; they want to feel that they can play their part and that they will have a role in reducing our carbon footprint. I think that is one of the big flaws in what is proposed for the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme.

One issue that was discussed in ‘Our Patch, Our Planet’ where there seemed to be fairly universal agreement was the need to improve the environment and the need to consider the future sustainability of development. We need to look at and take more seriously a renewable energy program to adapt to the changes that are taking place around us and to consider our natural resource management, including energy conservation, green industries and the development of green skills. I think Australians are willing to embrace policies when they are confident of the benefits available to their local communities—and there are many—from being more environmentally aware.

But the Australian community is certainly far from embracing the proposed Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme designed by this government. It has very little support from a large section of the community. It is a narrow-sighted approach that lacks credibility, and Australians are not confident that it will bring about a better environment for them and their families or even the globe. It is not that they do not want something to happen; they do. But they do not have the confidence that this is the way forward. What they are sure of is that it is going to cost jobs for them and their families and their local communities and that without a global commitment the scheme is very limited in scope. They are frustrated that they are not being listened to and that changes implemented on a personal scale will be negated by aspects of this proposed scheme. It effectively disempowers individuals from making real changes to better their patch and their planet.

Some of the things the government have done have understandably made the public very cynical. We have seen the sudden withdrawal of solar rebates and the remote area solar rebate program, for example, and their replacement with something far inferior. If you listen to the government’s rhetoric of how important this is and then you go through the list of some of the programs they have applied budget cuts to or have diverted funding from you will see they include the Green Loans Program, the Climate Change Action Fund, the Greenhouse Action in Regional Australia program, the Commonwealth Environmental Research Facilities program and the Coal Mine Methane Reduction Program. It is no wonder and justifiable that the public feel cynical about the proposals that are about to come into this place. (Time expired)

Ms RISHWORTH (Kingston) (6.37 pm)—I rise today to support the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Amendment Bill 2009. This bill strengthens the audit framework established by the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act and also clarifies the audit arrangements by making other administrative amendments. The passage of this bill is essential for Australia to be able to develop a third-party audit framework that is robust enough to support the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme. We have heard a lot in the House today about the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme so I am going to add my contribution, especially on the importance of and the need for a carbon
pollution reduction scheme. I think people on this side of the House at least do recognise that the need for a scheme like this is indisputable. The vast majority of scientists recognise that carbon pollution is causing the climate to change. We have seen 11 out of the past 12 years rank among the 12 warmest years since records began. The impact of climate change poses a threat to our economy, our environment and even our health.

As one of the hottest and driest contents on earth, Australia has a lot to lose from the impact of climate change. It has been proposed that anything more than an increase of 1.8 degrees Celsius could destroy the Great Barrier Reef—therefore not only destroying an amazing iconic site in Australia, one of the greatest wonders of the world and a unique environmental ecosystem, but also threatening the tourism industry and the businesses and jobs that go with it. We also know that it is predicted that climate change will see an increase in both the frequency and severity of drought. It has been suggested that the frequency of drought may increase up to 20 per cent over most of Australia by 2030. This poses a significant threat to our agricultural sector and to the country as a whole.

Of particular concern to me as a South Australian is the impact that less rainfall and greater evaporation will have on the Murray-Darling Basin, which has already been stressed by drought, over allocation and years of inaction. The system is simply not able to sustain further reduction in run-off as a result of climate change—thus threatening rural communities that rely heavily on the basin and the city of Adelaide, which also relies on the basin for its drinking water. We have seen in particular the refusal of the National Party to make any meaningful contribution to the policy discussion on climate change. To this day we see the coalition deeply divided on the existence of climate change. I believe that this position of the National Party is an enormous betrayal of the party’s core constituency. Rural Australia is going to be exposed to increased economic hardship caused by prolonged drought and possible fuel shortages to an even greater extent than city dwellers.

One particularly frightening possible result of a changed climate which is not often talked about is the effect on our health. I mentioned this just previously. One of the Australian contributors to the IPCC report is Dr Rosalie Woodruff, the author of *Climate change health impacts in Australia*. She has identified several threats to our health security. The first and most obvious is the likely increase in deaths from heatwaves. As, sadly, we saw last summer in Adelaide, the elderly are particularly vulnerable to the effects of severe heat. Currently over a thousand people die each year from the heat, mainly in nursing homes, but Dr Woodruff identifies that in a worse case scenario this figure could rise to 15,000 as temperatures rise and heatwaves last longer.

A changing climate will also change tropical disease vectors—that is, where mosquitoes that carry most tropical diseases are found. This means that if global temperatures increase then we can expect to see an increase in mosquito-borne illnesses like malaria, Ross River fever, and, according to Dr Woodruff, especially Dengue fever in urban Australia. So this is a particular threat. This is not something that is just a threat offshore; these diseases could potentially become a threat onshore. I know that the health and ageing committee will be looking further into this very important issue. The health impacts of climate change are significant and provide another compelling reason why we must take action on climate change.

For all these reasons, as a country and as a member of the global community, we must
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The coalition also needs to take its head out of the sand and realise the global nature of this problem. Those opposite when in government refused to sign the Kyoto protocol and were part of the ignorance in the global community and not part of the solution. It is in this context that this government has begun to seriously address the climate crisis by introducing the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme. While the opposition has been waiting and trying to see which way the wind blows, changing its position depending on the day or who the spokesperson is, the government has been getting things done.

I commend the Minister for Climate Change and Water for conducting a large range of consultations last year which did show the need for a strengthened audit framework to underpin accurate reporting as a part of an effective Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme. In response to this need the minister has presented this bill before the House today. The key elements of this new framework are the clarification of terms, changes to access to audit results, procedures for the registration of auditors and improvements to the system of public disclosure of energy production data.

The revised terminology proposed by the bill directly links the name of the audit activity to the subject matter being audited, either a greenhouse or an energy audit. It also clarifies the status and role of auditors under the act by referring to them as ‘registered greenhouse and energy auditors’. These seemingly simple changes also assist stakeholders understand the purpose of the audit framework being established which will ensure more effective participation. The government realises that there are a variety of sensitivities in relation to the compilation of information necessary to conduct a greenhouse or energy audit and so this bill includes provisions relating to both the publication of audit results and the secrecy of audit information.

act now. That is why this government has sought to deal with climate change by introducing the CPRS legislation. That is why we need, as this bill suggests, to monitor our emissions, reduce them and begin to transfer to a low-carbon economy driven by renewable energy and green jobs. There is no uncertainty here—the science is clear. It is even clearer than it was in 2007, when those opposite, who were in government, refused to accept the facts and instead preferred to peddle myths. Those opposite continue to be divided on whether or not climate change is even occurring, despite the overwhelming scientific evidence. While the Leader of the Opposition plays political games with his response to this challenge, there remains a lack of certainty for business and the community at large. So if the opposition are serious about working in the national interest—about leaving things better than they found them and about making sure that Australia is sustainable and prosperous into the future—then they need to start getting serious about climate change.

Instead we have seen the opposition deny, deny, deny—until the eleventh hour, when they present a report but no policy. While the opposition call for amendments on the CPRS, they do not suggest any. I believe, along with many from this side of the House, that the events of the last few days have shown that the coalition are not serious about the challenge of climate change. The coalition need to start talking and to have a policy about mandatory renewable energy targets, just as the government has. The coalition need to start considering how to encourage green innovation, particularly in the automotive-manufacturing sector, as the government has with its Green Car Innovation Fund. The coalition need to start supporting funds for the research and development of clean technologies.

The coalition also needs to take its head out of the sand and realise the global nature of this problem. Those opposite when in government refused to sign the Kyoto protocol and were part of the ignorance in the global community and not part of the solution. It is in this context that this government has begun to seriously address the climate crisis by introducing the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme. While the opposition has been waiting and trying to see which way the wind blows, changing its position depending on the day or who the spokesperson is, the government has been getting things done.

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The amendments to the act in this bill provide for the establishment of clear criteria for disclosure of audit results and give the Greenhouse and Energy Data Officer the discretion to make audit outcomes available to the public provided issues such as commercial sensitivity have been considered. Similarly, the bill ensures that the secrecy provisions of the act extend to information gathered whilst conducting audits and apply to all team members. This is common sense given that the auditors typically have access to highly confidential information and the protection of confidential information is important to ensure that businesses feel comfortable complying with the scheme.

The bill will also require potential auditors under the act to apply to the Greenhouse and Energy Data Officer for registration. Detailed requirements for auditor registration will be provided in subordinate legislation that will be determined after consultations that took place in May. The registration of auditors is a necessary requirement to ensure the integrity of the GEDO’s accounting. This is reaffirmed by the bill’s expansion of the scope of the legislative instrument determined under the act on the conduct and reporting requirements of audits and ensures that these requirements are more substantial than the current guidelines.

The final substantial change included in the provisions of this bill is to the public disclosure of energy production data. The bill removes the requirements for the GEDO to disclose corporate level energy production data. The purpose of this amendment is to avoid confusion between economy-wide energy production and other energy production totals. This is because the collection of energy production data is a key element of an effective national climate strategy and an important complement to the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics’ energy statistics.

An additional amendment to the act in the bill released by the Minister for Climate Change and Water and the Minister Assisting the Minister for Climate Change enables the voluntary transfer of reporting obligations to a facility specified under the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act from a controlling corporation, where only one member of its group has operational control of a facility, to a member of a different corporate group that has financial control of that facility.

I began at the outset of this speech by discussing the threat that climate change poses to Australia. It threatens our economic well-being, our environment, and it threatens our health and our future. The bill before us today provides for an effective, transparent and robust auditing system which will align with our proposed Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme. In combination we will be able to reduce emissions and contribute to the global effort of avoiding dangerous climate change. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr Oakeshott (Lyne) (6.50 pm)—I start with a point of reflection for all of us on the first day back debating what is often talked about as part of a suite of the most significant legislation before this chamber in the session and, potentially, in our times in this chamber. I look around and see one fine gentleman sitting and listening, and that is a point of reflection for all of us in thinking about the principles of engagement and whether or not we are engaging with the community on what we, I hope, consider to be of such significance.

Mr Bradbury—I’m listening.

Mr Oakeshott—Thanks. On the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Amendment Bill 2009 and on the suite of Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme legislation generally, I think, depending on what happens in the other place later this week, I
look to be the Independent of Independents and probably the only one who has taken a position of supporting the government in regard to this range of legislation that we saw pass through the last session and see in this one. That does not mean—and I made the point in the speech that I gave when the CPRS legislation went through—that I am 100 per cent happy with this legislation. It is far from an endorsement of this legislation. It is more of a position of supporting the hope that we can turn this legislation into something of substance in the future. Essentially, it is the framework for a market based response to the natural resource question of our times. That is a concept that I support.

I tried to move amendments to the CPRS legislation to establish an independent authority to oversee the framework questions that at the moment—and we are seeing it again in this legislation—are falling in the hands of executive authority and ministerial discretion. If there is one thing that government and this place need to look at very, very closely in all this legislation as it passes through this place, it is that increasing centralisation of decision making around those framework questions, around the minister and the executive, and treating this as a political exercise rather than a policy exercise. This will be dangerous if it is not addressed in the future.

I can understand the reasons in the establishment of this framework for having to have so much intimate control over so many aspects of the framework legislation. However, over time I would hope that there will be recognition of the point I am making about the value of an independent authority looking after the framework questions just as the Reserve Bank looks after many of the financial issues that face this country in independent way and just as, in a state like New South Wales, an independent corruption authority looks after issues of public sector corruption within that state. If this legislation is so important, if this legislation needs to let the science flow then it needs to allow that to happen and not get caught in the political mosh pit of what we are seeing this week and what we have seen in the birth of this framework of the suite of CPRS legislation.

In the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Amendment Bill we see a shift to ministerial authority. This bill as it stands proposes to remove the power and authority of the Greenhouse and Energy Data Officer under section 75, which currently allows the GEDO to determine, by legislative instrument, guidelines to be followed by an audit team when conducting a greenhouse and energy audit and preparing the appropriate reports and to place this power and authority within the hands of the minister. Again, we see the philosophical point of difference between me and, I think, many members of the community and government as to the role that government should play in the future management of and decisions about CPRS and the attached legislation that we are seeing pass through.

It is as much in the government’s interests to keep this at arms length as it is in communities’ best interests. If we can project out 10 or 20 years and if the CSIRO is to be believed that we could potentially pay around eight dollars a litre for fuel, the political pressures on a government to make a decision under this legislative package are going to be enormous, and so it is necessary to keep this at arms length so that hard decisions can be made when they need to be made. If this is science based issue and we want to be genuine in allowing the science to flow, then there are dangers for any government in keeping these decisions within the executive and very close to the relevant minister of the time.
From a business and investment point of view there are also enormous dangers in keeping this as a political rather than an arms-length, independent process in relation to the questions of investment and security of tenure. If I were an investor, even if the indicators were harder and tougher, I would be much more confident in the investment environment if it were at arms-length and independent from the political process. So I think it is better legislation and better policy for the government, in this legislation, in legislation we have seen go through this place already and in future bills—whether they are renewable energy bills or anything that is attached to this general suite of CPRS legislation—to really consider the role of divorcing the executive from the framework that is being built so that, in the future, independence and scientific evidence rather than vested interests or political imperatives can lead the decision-making process. I would hope that the government and the opposition consider that in the future when or if this legislation passes this week or in the future.

Whilst I was not opposed the CPRS, similarly I am not opposed to this bill, other than to make the continued point about the need for greater independence in future decision making. I want to pick up on a couple of key quotes in the second reading speeches on this legislation and on previous legislation made by the Parliamentary Secretary for Climate Change on the question of ministerial power under section 75. When introducing legislation the parliamentary secretary made the point:

This will ensure greater levels of consistency in the conduct of audits and reports provided by auditors.

The point I have just made is relevant in that I argue that this need for consistency in the marketplace should be monitored and regulated by an arms-length body, an independent body, as ministers change, as governments change and as political pressures change and this is where, if it remains a ministerial discretionary power, we lose consistency. Consistency cannot be guaranteed because, as we all know in this place, things change. If it is a genuine exercise in trying to establish consistency, I continue to make my point that we need to look at being arms-length in future framework questions, just as a whole range of independent bodies have been established by state and federal governments around this country.

Another point he made in a previous speech, when I put up the amendments to this question, was that the government basically rejected the concept because they believe the issues are so important they deserve parliamentary scrutiny—which is a very polite way of voting down an amendment. In the end, I would be more comfortable with parliamentary scrutiny, but executive authority is being gained in this legislation, and that is significantly different to parliamentary scrutiny. It is ministerial authority that is being gained. A lot of it will not be seen by us in this parliamentary chamber, and we will have very little control over more than 20 key framework questions that we are seeing go through this place as part of this package of legislation. They are new principles, new concepts, that have been established by government.

I have no problem with those principles or concepts but I do have a significant problem with the fact that the future decision making around those principles and concepts is owned by the people on that bench—in particular, one, two or three of the people on that bench. That has huge problems attached to it from an investment point of view, from a policy point of view and from the point of view of community level confidence in this being a genuine exercise in trying to answer one of the great science questions of our time. I am not opposed to this legislation but
I am concerned about that particular point and I will continue to raise it as each of these attached pieces of legislation come through.

It seems that everyone in this place has been writing essays or reading essays during their break. Over the past six weeks I have been reading an essay, ‘Quarry Vision’, which was published in the Quarterly Essay 2009. It makes some tremendous points about the language that is used in this place, the general view that we have of this legislation and who the drivers of the legislation are. Some of the points it makes include this: not one credible piece of economic research suggests that making deep cuts in emissions by 2050 would cause even a temporary recession let alone crash the economy, cut GDP, send energy prices spiralling or cause whole industries to shut down or flee our shores. Every serious study of the costs finds that deep cuts would delay the trebling of the economy and doubling of real wages by a few years at most later this century.

For all of us in this place, a consideration of the language shows that, rather than saying that halving Australia’s emissions by 2050 would result in the sky falling in and GDP being cut by at least 10 per cent, in reality what is going to happen is that it will not grow by 280 per cent but by 240 per cent. We can use positive rather than negative language about this. There are good business and good community outcomes for establishing a very important market based response to this natural resource question. We should be proud of that, we should be positive about that and we should push for that. We should push for the best policy outcome that we can. There are jobs attached to this. There is a new economy attached to this. I do not think it is something we should be afraid of. All of us in this place should consider the real place in the GDP of today and of the future of the vested interests that are knocking on our doors trying to protect their patch and what we can do to grow the best possible economy of the future as well as be a good international citizen with regard to this key science question of our time.

Mr CHEESEMAN (Corangamite) (7.03 pm)—I stand to speak on the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Amendment Bill 2009. I must say from the outset that it is nice to finally be immersing ourselves in the nitty-gritty of laws that will actually go some way to addressing climate change. It is a really good feeling to be doing this, and it is a long way from the Howard years, when the previous government were climate change deniers. Through those years, Australia became an international embarrassment, blindly following the thoroughly discredited US Republican administration down the path of denial of the absolutely obvious. After that shameful chapter in Australian history, it was a great thing that the Rudd government ratified the Kyoto protocol, and we are now moving to legislate for climate change reduction. This feels even better for me; we are finally getting down to working through the details of practical actions that we as a government need to take.

Australia has moved a long way in the short time that the Rudd government has been in office, but our political opponents, the Liberals, still do not seem to get the problem of climate change. There have been many studies which have totally spelt out the devastation that climate change will cause, and the conclusive evidence that has come from those very detailed reports over many years shows the challenges that climate change will present not only to our economy but to the international economy. The Liberals are still stuck in time; nothing seems to have changed for them at all. They are still stuck between the climate change deniers, the climate change delayers and those who just want to ignore the whole problem.
I had a really good laugh over breakfast during the last parliamentary sitting period when I was reading a piece by Michelle Grattan in her column in the *Age*. Michelle described the current Leader of the Opposition as a horse rider riding two horses at once, one foot on each, desperately holding the reins and trying to keep the two horses together. Two wild horses—Neddy Do Nothing and Neddy Denial, with Malcolm in the middle. He was probably reading a leaked fabricated email at that time, so he may have missed that contribution, but that image was perfectly captured by Michelle. She really nailed it in that one sentence—’Malcolm in the middle’. Of course, that is very disappointing for this nation.

I should say something about the detail of this bill. This bill again shows the rigour with which Rudd government ministers are approaching all legislation. We are trying to be thorough to ensure the legislation works as it was intended. This bill strengthens the audit framework established by the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act by requiring auditors to register with the Greenhouse and Energy Data Officer, or GEDO. It also clarifies audit arrangements by making a number of other administrative amendments. It is also important to note that this bill imposes no burdens on industry beyond those originally intended by that act. This bill will be followed by subsequent legislation that goes through in detail the requirements for the audit registration and the criteria for conducting and reporting on those audits. There is a very obvious imperative for this bill, which is that we must have a very strong and robust third-party audit framework to support the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme and to ensure proper compliance.

I would like to say a couple of other things about the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme because this bill and that legislation are very strongly linked. There is no doubt that we need and, one day soon, will have a Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme. It is simply a matter of time. It is a terrible shame that we currently have all the game playing by the various political parties in this place and in the Senate, particularly by the Liberal Party and the National Party. I believe that most Australians strongly support what Labor is doing and abhor the silly games being played by the coalition. Clearly, putting in place a Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme is extremely difficult, but it is essential. It has implications for our current workforce and provides some great opportunities to grow new jobs and develop new industries. We hope to introduce a Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme in a way that does not tip hundreds of thousands of people out of work, and that is what Labor is doing. We are putting in place a well thought through, well calibrated piece of legislation designed to grow jobs and to ensure affected industries can make that transition.

We must also take account of what the rest of the world is doing, and Labor’s legislation does just that. However, I believe it is also incumbent on countries in the developed world to take a lead. It is the countries of the developed world that created this problem. The less-developed countries have every right to point that fact out. I believe Australia, as one of the most developed countries in the world and also the country with the highest carbon footprint per head in the world, has a moral obligation to lead on this question. That is why the opposition stance is so shameful; that is why the opposition stance is so immoral. My view is that the most culpable of our political leaders in this debate are the climate change deniers. If some people still want to believe the world is flat, I guess that is their decision; they are just foolish and ignorant. My real beef is with those on the other side who know that climate change is happening, who know that climate change
is caused by carbon pollution and greenhouse gases but do not take any steps to address it. They would rather take some cheap, opportunistic response than do something about the most significant issue facing this planet. They care more about scoring points than about their kids’ futures. It is time the opposition took a hard look at themselves on this question.

Another important aspect of this bill is that it requires the results of the greenhouse energy audits to be included on the register established under section 16 of the act. This is extremely important for building on our knowledge base and data sources on business carbon outputs. A more detailed knowledge of the outputs across every industry is very important. A knowledge of what every industry sector is doing is very helpful for developing future policy on carbon reduction and knowing what the impact on those industries will be. The collection of energy production data will remain a key component of this act to inform government on energy flows across the Australian economy and to underpin the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics energy statistics.

Another important aspect of this bill is that it allows for the review by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal of decisions made by the Greenhouse and Energy Data Officer not to register an audit under the act. As well, there are provisions in relation to the registration of auditors. This is clearly an important and necessary control measure. This bill also gives the GEDO the authority to audit entities who report under section 20 of the act and clarifies and increases powers in relation to requirements for the preparation, conduct and reporting of audits. This bill allows for regulations to be made requiring the results of the greenhouse energy audits to be published. Clearly, transparency and public knowledge are a very important aspect of this bill.

The amendments are based on feedback from stakeholders received during consultations back in 2008. The majority of stakeholders agreed that the audit framework would need to be strengthened in order to better support the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting System and underpin robust reporting for the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme. This is evidence of a thorough consultative process and clear evidence that the Rudd government is listening to key stakeholders. We will continue to engage with key stakeholders on these matters. The Rudd government has made a commitment to further consultation on the draft regulations. Yet again Labor is leading in this debate and yet again we are listening to that feedback from our stakeholders.

I would like to conclude on this point. We have seen debate in the media in more recent times on some fairly flimsy reporting that the coalition and others have produced. I had a look at that report today, and clearly the coalition cannot be taken seriously on these matters. I commend this bill to the House.

Mr KATTER (Kennedy) (7.16 pm)—I most certainly have great respect for the minister at the table, the Minister for Early Childhood Education, Childcare and Youth and Minister for Sport, but it disappoints me that there is not a single public servant over there and there are none of the relevant ministers in the chamber as we debate the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Amendment Bill 2009. In the Queensland state house, where I was for 20 years, for all legislation there was a senior officer of the department there. In saying that, I want to pay tribute to Tony Burke, the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, who is the only minister in my 15 or whatever it is years here who has ever come into the parliament to face the music on his own legislation and who has insisted that his senior public servants were in here as well. Not only
are these people out of step with the rest of Australia; they are not even in step with their own parliament. They do not even know what the parliament says, let alone what the people of Australia say.

Mrs Mirabella—They don’t care.

Mr Katter—The honourable member who is representing the opposition interjects. I would not be speaking too loudly if I were her, because I cannot remember any of her ministers ever coming into the parliament when they had legislation. We get up here and talk and I just wonder what the value is of getting up here and talking. Is anyone going to be listening? I wonder about the value of it. But, assuming that there is a value in talking in the parliament, in the house of the people of Australia—which I doubt—I will say what I have said here on numerous occasions. Sometimes I agree with Barnaby Joyce. His comments in the Australian were dead spot-on. Naturally I think they are very clever, because I have said them about 400 times myself! All that is going to come out of the government’s program is a huge windfall profit for the likes of Goldman Sachs, Macquarie Bank and all of these people that buy and sell shares. Whether they are people that do that or not I do not know; I am not familiar with the share market. But I do know this: where they may have had $100,000 million worth of share value that they could trade, now they will have $110,000 million worth of securities that they can trade. I speak with authority on that because I did buy and sell securities as an insurance agent in my younger days. That is all that is going to happen here. It is a glorified managed investment scheme. That is all it is. It will be a glorified MIS.

It seems to me that the proposals that are coming forward from the opposition are more sensible, but I do not think that they will achieve any of the goals or objectives that we want to achieve. I scored Media Watch a few weeks ago because on a Monday I said that there was no problem and on the Tuesday I said, ‘This is how we fix up the problem.’ Of course, they pointed out that I had said the day before that the problem did not exist. I reiterate that the problem with CO2 is 400 parts per million. Imagine if all that roof were illuminated and there were 20 or 30 cockroaches up there. This is like saying that we would not see anything in this room because of the few cockroaches up there. Mr Deputy Speaker, it is 400 parts per million. Are you telling me seriously that the world is going to warm because there are 400 parts per million of CO2 up there? If you know anything about science, you realise how utterly preposterous that proposition is, how absolutely ludicrous and ridiculous it is. There is eminent scientist after eminent scientist debunking this. People will be laughing at it, as they did at the Club of Rome’s prognosis that the world would be starving to death in 1984. It was fairly unfortunate for the Club of Rome that in fact there was the greatest superfluity of food in all of human history in that particular year and food prices throughout the world tumbled through the floor.

People are just picking up some emotive proposition out there and running with it, without any hard scientific rigour whatsoever. You do not have to be Albert Einstein to figure out that it is under 400 parts per million. Get a light globe and put a little pinhead in front of it and then say that there is going to be no illumination coming from the light globe because of that pinhead in front of it. That is how stupid the proposition is. I must also say—and this is where some will accuse me of speaking with forked tongue—that there has been a massive increase. When you are looking at a 1,000 per cent increase in a period of a century or two centuries or whatever it is, even an anti—I am not a sceptic; I
I do not come at it from the point of view of CO2, but there are enormous benefits in reducing the enormous amount of energy that we consume. I had the great privilege and honour of being the mines and energy minister in the Queensland government. Before that I had very senior portfolios which gave me a lot of responsibility in the energy area. When I became minister, we immediately started preparing cabinet submissions and forewarned the electricity commission that we would be putting solar water heaters on the roof of every single government house in Queensland. With the Housing Commission houses and welfare houses, that amounted to about 15 per cent of all of the houses in Queensland having a hot water system on the roof. We felt that because it would be a mass purchase we could give them at very attractive prices and we might even put a little bit of a subsidy in there. But to every household in Queensland it would be very economically attractive for them to put a solar hot water system on the roof, so we reckoned that about 25 to 30 per cent of the houses would take it. Forty per cent of energy requirements domestically are for heating water, so if you take 20 or 30 per cent of that away and use the sun to heat that water, though you have still got to take it to boiling point if you want to make a cup of tea or something, you take 20 or 30 per cent of domestic demand away. We were looking at an expectation that, instead of having to build another 1,000-megawatt power station in the next two or three years, we could postpone that power station for at least 10 years. We have 40 of those 1,000-megawatt power stations in Australia, but Queensland could have postponed one of them and it would not have come on line, because we were using the sun for the supply of that energy.

It amazes me that the government is going to go forward and create tens of billions of dollars worth of securities which will make the security traders rich. I can bet London to a brick that any intelligent, sensible person in Australia knows that there will be a tax dodge involved here somewhere and it will just be another glorified MIS scheme. There is no doubt about that; that is what it is going to come to. But instead of going down the pathway of doing something practical and real, such as the solar hot water systems, no, we do not do that. The government has put some insulation batts in the roof, but I really think when compared with solar hot water they are a joke. The sorts of savings that you are going to get out of that are very small indeed. Of course, 20 or 30 per cent of Australia’s population has a very hot sun. Reflective roofs rather than insulation batts might have brought serious benefit. I would put that forward as a proposition.

I and my colleague from New England, with great support from the member for Lyne, have emphasised the benefits of ethanol on numerous occasions in this place. I am not a greenie, I am an anti-green, but the great patron saint of the Greens, Al Gore, on page 136, I think, of his book *An Inconvenient Truth* names as the first solution ethanol. But have we heard it from the government side of the House? The other side of the House can stand ashamed of themselves. They destroyed the ethanol industry in Australia. We went from 72 megalitres down to 24 megalitres under their regime. They smashed it to pieces, to suit what interests we do not know, but they most certainly were the architects of destruction of the Australian ethanol industry. Whilst America was building 40 ethanol plants a year and Brazil was building 20 ethanol plants a year, Australia built one plant in 40 years. This is something that Australia has a huge advantage in. We still at this point of time have a very sizeable
sugar industry. That industry can be very easily converted, 50 per cent of it or even 100 per cent of it, across to producing ethanol instead of producing sugar. Since the average price for sugar has been very poor for the last seven years, it would be a very good thing to do. All I am saying is that in just two projects in North Queensland there are three million megalitres of petrol—one-seventh of Australia’s entire petrol needs in just those two projects.

I seriously feel physically sick and uncomfortable when I reflect on the fact that my country is a net importer of food. When I say it I am sure no-one here believes me. We are a net importer of fruit and vegetables. The graph has been heading that way for ages and it has just continued its trend, but now we are a net importer of fruit and vegetables. Five years ago we became a net importer of pork, a very important commodity in food intake in this country and in most countries. Last year we broke through with fisheries: we became a net importer of fish products like prawns, fish and everything else that you get from the fishery industry. So we are now only an exporter really of beef and grains, and sugar, a very minor commodity as far as food consumption goes. Isn’t that something to be proud of as a race of people! We occupy a continent in size almost as big as China, almost as big as Canada, almost as big as America, almost as big as Brazil. We are not much smaller than any of those countries. But we are a net importer of food. What is happening? The opposition side of the House decided they were going to close down 40 per cent of the Murray. The honourable member sitting here representing them today is one of those members of parliament. I have to say that if you are then you should have resigned from your party. If any party decides to wipe out the base industry of your electorate, you should do the decent thing. If you cannot talk some sense into them then you should get out and join us over here, move to the cross benches as I had to do.

Let me just reiterate, because there are a lot of people who do not understand what is going on. Sixty per cent of Australia’s existing agricultural production—what is left—is coming off the Murray-Darling. There will be those that say 40 per cent, but I would take Ian Causley’s figure of 60 per cent. I think he would know more than anyone else, and I have always reckoned 60 per cent. I will not go into the details of the argument of whether it is 40 or 60 per cent. We are going to take 3 million megalitres of the 8 million megalitres of irrigation water out of the Murray-Darling River. If you want to do the mathematics, you will find out that what existing agricultural production we have in this country will be cut by a further 25 per cent. What a shameful reflection upon this country. If you produce less food, somewhere someone in this world is going to starve. If there is less food out there, there will be more people starving. There are about 1,500 million people that go to bed hungry every night, in a world with a population of about 6,500 million.

All I am saying is that—whether you want to grow sugar to produce ethanol or whether you want to grow food, I do not really care—I think it is immoral, the worst possible type of immorality, to not use the land. I refer to the words of Ben Chifley, who said, ‘If you don’t use this land, you have no moral right to hold onto it,’ which was almost the exact phrase used by Ted Theodore—probably the most important person in Australian history. That was the same phrase used by McEwen again and again in this place. Is it any wonder that thoroughly decent people like the member for Lyne and the member for New England no longer attach to a party that cannot understand that most basic concept?
I speak with some considerable passion because I love my country. All of my forebears were on the ground in this country in the 1870s. We would like to think we have made some sort of contribution to the country throughout that period. There are many others in this place that could claim to have made a greater contribution than my family; that is for sure.

Consider the proposition that we are proceeding with here. Let me be very direct: we only export one commodity now. We do not have any manufacturing. Our agriculture is just about finished and what is left of it will be killed by the Murray-Darling decision. We have only one commodity left and that is minerals. I represent the richest mineral province on earth. We have 500 million tonnes of iron ore. We have never looked for iron ore; we just happen to stumble across it when we are looking for other things. We have just happened to stumble across 500 million tonnes. We have not mined a single tonne of it yet. We have about one or two per cent—I have to check on the figure, so don’t anyone quote me on that—of the world’s reserves of uranium, which is clean energy but with some dangers.

We have the world’s biggest vanadium deposit. Virtually anything made out of steel, anywhere in the world, will have some vanadium in it. We have one of the biggest silver-lead-zinc deposits, which the Chinese have just purchased. And—God bless them—we hope they will open up and start mining because it has been there for 30 years at Dugall River, which we have not touched yet. We have one of the four biggest oil shale deposits in Australia in this area. There are only 24 major phosphate deposits in the world, and we have four of them.

Having said all of those things, I also say that we will not be opening mines in our area. It is mainly copper-silver-lead-zinc—and I have not even mentioned them as I have been going through. We will not be opening mines in our area. We will be closing four mines; there is no doubt about it.

When you say—as one of the previous speakers did, from the government side—that it is not going to affect industry, I am telling you that they are already running at a loss. How much loss do you think the person in Zurich who owns Xstrata is going to take before he starts closing mines? Do you think he is just there to be Santa Claus to Australians, do you? It is rather a novel concept. If a mine is not making a profit, yes, it might be good business to try to keep it open for a few years, but these mines are desperate. This relates to all of the mines throughout that great mineral province, which is producing nearly $15,000 million a year of export earnings for this country. Many of my good friends go down there and risk their lives, because it is still a very dangerous occupation. There is a limit to how safe you can make a mine. As an ex-miner, I can talk with authority. They are on the cusp. Unless help arrives shortly, they are going to close. Instead of helping, you are pushing them over the edge.

Are there alternatives? Yes, there are. The first solution of the patron saint, Al Gore, is ethanol. The last government smashed ethanol, and this government is clearly determined not to do anything about it. Yes, that is a solution. As far as the electricity industry goes, I have pointed out the most simple of things. When I say 40 per cent of domestic consumption, that is from Szokolay’s book, which is probably the best book ever produced in the history of the world on energy and housing in Australia.

I say with great passion: let us look at serious ways of reducing CO2 if you are serious about it. If you are not a cynic but an anti like me, you would say, ‘Well, we should
give a pull on the reins.’ There is the way to do it, so do that. Do not line the pockets of the slimy, slithering city suits from Sydney. Don’t do that again, please. Don’t create a glorified MIS. Please, look at reality and do something real, substantial and specific for the Australian economy, as the great governments throughout Australian history have done previously.

When this government talked about nation building, I said, ‘That is about Ben Chifley building the Snowy Mountains— (Time expired)

Ms SAFFIN (Page) (7.36 pm)—It is always a bit challenging and daunting to follow the member for Kennedy, because he speaks with such passion and across a wide range of areas in speaking to particular bills—talking particularly about water, mining and industries. It all has relevance to the bill before us, but it is a little bit daunting to follow him. In the electorate of Page, we have a project underway to do with ethanol, one of the things that the member talks about all the time, and I am pleased about that.

I rise to speak in support of the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Amendment Bill 2009. The then Parliamentary Secretary for Climate Change—now Minister for Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science and Minister Assisting the Minister for Climate Change—said it makes minor but important changes to the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act, and indeed it does. They may be minor, but they are very important. I will recap the purpose of the principal act and then outline the nature of the amending bill’s changes, the specific impact and the general impact. I will conclude with a few general comments on the broader framework this principal act and this amending bill respond to, which is climate change.

The principal act established a general framework for mandatory reporting of greenhouse gas emissions and energy production and consumption by industry. This framework is important in facilitating the operations of the government’s efforts to reduce the deleterious effects of climate change, and these effects are not in dispute. There is discussion around the quantum in some areas but not around the fact that climate change is a fact. Climate change is global warming, but it is a result of human activity. I know there are some on the opposite side of the chamber who try to dispute that climate change is a reality, because we do have climate change deniers in this place, but the evidence supports the other view: that it is a fact and we have to deal with it.

I also wish to emphasise this point because, wherever the emissions come from, it is really human activity, and that is what we have to deal with. We have to take action to respond to and deal with it. My point is that humans cause it as the primary base and we humans in government and the community are responsible for changing it. The government does that by leadership. That is what it has done and what it is doing, despite what I would say is the reckless political posturing of the Liberal and National parties. I know that in the National Party—the whole nine of them in this place—there is absolute climate change denial, and even—

Mr Pearce—Don’t get stuck into us!

Ms SAFFIN—The whole nine! It is really astonishing to see—it is amazing—because even in their electorates there are people who know that climate change is a reality and we have to deal with it. But the key issue is that, even with people running around in circles and without direction, we have to deal with it, and dealing with it we are. It also seems that there are a few in the other place, the Senate, who have those views as well, and it is interesting to hear that played out. It is
also interesting to hear the amount of airplay they get for such a minority view.

I will go back a step. The framework of the 2007 act which this is amending is not capable, in its current form, of providing the regulatory mechanisms required to make advances in domestic and international reporting obligations, and those reporting obligations are significant obligations that we have to be very mindful of given that we are now a party to Kyoto, having ratified that. They also give life to the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme, providing a cohesive central repository for the data, which will serve the community and government in a coalesced but also discrete way as it helps us achieve our primary goal, which is about reducing carbon emissions. The amending bill will make the principal act stronger and it will support the government’s policy with the introduction of the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme and the emissions trading scheme, ensuring that the economy is wide and accountable for greenhouse gas emissions, production and energy use, because that is what we have to have being reported.

Because we are dealing with companies and businesses as well, some of them understandably with commercially sensitive information, the amending bill provides the balance between public disclosure of audit outcomes—that which is for the public good—and protection of commercial-in-confidence information. I do not support any regime that hides behind commercial-in-confidence, because sometimes it can be convenient for that to happen—in fact, it annoys me—but this bill actually gives the right balance in that area. But we always have to err on the side of public interest disclosure when we are dealing with these matters. It is a feature of this amending bill that it imposes no burdens on industry beyond those originally intended.

I will turn now to the functions of the amending bill. The functions of the act will be enhanced by the amending bill through strengthening of the audit framework. It replaces ‘external auditor’ with ‘registered greenhouse and energy auditor’ to remove any confusion relating to the status and role of auditors under the act. Importantly, such audit team leaders will be required to register with the Greenhouse and Energy Data Officer, and the AAT—the Administrative Appeals Tribunal—will be able to review decisions by the regulator to not register any auditor. That is an important function.

The stakeholder feedback was supportive of a regulatory process for auditors. It was a good public interest initiative. The legislative instrument may now outline different types of greenhouse and energy audits, thus facilitating scope to target audits to achieve the outcomes. The commercially sensitive information will be protected, and the legislation will also include an offence regarding the release of audit information beyond authorised purposes. Audit team members, as well, are now legally obliged to keep greenhouse and energy information and audit information obtained under the act confidential—I take it by extension, again, unless so authorised to release.

The regulator will be authorised—the way I read it, and I stand to be corrected—on a discretionary basis to publish certain audit results. I am not quite sure on what basis, and I ask the parliamentary secretary if he could address that issue in his speech in reply in the second reading debate. Currently, the regulator is obliged to publish information aggregated in such a way as to render it unusable and potentially misleading and therefore of no utility whatsoever, according to my deduction from what I have read and from some of the comments that the Parliamentary Secretary for Climate Change made in his second reading speech. The parliamen-
tary secretary said that the amending bill will remove that current obligation, and that is a good thing.

I have some general comments. This forms part of the Rudd government’s response to climate change, and it is a matter that was committed to in the 2007 election campaign. The climate change policy had 10 key activities contained in it. There was not just one; it had 10 key activities. It covered a whole range of activities and actions that needed to be taken to address climate change, which are about reducing carbon emissions. The climate change policy was a comprehensive one. It also included the mandatory renewable energy targets.

I now wish to make some concluding remarks regarding the bill and its location in the overarching climate change framework policy. It is really surprising to be standing here after about 2½ years of debate, discussion and discourse, when this information, this policy and these ideas have been distilled in the public arena. In the lead-up to the 2007 election there were policies. In fact, I remember hearing the opposition say that they would commit to a climate change policy—that was said in the 2007 election campaign—and there was a cap-and-trade scheme, an emissions trading scheme, as well. It was a big issue in the election; it is still a big issue now in the Australian community. In my seat of Page, it is a big issue.

In fact, in my area, there has been a whole lot of leadership in this area of climate change, of environmental advances while at the same time being sensitive to the industry base in my area, which is agriculture, horticulture, timber and also retail and a whole range of other areas. After 2½ years we have had green papers, white papers, the Garnaut report and all sorts of reports. There is nothing not known about this. There is nothing that is new. It is in the public domain.

We still have an opposition that cannot get its act together—it cannot get its leadership act together; that is the key issue—and that is not serving the national interest and basic electorate interests by agreeing to the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme legislation with the emissions trading scheme that is before the Senate. To have a policy—no, it is not a policy. To have somebody’s policy, not a policy of the opposition but a policy released yesterday that the Leader of the Opposition said was not a policy and about which he then said, ‘Look at it,’ seems to be more about, ‘Look at me; look at me—I’ve got something too,’ but after seven or eight delaying tactics over a long time.

Even though I am talking about this amending bill, which is about reporting, all of these things fit together like a glove. We need the whole package to ensure that we as a government and an opposition, as responsible parliamentarians, as members of parliament responsible to our electorates, introduce a scheme that will be of benefit to the Australian public. On my local ABC today I heard one of the National Party senators. Senator Nash was on the radio talking about how introducing such a scheme would be the end of the earth as we know it. What absolute nonsense. We only have to look at the Treasury modelling. We just have to look at the figures to do with employment and look at the Treasury modelling on the number of jobs that will be created in this industry: 26,000 green jobs alone. These are not make-believe jobs; some of them are happening now. I have seen newspaper coverage even today talking about the insulation industry and other industries. They are hiring more people. They are training more people. Job numbers are going up.

This is responsible policy. It is responsible environmental policy. It is responsible economic policy as well. No responsible government introduces an environmental policy,
however much it is needed, without factoring in what that means to the Australian economy. It is absolutely essential that those two work together, and indeed they do. There are some people who would like to have higher targets. Wouldn’t we all? All of us want to make sure that we do reduce carbon emissions and that we reduce our environmental imprint, but we have to do it in a sustained and balanced way, and doing that is what it is about.

But I am astounded. There is not too much that astounds me in public life, in politics, but I am astounded by the obstructionism, the obfuscation and just the delaying tactics. Sad to say, it really is more about the member for Wentworth, the opposition leader. It appears to be more about his leadership—or his lack of leadership—or his failing leadership or whatever than it is about good public policy. In a sense, the Australian public is being held to ransom by really base political interests in this area.

This is an issue on which the Australian public have made it really clear that they expect us to act. The government is acting. We face challenges. There are future challenges. This amending bill, which in the whole context of climate change forms part of the package to address those issues, is about leadership, is about responsible action and is about positioning Australia to face up to and meet those future challenges that we have. With those concluding remarks, I commend this bill to the House.

Ms MARINO (Forrest) (7.52 pm)—I rise to speak on the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Amendment Bill 2009, a bill which makes minor amendments to the coalition’s act of 2007. The administrative amendments allow corporations to appeal to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal if they disagree with Commonwealth determinations, through an audit framework which improves the administration and policy intentions of the act. The coalition does not oppose this legislation.

The original act was introduced to establish a national framework for reporting greenhouse gas emissions, various abatement actions as well as energy consumption and production by corporations. The aim was to minimise costs and red tape while providing criteria to calculate greenhouse gas emissions. When I consider corporations in my electorate of Forrest, the consultation and appeals processes are very important to companies such as Griffin Coal, a company that, for example, is currently experiencing major problems with determinations made by the Department of Climate Change and Water’s NGER scheme in relation to presumed emissions default determinations.

Currently, there is very limited capacity for any company to appeal any decision or determination made by the department—something Griffin has made several representations to me about. Griffin Coal owns and operates an open-cut, low-rank sub-bituminous black coal mine in the Collie Basin in my electorate, and is currently required to report under the NGER scheme and existing legislation. I note that Wesfarmers Premier Coal operates out of the same coal measures in the Collie Basin.

Noel Ashcroft from Griffin Coal wrote to the director of the National Inventory Section of the Emissions Reporting Branch:
I am writing to request Griffin be consulted during the determination review process that you are currently undertaking. In particular, we would like to discuss our disagreement with the current default emissions factor for fugitive emissions from Western Australian open cut mines prior to the finalisation of the new determination arrangements. Griffin is concerned that the department has set a default emissions factor for Western Australian fugitive emissions that is based on limited and possibly inappropriate information.
Mr Ashcroft enclosed a report to the director of the National Inventory Section of the department, commissioned from a leading energy and greenhouse reporting consultancy, which reviewed the default emission factors and the presumed basis on which they were established. The key findings of the report were that ‘The default emissions factor for WA open-cut mining was changed during the process of finalising the NGER determination and there was no opportunity for public comment on this change. The emissions factor that has been applied to WA is inconsistent with findings that indicate that Western Australian coal has a negligible emissions factor. There appears to have been an inconsistent approach undertaken in how to apply emission factors to different states.’

Potentially, one of the most relevant parts of the report in relation to the bill before the House was the statement that ‘There is little available information, nor is there clarity on the basis for the decision to change the emissions factor for WA open-cut mining.’ This is a practical example of the need for appropriate administrative appeals processes, specifically at the determination level in relation to existing and future departmental determinations, particularly as in Griffin’s case, when the department’s determination is based on an assumption not supported by independent sources of advice—advice such as that also provided by the Western Australian government Geological Survey and State Mining Engineer; advice that states quite simply that it is well known that Western Australian coal measures are of a different age and development from that on the east coast, and do not contain methane.

I understand also that this position was verified, supported and communicated in writing to the Department of Climate Change and Water by none other than the Western Australian Department of Mines and Petroleum—the state authority. To further support this in an operational sense, the new high-wall miner currently operating at Collie—a machine with an extendable mining arm capable of working up to 300 metres into coal seams from an open-cut pit wall—has a continuous methane measuring capacity. I am told that in the two months the highwall miner has been in operation no methane has been detected in the Collie coal measures, a further reason for Griffin to have a mechanism to appeal NGER determinations.

I am also told that Griffin Coal is not the only company needing a process to appeal Commonwealth determinations. Mines in western New South Wales and parts of Queensland have also been allocated default factors beyond their actual levels and need a determination process to appeal such decisions. An appeals process may also prevent companies from having to conduct extremely costly drilling and tier 3 sampling and measurement processes to substantiate their actual emissions. This drilling and sampling process could cost individual companies tens of millions of dollars.

The need for an accurate default emissions factor in the first instance has major commercial implications for companies like Griffin that have to report under NGER. The default process needs to be simple and accurate, and not made based on assumptions of methane emissions from other states. Clearly, given the problems faced by Griffin, an appeals process at this particular level is a necessity. As Mr Ashcroft stated in his letter to the department:

The situation that exists with the current WA fugitive emission default factor has, if not corrected, the potential to materially and unjustly impact on Griffin’s business. We would like the default emission factor that we use to report to be based on credible information and assumptions.

My most recent information is that the department is ‘looking’ at the information provided by Griffin, but will not change any-
thing until next year. Given the connection between the NGER emissions determinations and the government’s proposed flawed CPRS, accurate assessment and appeals processes are absolutely critical. For practical purposes, this also strongly supports the coalition’s calls to separate the Renewable Energy Target legislation from the CPRS. The need to get it right is paramount. I understand from a recent article in the Age newspaper on 10 August that just over half of the industries required to report their emissions to the government under this legislation have actually registered prior to the 31 August deadline. They do still have time. Of the over 700 businesses required to register, only 400 have currently done so.

The coalition cannot support the seriously flawed CPRS legislation, which will lead to job losses for Australian workers without materially cutting our 1.4 per cent of the world’s carbon emissions. We cannot afford to lose jobs and investments throughout regional Australia, particularly given the unprecedented government debt and deficit. The 40 per cent increase in power bills will affect every Australian and has the potential to render key regional industries uncompetitive and unviable. And we are yet to be told what the complete regulations will be under the CPRS and what and where the additional costs will be. Take today, for instance. A simple question on the additional cost on a litre of milk could not be answered by the Prime Minister.

The CPRS will bring about major structural change in our economy—potentially the most major structural change in our history. Framing Australia’s legislative response has to be right, and clearly the legislation is not right. We have repeatedly been told that it is a friendless scheme, and I have had visits to my electoral office from a range of green groups who strongly oppose the government’s CPRS. Business and industry do not support it. The expectation was that, with such significant structural change, the government would engage in comprehensive legislative, policy and regulatory consideration, consultation and amendment.

As I have said, without materially reducing our carbon emissions, this government is legislating to export jobs, investment and emissions through the design flaws. It is a design which will seriously damage the globally competitive position of many industries, severely disadvantaging our export and import competing industries. It is an incredibly complex design, which is a flaw in itself, creating one of the greatest churning of funds ever designed by a government in our history. This makes it almost impossible for industry to understand and evaluate specific impacts on their individual operations, let alone consider the management of the reporting and churn process.

There is genuine business concern that this complexity in itself will add ongoing major costs to business and industry. Some of the flaws in the scheme are quite fundamental. For instance, coal electricity generators in my electorate will add a $4 billion tax on the industry over five years. And coal fired power generators in my electorate, under the CPRS legislation, have been completely assumed away; they do not exist. They are not part of the government’s modelling at all. The legislation is based on the national energy market, which operates a gross pool system which allows costs to be passed through in the way that electricity is sold.

WA, of course, is an energy island. The market is primarily a bilateral contract system with long-term contracts of typically 15 years, with only a minor percentage of the market traded. Unless several years ago, when negotiating their contract, an electricity generator in the south-west made provision
for carbon costs, the generator will now have to pay this cost under the proposed scheme. I note that 90 per cent of the transitional assistance will go to four brown coal generators in Victoria and South Australia, with only $24 million going to the WA government Verve Energy plants and there being no assistance at all for the private sector.

A further structural flaw is the treatment of fugitive emissions, the cost of which is set from the greenhouse legislation using a set of default emission levels for each state. As I have said, south-west coal has been allocated the highest default factor when, as I explained earlier, Collie coal does not produce measurable methane. One company has been to Canberra four times and has met with more than 40 members of parliament and key departments. In spite of this, nothing has changed in the legislation. Seriously flawed legislation is not the answer to climate change.

I have a major alumina refinery in my electorate which operates in the global market, where prices are set by international supply and demand. In the words of the Aluminium Council, our major concern with the proposed CPRS and renewable energy target is the magnitude of the cost being imposed on Australian producers that is not being imposed on competing suppliers from other countries. The total cost impact of the current scheme design is approximately $4 billion over the first 10 years. This is tens of millions of dollars per site imposed only on Australian producers.

Concept Economics modelling shows that 23,500 direct jobs will be lost in Australia’s minerals industry by 2020 and up to 6,000 jobs will be cut in regional Western Australia. Put simply, the families and communities in my electorate will pay not only for the Labor government’s debt and deficit but also for this flawed legislation. And we have not seen the detailed analysis and modelling of the costs, how it will it affect each industry and regional community and whether this is the most effective option for Australia to reduce emissions. We need to know what the cost of action or lack of action by competing countries is, and industry and business need a globally competitive level playing field.

The proposed US emissions legislation will provide 100 per cent protection for US export and import competing industries until 2025. Coming from the dairy industry, I well understand how difficult it is to compete in global markets without a level playing field. The industry competes at this moment with heavily subsidised competitors that have a direct economic advantage. The result has been an erosion of our traditional dairy markets by those subsidised competitors. There have been losses in numbers of dairy farmers, jobs, small businesses, investment and Australian-owned processes. It has come at a huge cost, both socially and economically, to communities right around the country.

Any assumption that, by making the concessions first, the rest of the trading world will do the same, as the Rudd government is doing with the CPRS, is wrong. Farmers and exporters continue to carry the cost. Instead we are now seeing an increase in and a return to those subsidies by the US and the European Union. The agricultural, horticultural and viticultural industries will, under this scheme, now also have to compete with imported products from countries that have the advantage of no flow-on costs of production from an ETS.

The Australian Farm Institute and ABARE indicate there will be between 6 to 20 per cent cost increases to our 150,000 business growers, and under this scheme farmers will have no opportunity to participate in carbon capture and storage but will face declines in production and income. The forestry industry
has also been excluded from additional fuel cost compensation, and I ask: what future will the Australian agriculture and forestry industries and manufacturers have under the flawed Rudd government CPRS? It should be no surprise to Australian farmers that Treasury modelling has not even considered the impacts on agriculture.

No-one in my electorate should underestimate the very direct impacts the flawed CPRS will have on every industry, business and individual, including the mining and resources sector; manufacturing; all forms of agriculture; forestry; tourism; every small, medium and large business; as well as every home and family. For Australia to implement a flawed, complex, bureaucratic emissions trading scheme which fails to make a measurable impact on reducing global emissions—at the same time as costing Australian jobs, industrial output and investment—will damage the economy and increase the cost of living for Australians. Businesses and individuals in Australia need to be globally competitive and environmentally effective in their emissions mitigation decisions, and businesses need certainty that they will actually still be in business after the introduction of the government’s flawed emissions trading scheme legislation. I support this bill.

Debate (on motion by Mr Brendan O’Connor) adjourned.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA: AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT

Mr STEPHEN SMITH (Perth—Minister for Foreign Affairs) (8.08 pm)—Mr Deputy Speaker, on indulgence: I would like to update the House, as I indicated after question time I would endeavour to do, on the circumstances surrounding Airlines PNG flight CG4684 from Port Moresby to Kokoda. As members will be aware, that flight has been reported as missing since this morning. At the close of search-and-rescue efforts this evening, the plane is still missing. Those search-and-rescue efforts have been hampered by bad weather and, of course, it has been dark now in PNG for a number of hours.

As I indicated to the House, there were 13 people on board the plane: 11 passengers and two crew. I advise the House that, of the 13 on board the plane, nine are Australians, three are Papua New Guineans and one is a Japanese national. The nine Australians are from Victoria and Queensland. In the last half to three-quarters of an hour, all of the families of the nine concerned have been contacted by Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade consular officers from Canberra through a crisis centre which was activated this afternoon. For all of the obvious reasons, I am not proposing at this stage to identify any of the Australians concerned, but we hold very grave concerns for their safety and welfare.

I would like to indicate to the House the action which the government has taken in conjunction with the Papua New Guinean government since question time. As members will recall, I was advised of these circumstances during question time and made a brief statement to the House at about four o’clock. That coincided with a statement from Airlines PNG in Port Moresby. At about 4.30 pm the Prime Minister, the Minister for Defence, the National Security Adviser and the Chief of the Defence Force, Angus Houston, and I met and, at the conclusion of a brief meeting, instructed Australian officials that Australian assets be made ready for deployment to assist in the search-and-rescue effort.

At about 5.15 pm the Prime Minister spoke with his counterpart, PNG Prime Minister Somare, who readily accepted Australia’s offer of assistance in the search-and-rescue effort, which will include both De-
fence and civilian assets and which I will detail in a moment. At about seven o’clock this evening, the Prime Minister, the Minister for Defence, the CDF and I met to confirm the detail of the deployment of the civilian and Defence assets. I have, of course, spoken on a number of occasions to the high commissioner in Port Moresby, and I have also relayed and exchanged messages with my counterpart, Foreign Minister Sam Abal, on this matter.

Senator Faulkner, the Minister for Defence, has detailed to the Senate the Defence assets to be deployed, but I will summarise those for the benefit of the House. HMAS *Success* is being diverted from its current location near the Torres Strait and will arrive off the Papua New Guinean coast by first light tomorrow. HMAS *Success* has a Sea King helicopter on board which will be available for the search-and-rescue effort. An Air Force Caribou is currently in Port Moresby for unrelated activity, and that will be available for tasking from first light tomorrow, weather permitting—and I underline that search-and-rescue efforts by PNG authorities today have been very much hampered by bad weather.

A C130 with an aeromedical capability and a fully equipped ground party, which will be on board to assist with search and recovery efforts, will depart Australia overnight and, again, is expected to be ready to assist from tomorrow morning. Two Black Hawk helicopters from the Sydney area are being prepared for movement by a C17 aircraft. They will be deployed from the Sydney area tomorrow morning and are expected to arrive in PNG sometime later tomorrow. In addition to that, the Australian Maritime Safety Authority has made available a Dornier 328 aircraft. That departed this afternoon and will also be available to assist with search-and-rescue efforts.

Today the PNG effort has been two helicopters and a two-engine aircraft. One of the helicopters has landed in a village, which the PNG authorities and Airlines PNG believe has narrowed the search area to what I describe—and I do not put it any higher than this—as the general vicinity of a possible crash site area. Local villagers and people have indicated to authorities that they heard what they thought was the sound of a crash in the general vicinity. Despite the bad weather one of the helicopters has been able to land in that general vicinity, and with better weather tomorrow it may well be able to further narrow the search area.

Tomorrow, again weather permitting, PNG authorities will deploy two additional helicopters and it has been agreed between the Australian high commission and PNG authorities that two Australian high commission staff will be on board those additional assets and as a consequence be available in the general area to assist.

The families of the nine concerned are being given all possible consular assistance. As I say, we are gravely concerned for the safety and welfare of the nine concerned. We hope that tomorrow the additional assets made available both in and by Papua New Guinea, the Australian Defence Force and the Australian Maritime Safety Authority will be able to be deployed to assist in search-and-rescue efforts.

I have taken the opportunity to speak to the shadow foreign minister, who is not available to be in the House. I have relayed the substance of my report to her and I again thank the opposition for their cooperation in enabling me to advise the House. The House can be assured that as circumstances and events unfold I will continue to endeavour to keep the House fully informed. At times like these our hearts go out to the families who now find themselves in a very difficult situa-
tion and we will do everything we can to support them pending the further search-and-rescue efforts. I thank the House.

**NATIONAL GREENHOUSE AND ENERGY REPORTING AMENDMENT BILL 2009**

**Second Reading**

Debate resumed.

Mr PERRETT (Moreton) (8.16 pm)—I rise in support of the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Amendment Bill 2009, which seems strangely overshadowed by the details presented by the foreign minister. Obviously, the Kokoda region has a significant place in the Australian psyche because of the role it played in changing the course of history back in World War II and because so many Australians from the Prime Minister down have made the pilgrimage to look at the defence of Northern Australia that took place on the Kokoda track in World War II.

I echo the concerns expressed by the foreign minister in terms of the nine people who are missing. When we heard the news today in question time, obviously, so many of us thought of the people we know who had done that trek. So many of us know someone who could have been in that plane. It was particularly shocking to hear the news. As I said, I am speaking on the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Amendment Bill, but my prayers are certainly with the families of those nine missing people.

This bill before the House is another step in my long struggle to look after my great-grandchildren. I should point out that I will return to this goal later in my talk. It is also a part of the ALP’s struggle to look after my great-grandchildren. The bill before the House deals with the voluntary transfer of reporting obligations of facilities currently caught by the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act 2007, the NGER Act, over to the new provisions outlined in the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme.

The legislation before the House particularly has relevance for entities such as a coalmine that is run by a contract mining company. With my background in the mining sector, I am very aware of how often that happens. The people that do the exploration may on-sell that exploration permit to a minerals development licence, to another company, and then maybe an international company or a large Australian company will take over the process and even outsource that. An APESMA document that came across my desk the other day talked about the number of mining companies up in Queensland, say, where they are not necessarily employed by the company that owns the mine but instead the business has been outsourced, such as the Coppabella Mine, which is outsourced to Roche Highwall Mining Pty Ltd, or Thiess, which operate in the Burton Mine, the Collinsville, the Foxleigh, the Oaky Creek open cut and the South Walker Creek. There are numerous examples where this happens. It also happens in the oil and gas industry, especially with pipeline operations where sometimes the running of the entity is outsourced to another commercial entity.

Under this legislation all reporting and record-keeping obligations and compliance measures under the NGER Act will be formalised by the introduction of the reporting transfer certificate concept, or the RTC concept. It is good to have a couple of TLAs, or three-letter acronyms, thrown into the House. I know there is a real shortage of acronyms in this House, so I am happy to be able to contribute a couple more. The RTC concept will be a short-term measure until the introduction of the CPRS and RTCs will be cancelled on 30 June 2011. They will be replaced by the liability transfer certificates, or the LTCs. Sunsetting the RTCs is important as, while they do not attract any financial...
ability, under the CPRS legislation LTCs will attract financial liability.

Obviously, all good governments, all sensible governments, avoid red tape. The legislation before the chamber will reduce administration and economic costs on industry because there will be consistency in the terminology, the concepts and the rules between the existing NGER Act and the future reporting arrangements.

It is all very well to stand here in the chamber and discuss sensible climate change legislation, but I feel it is a bit like ensuring that the table settings are just perfect on the last night of the Titanic. Why? Because there is obviously something else happening. If we look to the Titanic as a metaphor—and I note that all the people in this chamber are well read, learned and literarily inclined, so I am going to look at—

Mr Brendan O’Connor—I’ve read that book; it’s a good book.

Mr PERRETT—I will take that interjection. I am going to look to the Titanic, which is a wonderful metaphor for what we are discussing tonight in legislation. In a way the Titanic personifies human folly or the hubris of humanity. I turn to a poem by Thomas Hardy, who is probably better known as an author than a poet. It is one of my favourite poems. It is called The Convergence of the Twain, which he wrote a year after the sinking of the Titanic, and it was the verse contained in the anniversary booklet which was handed out at the service when people gathered together to commemorate the loss of lives on the Titanic one year on. It is quite a long poem, so I will not quote the entire poem. I know the minister would be keen to have poetry read in the chamber. It is a villanelle; it is quite a strange poem. To set the scene, some fish are talking at the bottom of the ocean at the wreck of the Titanic and they are saying, ‘What the hell is this doing down here?’ Hardy wrote:

Jewels in joy designed
To ravish the sensuous mind
Lie lightless, all their sparkles bleared and black and blind.

Dim moon-eyed fishes near
Gaze at the gilded gear
And query: ‘What does this vaingloriousness down here?’...

Well: while was fashioning
This creature of cleaving wing,
The Immanent Will that stirs and urges everything
Prepared a sinister mate
For her - so gaily great -
A Shape of Ice, for the time far and dissociate.
And as the smart ship grew
In stature, grace, and hue,
In shadowy silent distance grew the Iceberg too.
Alien they seemed to be:
No mortal eye could see
The intimate welding of their later history ...

That is what we are talking about here: the world, civilization, has progressed over the last 5,000 years or so. We are coming up to a time where we have evolved; we have developed industry; we have developed so many wonderful things; technology has advanced us—the world wide web et cetera. But we are now coming up to a crunch time similar to when they were creating the Titanic, which at the time was celebrated as the pinnacle of human endeavour—unsinkable—where humanity had triumphed over the sea; humanity had triumphed over Neptune. Obviously, things did not turn out so great for the Titanic.

I see that the member for O’Connor is in the chamber, so perhaps I could have gone with a slightly different metaphor rather than something literary.

Mr Secker interjecting—
Mr PERRETT—I could perhaps have gone with a less literary metaphor which might have been the metaphor of being at the Christmas party where you have Uncle Harry loading the shotgun in the corner. That brings me back to my original introduction where I talked about my great-grandchildren, this legislation before the chamber and my struggle now to look after them later. I said ‘my great-grandchildren’ but I do not have any grandchildren; I have a four-year-old child and a seven-month-old child, so I am a little bit off having grandchildren yet. But this legislation before the chamber is very significant in dealing with climate change. When we try to address climate change and do what we can to change it, who is standing in the way? Who is standing in the way of these endeavours?

Let us have a look at an article by Phillip Coorey in the *Brisbane Times* entitled ‘Abbott foray will highlight tussle within Coalition’. It is from May 25—a little bit out of date. It says:

Tony Abbott is not crazy enough to believe that he will ever lead the Liberal Party, a prospect he fleetingly embraced after the last election before pulling out of the leadership race.

... ... ...

Due for publication in late July, Abbott’s manifesto will recognise that all new Oppositions need to do some soul-searching to rediscover what they believe in and where they want to go before being fit to return to government.

... ... ...

Abbott’s foray—

that is, the book he has recently published—

will highlight the never-ending tussle within the Coalition over whether to adopt a moderate or conservative approach to policy. The wrestling has been a hallmark of Malcolm Turnbull’s leadership.

This returns me to my question of who is standing in the way. Obviously, the people standing in the way of trying to address the possible ravages of climate change are those opposite, and the question is: what do they stand for? Is it policy or is it politics? I could have quoted from an article by Phillip Coorey, which was quoted in question time today, in which he cited an opposition MP who said:

We were staring at an electoral abyss. We had to pretend we cared.

That is in the context of the opposition addressing climate change and bringing in a cap-and-trade scheme or whatever they seem to have grasped fleetingly today in their party room.

So what do the opposition stand for on climate change? Because it is important to establish what they are in favour of. To quote a great singer—it might have been John Cougar Mellencamp—from the eighties or nineties:

You’ve got to stand for something, or you’re gonna fall for anything.

When we are talking about the Liberal Party, it is interesting to try and ascertain what they are interested in. Obviously, the Leader of the Liberal Party was interested in climate change. He obviously took the fight up in the cabinet room, explaining that change is a reality. He is not one of the sceptics at all. He believed that climate change was occurring; he believed the science. He is not one of those who have been questioning it. But in talking to the Liberal Party now it seems that politics has triumphed over policy—and I am talking about the real part of the coalition, which is the Liberal Party not the National Party. I am not sure what the views of the National Party are. I come from Queensland where the airwaves have been dominated by Barnaby Joyce and what he represents, which I have not quite grasped.

When we look at the history of government in Australia and the tough decisions
that have been made in tough times, we see that we turn to the Labor Party for leadership. For three out of four years since Federation, the Liberal Party or the conservative parties have been in power. But when we look at what they have done, they have really benefited from the decisions of the Labor Party. I do not think we could go so far as to call them a parasite; that would be stretching it a bit. Maybe it would be more appropriate to call them an epiphyte, or, if we look at the National Party— (Time expired)

Debate interrupted.

ADJOURNMENT

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms AE Burke)—Order! It being 8.30 pm, I propose the question:

That the House do now adjourn.

Youth Allowance

Mr SECKER (Barker) (8.30 pm)—It is a big call to say that one issue is the biggest issue I have come across in parliament, but in this situation I can make the call because I can say that the Rudd government’s changes to Youth Allowance have been the biggest issue I have come across in nearly 11 years of being a proud member of this parliament. I speak not only of that but also of the gap year students who decided to work this year to earn the income which would have qualified them for the independent youth allowance under the old rules. Instead, the Rudd government has doubled the amount of time they must work to earn the benefit, to at least 30 hours a week over 18 months, denying thousands eligibility. I can use the analogy that this is like changing the AFL grand final at half-time and saying, ‘You’ve got to play the second half in Perth in five minutes time,’ and of course it is impossible.

These current gap year students have already made study decisions based on the existing Youth Allowance rules. The Rudd Labor government has now pulled the rug from under these current gap year students. The changes to Youth Allowance in effect punish all students who are currently on a gap year, having taken the decision to defer their studies in order to meet the workforce participation criteria they were told about at school last year.

My office has been inundated with letters, emails and contacts from rural and regional students, parents and school councils who believe the changes have been made without regard to the effect on country students whose families sacrifice tens of thousands of dollars to allow their children to study in the city. The changes to the eligibility criteria will require students to defer their studies for two years. As a result, many will not bother with tertiary studies, even if they could find work in the current environment. They do not have the luxury enjoyed by city students of being able to stay at home when they study. They do not have that choice.

It is a fact that the specific circumstances of rural and regional young people have not been adequately considered by the Rudd government. A recent Labor dominated Victorian parliamentary inquiry has agreed with coalition concern about Minister Julia Gillard’s Youth Allowance changes that will stop many students from rural and regional areas from accessing university education. The chair of the parliament of Victoria’s Education and Training Committee, Labor member Geoff Howard, said of Julia Gillard’s changes in his introduction to the report that the committee was:

… concerned that the specific circumstances of rural and regional young people still have not been adequately addressed. Already, many such students defer their studies to meet eligibility criteria for income support and this route to financial independence is set to become even more difficult under the new system.
In a particularly scathing passage on pages 177 to 178 of the report, the committee argued:

... the Committee believes that the removal of the main workforce participation route will have a disastrous effect on young people in rural and regional areas.

The report also said that the changes:

... will have a detrimental impact on many students who deferred their studies during 2009 in order to work and earn sufficient money to be eligible for Youth Allowance.

This is from a Labor chair and a Labor committee.

The changes will prevent rural and regional students from being able to go to university next year because, while their parental income may be too high for them to qualify for youth allowance as dependants, it often is not high enough to subsidise them living away from home, given student rents in Adelaide and Melbourne of $15,000 a year. I demand of the Rudd Labor government access to youth allowance for rural and remote students who have to leave home to attend university. I demand that we do not disadvantage these students—the best and brightest that come from the bush. (Time expired)

Climate Change

Burma

Ms SAFFIN (Page) (8.35 pm)—Our national interest lies with our taking strong global action on climate change and strong and effective action domestically to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Rudd government’s CPRS covers both bases; therefore, it serves the national interest and, therefore, that of our local communities, like my electorate of Page. The government’s CPRS is built around key principles and solid, agreed, international scientific evidence—not hocus-pocus, magic pudding or some sorts of fairyland scenarios.

Principle 1: reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Australia. Principle 2: provide ad-

justment arrangements for industry most likely affected by carbon price. Principle 3: make arrangements to provide assistance to households—in particular, pensioners, car-
ers, seniors and low-income households—and support for middle-income households and motorists. It is transition for our econ-

omy, transition for the environment and preparedness for our future challenges, thus se-
curing our future.

Speaking of principles, the opposition leader, a few weeks ago, with yet another delaying tactic, issued nine rather vague principles on the opposition’s approach to climate change. I submit one position from the number and variety of positions of the Liberal and National party members. Yester-

day, the opposition leader ditched the nine so-called principles and issued a report—but not a report that forms the basis of a coalition policy, so not an agreed policy. It is another non-policy in a long line of precedents set before the coalition would form a policy. All have come and gone—still no policy.

The time line: 2007, coalition policy to have a cap-and-trade scheme; December 2007, wait for the Garnaut report; September 2008, wait for Treasury modelling; September 2008, wait for the white paper; December 2008, wait for the Pearce report; April 2009, wait for the Senate inquiry; May 2009, wait for the Productivity Commission—forgetting, it seems, that the Productivity Commission had made a submission on emissions trading to the then Prime Minister Howard’s Shergold report—and now we are waiting for Copenhagen and President Obama’s scheme. There have been seven delays in all, and now there is an eighth de-

lay, which is the report, but there is still no policy.

The other catchcry is about jobs. Going on about regional jobs on ABC radio today, Senator Nash was peddling those porkies
about ‘jobs going’. But the Treasury modelling also points out that, by 2050, the renewable energy sector will be 30 times larger than it is today. Furthermore, a 2009 study by the Climate Institute shows that there are some $31 billion worth of clean energy projects already underway, or planned, in response to the government’s climate change policy. This will generate around 26,000 new jobs, mostly in regional areas. There will be 2,500 permanent jobs, 15,000 construction jobs and 8,600 indirect jobs in supporting sectors.

In the minute that I have remaining, I would like to draw the attention of the House to the fact that Burma’s Aung San Suu Kyi was today sentenced in Insein Special Court to three years prison with hard labour in Insein jail in a suburb of Rangoon, or Yangon. The SPDC and General Than Shue, the head military dictator, has converted that to 18 months house arrest. It is still not clear whether that will be in Suu Kyi’s home, but I just want to say that it is the most shocking condemnation of their rule. It seems quite bizarre. I am sure Mr Than Shue thinks he is doing something good, but doing something good would be releasing her and withdrawing the charges. The charges arose out of somebody swimming across the lake, supposedly to get to Suu Kyi’s home. She was charged. Her home was heavily fortified by the regime’s people outside. I am sure members would agree with me when I express my sympathy and feelings of disgust. I extend my goodwill to Suu Kyi.

Swan Electorate: Aircraft Noise

Mr IRONS (Swan) (8.40 pm)—This evening I want to brief and update the House on significant changes to aircraft noise in my electorate of Swan. Most of Perth does not have to pay the price for having a close and convenient airport, but my constituents do. In January my office started to receive a surge of calls from local residents noticing more planes above their houses on new lower trajectories. At a Perth Airport Aircraft Noise Management Committee meeting it became clear that other community representatives were experiencing a similar number of complaints. Locals and community representatives did not know why there had been such significant changes. At the meeting a reason emerged. In a presentation by Airservices Australia, the committee was told that changes had been made to flight paths in November 2008 as a result of the Western Australian Route Review Project. The changes had been directed by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority but the consultation process was overseen by Airservices Australia. There had been no consultation whatsoever with the local community.

Although I was not an MP and, therefore, not a member of the committee when the changes were being discussed in 2006 and 2007, I understand that other committee members were given the impression that any changes would be minimal. I understand that the concerns raised at the time were largely ignored. I wrote some time ago to Airservices Australia to request understandable information on how these changes have affected each of the suburbs in my electorate of Swan. With the initial absence of a response, I decided to contact members of my electorate with surveys asking if residents had been affected by noise changes and, if so, how. I shall present the responses in due course to Airservices Australia, the committee and the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government.

The results so far show how widespread and dramatic the changes have been. Consetta Cinanni, of Queens Park, said she now cannot even hear when using the phone. She said, ‘The planes fly directly overhead constantly.’ Mr Herbert, of Belmont, said: ‘Yes, I
now have more air traffic over my house and vibration and windows rattling and cracks opening as a result. When I bought this house 13 years ago, it was specifically because it wasn’t in the flight path.” Melissa Francis, of Rivervale, said: ‘Yes, there are a lot more aircraft flying directly (or very close) over our house. Previously it was very occasional, and we deemed this acceptable upon purchase.’ Swain Johnson, of Rivervale, added: ‘Aircraft now come directly overhead more frequently and early in the morning—windows shake and light fittings have come loose!’ I could go on and on because I have received hundreds of surveys back.

The response I have now received from Airservices Australia has confirmed the significant nature of the changes. Given this, questions must be posed about how substantial changes to flight paths could be made with no consultation with the local community. If CASA and Airservices Australia have breached their charter then there is no alternative but to reopen the Western Australian Route Review Project. It is also time the House begin considering alternative noise abatement programs for Perth Airport. I have also heard from Mr Ken Healy, from the Magic Men, who has also made comment on noise issues affecting the Perth Airport.

Most major airports around the world that are close to residential areas have noise abatement programs, but Perth seems to have been hard done by over the years. Across Australia airport noise curfews apply at Sydney, Adelaide, Coolangatta and Essendon airports. Noise insulation programs have been run by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government in Sydney and Adelaide. I can find no evidence of any similar noise insulation programs for Perth. These schemes were both justified by sudden increases in airport noise. If the government is not prepared to reopen the Western Australian Route Review Project then Perth is surely also due a noise insulation rebate.

The survey results say there is broad support for some form of curfew and a significant proportion would be willing to pay for better insulation if there were a government subsidy. Last week Queens Park resident Max Scott took the time to come into my electorate office in Victoria Park. Max was able to show me airport noise correspondence with governments and airport authorities dating back to 1982. The least that organisations associated with the airport can do is give residents like Max Scott a proper opportunity to have their say.

I read with interest Perth Airport’s preliminary draft master plan, a 20-year statutory plan for Perth’s development. I was pleased to read that the airport has a good plan for upgrading the road and infrastructure surrounding the airport, and the overall concept for the airport was, in my view, a fantastic step forward. I made a submission to Westralia Airports Corporation and argued for proper consultation, a resolution of the flight path issue and a guarantee that future flight paths will not be altered without community consultation.

In conclusion, I fear that the organisations responsible for Perth Airport are not taking their consultation duty with the public seriously enough. I firmly believe that the public must always have an opportunity to have their say. The views of the public must matter and they must be actively taken into account by decision makers. *(Time expired)*

**Building the Education Revolution Program**

**Mr ADAMS** (Lyons) (8.45 pm)—I would like to congratulate the Rudd government on the Building the Education Revolution program and say what it means to my electorate. The part of the program I want to talk about
is the three elements in this school rollout so that every Australian school will be able to access a part of the government’s investment of $987.2 million during the 2008-09 financial year, $8.5 billion over 2009-10 and $5.2 billion in 2010-11. This is a critical component of the government’s economic stimulus package, giving our schools the attention they so richly deserve. Not only are we giving our kids better facilities, but we are also helping the local tradesmen in their areas to gain work.

Primary Schools for the 21st Century is $12.4 billion to build or renew large-scale infrastructure in all primary schools and the primary components of K-12 schools, including libraries, halls and indoor sporting centres.

Science and Language Centres for 21st Century Secondary Schools is $1 billion to build up to 500 new science laboratories and language-learning centres in secondary schools that can demonstrate both need and readiness and capacity to complete construction by 30 June 2010.

The National School Pride program is $1.3 billion to refurbish and renew existing infrastructure and build minor infrastructure of up to $200,000, subject to the size of the school. It will have a great effect on small country schools.

The further point I want to make is that it is not just the big schools that are being assisted by this program; it is all the schools, and this is where it is so good in the electorate of Lyons. I have some small regional schools that are receiving funds to put in libraries or are adding an extra specialised classroom or are putting on a hall for indoor sports or events. So important also are science labs in larger high schools. If this is the century for science, country children must learn how to deal with the challenges that will be facing them, particularly through climate change and its effects on our country and on the globe. They must learn where food comes from, how to grow or raise it at home, how to cook it and how it affects you. These are important parts of science.

The smaller, more isolated schools are so important to my communities. They make up the hub of those communities, where all the action is. We have lost so many facilities over the years, but our schools remain and have become community centres, adult learning sites, public meeting spaces, internet sites and ideas-breeding places.

I am often asked to go to events that expand the school activities in amazing ways. The children are involved in developing their community from kindergarten age right up to year 10 in many cases. These are our future workers in country areas. We need them to be there to help the remaining small businesses, the farmers, the foresters, the miners and the fishermen to continue the work that keeps our state and other states alive.

We are in a changing world and I believe that we need to help these communities to survive sustainably and train their children to use and take care of the land and the sea in the future. With the new broadband rollout and satellite coverage in most areas, there is nothing the country cannot do that the city is doing now. This government is definitely thinking of the future and I am thankful that it has this vision that all Australians can be involved in that future.

Mother Mary MacKillop

Mr SIMPKINS (Cowan) (8.50 pm)—‘We must hold ourselves in readiness for God’s will, whichever way things go.’ Those words were uttered 110 years ago by Sister Mary MacKillop. Today I will take the opportunity to speak of Mother Mary of the Cross, Blessed Mary MacKillop, for whom the Ballajura Catholic church is named, as is the Mary MacKillop Catholic Community
Primary School. Soon Australia will have its first saint recognised, and I look forward to that day.

Mary MacKillop was born in Fitzroy in 1842, the eldest of eight children. Her family continually struggled, as her father was not very financially aware. Mary MacKillop commenced working from 16 and was responsible for the financial support of her family. She worked as a clerk, a teacher and a governess. It was during her time as a governess at Penola, a town in country South Australia, that Mary met Father Julian Tenison-Woods. Father Woods sought Mary’s assistance in providing children in the outback with religious education. However, because of her family’s reliance on her wages, it was not until 1866 that she was able to officially open the first St Joseph’s school.

Mary had been inspired by Father Woods. Her faith and her religious conviction then attracted other young women to join her. The Congregation of the Sisters of St Joseph was begun. The next year, 1867, Bishop Shiel asked Mary to open a second school, this time in Adelaide. The Sisters of St Joseph then expanded beyond the second school and created more schools in outback communities and in the larger cities around Australia.

Mary MacKillop had a significant impact on Catholic education that originated in those years. Beyond the schools, her dedication to those in difficult circumstances resulted in her founding homes for the homeless and destitute, as well as orphanages, refuges for former prostitutes and refuges for former prisoners.

It is clear that Mother Mary did experience resistance and opposition to her work. Strengthened by her faith, she endured those trials with forgiveness. She did, however, suffer from ill-health, which made her work even more challenging and her results remarkable. The hundredth anniversary of her death was last Saturday, and on that occasion I was honoured to join the congregation of the Blessed Mary MacKillop Catholic Church at Ballajura for a commemorative service led by Father John Jegorow.

It is worth understanding that with the beatification of Mary MacKillop in 1995 and the conferring of the title Blessed, that event represents that her first miracle was recognised. The Catholic Church in Australia and around the world waits with great anticipation for an announcement that canonisation will be granted to Mary MacKillop, meaning that a second miracle will have been recognised. Canonisation in this case represents the conferring of the title Saint. Australia will then have its first saint, St Mary MacKillop.

It is my belief that when Mary MacKillop is recognised as a saint she will be an even greater inspiration to Catholics across Australia. It will cause the Catholic church in Ballajura to change its name, possibly to St Mary MacKillop Catholic Church, and the primary school will have to rename itself St Mary MacKillop Catholic Community Primary School. I am sure that no-one will mind such changes in Ballajura, and rightly so. There will perhaps be even more pride in the community than there already is.

It would, however, be wrong not to emphasise that the work of Mary MacKillop had a very positive influence on Australia at that time and continues to do so, through the generations that have benefited. What she did and her dedication toward helping others is a great example of an Australian spirit that continues. She was a shining example of commitment toward helping and protecting those in circumstances of adversity. That example is not just for Catholics or Christians but for all Australians. Her canonisation will create greater profile and reflection on her work. Her example of dedication and
selflessness is an example that all should follow, and canonisation will help to highlight her example both now and for future Australians.

I will conclude where I started by saying that I very much look forward to the recognition of a great lady being acknowledged as a saint very soon, and a saint for Australia.

Robertson Electorate: Marine Discovery Centre

Ms NEAL (Robertson) (8.54 pm)—First, I would also like to add my voice in recognising the achievements of Mary MacKillop. She obviously has a very strong connection with the Central Coast, where I come from, which is where she last resided before her death, with the Joeys there. Certainly I strongly support her canonisation and her recognition as someone who has really contributed to the life of Australia and someone who, as well as being a religious person, was also a great Australian who I would very much like to see recognised in the future. I joined with the opposition for that call.

But that is not the reason I am speaking today. I want to talk about the Marine Discovery Centre in my electorate. You may recall, Madam Deputy Speaker, that I have reported to the House on two previous occasions in relation to this matter. I can now report that some great success has been achieved. The Marine Discovery Centre was a joint proposal of the Central Coast Environment Network and the Ourimbah campus of Newcastle University, located in my electorate, assisted ably by the Department of Education, with the support of the tourism and hospitality industry on the coast. It was proposed to have the facility at Terrigal to provide educational facilities in relation to the marine biology of the coast and also to attract tourists. A number of stakeholders came to see me about it almost as soon as I was elected some 18 months ago. I was enthused by their proposition and I saw its great merit in promoting tourism, education facilities and economic activity. As a result I convened a number of stakeholder meetings to promote the activity and to try and gain support in the broader community and with government.

As a result, I am happy to report that last week a site was identified for the project, the site of the previous Terrigal tourism office, which has been abandoned, or should I say unoccupied, for some months. It has now been handed over by the New South Wales Department of Lands to the Marine Discovery Centre for their use. There will be a range of work done to refurbish that building and by December, in time for the Christmas tourist season, that office will be open and operating. I am absolutely thrilled to see that that has come about. This is a provision of the site for some five years and will certainly allow the people that are involved in the project to get it underway and operating without having to invest too much in rent, so they will be able to invest in refurbishing and really developing the facilities.

It really works very well because there has also been a very important announcement in the last few weeks in relation to another tourist facility on the Central Coast, and that is the announcement by the Defence Minister, John Faulkner, that $5.8 million would be invested in sinking the former HMAS Adelaide off the coast at Terrigal. For those who are involved in the diving industry or have an interest in it, they would know that ships such as those sunk off the coast are a big tourist attraction and have great interest for many divers. This is going to be a great facility and something that the tourism and diving industries on the Central Coast have really been calling out for. I am hoping that sometime early in the new year that will be finalised and that we will see the joint attraction of the Marine Discovery Centre and former HMAS Adelaide.
HMAS *Adelaide* as a dive site co-located close together and being a fantastic tourism facility.

All these things have only been able to come about because of the support of the Labor federal government, and I want to particularly thank Minister John Faulkner and of course the previous minister, Joel Fitzgibbon, who I lobbied, along with the present Premier of New South Wales, Nathan Rees, to bring this project about. I am thrilled that this will bring about greater tourism, greater economic activity and of course ultimately more jobs for my electorate of Robertson on the Central Coast. I congratulate all people involved, particularly the CCEN, the main promoters of the project, John Asquith and Jill Smith, who have done a very good job.

(*Time expired*)

Question agreed to.

**House adjourned at 9 pm**

**NOTICES**

The following notices were given:

**Mr Griffin** to present a Bill for an Act to amend the law relating to veterans’ affairs, social security, military rehabilitation and compensation and aged care, and for related purposes.

**Mr McClelland** to move:

That the House:

(1) notes the sixtieth anniversary of the Four Geneva Conventions of 1949;

(2) congratulates the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement for continuously fostering the principles of international humanitarian law to limit human suffering in times of armed conflict and to prevent atrocities, especially against civilian populations, the wounded, and prisoner of war;

(3) recalls Australia’s ratification of the Conventions and of the two Additional Protocols of 1977;

(4) affirms all parliamentary measures taken in support of such ratification;

(5) encourages the fullest implementation of the Conventions and Additional Protocols by the military forces and civilian organisations of all States;

(6) encourages ratification by all nations of the Conventions and Additional Protocols; and

(7) recognises the extraordinary contribution made by many individual Australians, including Australian Red Cross members, volunteers and staff, in carrying out the humanitarian ideals expressed in the Conventions and Additional Protocols.
QUESTIONS IN WRITING

Immigration: Cases
(Question No. 431)

Dr Stone asked the Minister representing the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, in writing, on 27 November 2008:

(1) In respect of immigration cases currently before the High and Federal Courts: (a) what is the total number in either court; (b) for what length of time has each been awaiting a decision.

(2) In respect of immigration cases currently before the Minister, seeking Ministerial Intervention: (a) what is the total number; (b) for what length of time has each been awaiting a decision.

Mr McClelland—The Minister for Immigration and Citizenship has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

(1) (a) The number of active immigration matters before the High and Federal Courts as at 9 December 2008 are:

- Federal Magistrates Court 480
- Federal Court (first instance) 16
- Full Federal Court 125
- High Court 113
- TOTAL 734

(b) For the quarter ending 30 September 2008, the average time to resolve a matter in the Federal Magistrates Court was 167 days, 102 days in the Full Federal Court and 96 days in the High Court.

(2) (a) and (b) Normal workflows mean that the number of cases referred to the Minister, after assessment by the Department, for the consideration of the exercise of his various powers, can vary significantly from day to day, or during any given day. Statistical analysis of cases before the Minister in the first week of December 2008 indicates that most cases had been with him for less than one month.

Education, Employment and Workplace Relations: Moncrieff Electorate
(Question No. 593, 594, 595 and 598)

Mr Ciobo asked the Minister for Education, Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, Minister for Social Inclusion and Minister for Early Childhood Education, Child Care and Youth, in writing, on 12 February 2009:

In respect of the Government’s funding of organisations and projects between 3 December 2007 and 20 January 2009: (a) which organisations and projects based in Moncrieff electorate received funding from the Minister’s department; (b) what sum of funding did each organisation and project receive; and (c) for what purpose was each funding commitment made.

Ms Gillard—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

Any person or organisation who meets the relevant criteria is eligible to access the Department’s programs and services. The details of funding to organisations is available on the Department’s website at www.deewr.gov.au.
Small Business
(Question No. 662)

Mr Ciobo asked the Treasurer, in writing, on 19 March 2009:

(1) From 3 December 2007 to 19 March 2009:
   (a) how many and what percentage of payments made by the Minister’s department to small businesses were not made within (i) 30, and (ii) 60 days of receipt of the goods or services and an invoice; and
   (b) what was the average time lapsed between invoice received and payments made by the Minister’s department to small businesses.

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

Australian Accounting Standards Board
(1) (a) none.
   (b) 15 days.

Australian Bureau of Statistics
(1) (a) (i) 1070
         3.5%
   (ii) 320
         1.05%
   (b) 8.36 days*

* Payments made by AGCC have been treated as same day payments and consequently recorded as zero days elapsed.

Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
(1) (a) (i) 0.03%
   (ii) Nil
   (b) Approximately 25 days*

* The ACCC systems do not provide this information from any reports. The information was obtained using statistical sampling and extrapolating the results. The estimates above relate to the period 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008.

Australian Office of Financial Management
(1) (a) (i) 5 invoices (5%)
   (ii) Nil
   (b) The average time lapsed between invoice received and payments made was 8 days.

Australian Prudential Regulation Authority
(1) (a) and (b) APRA’s intention is to make payments to suppliers within 14 days of receipt of a correctly rendered invoice by its Finance Department. The average time lapsed between receipt of the invoice by the Finance Department and payment to suppliers is 16 days.

Australian Securities and Investment Commission
(1) From 3 December 2007 to 19 March 2009:
   (a) 7,694 invoices from small businesses were paid by ASIC, of these:
       (i) 1,247 or 16% were paid more than 30 days from the date of invoice; and
       (ii) 433 or 5% were paid more than 60 days from the date of invoice.
   (b) The average time lapsed between invoice received and payments made by ASIC to small businesses was 28 days.
**Australian Taxation Office**

(1) (a)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 July 2007 - 30 June 2008</th>
<th>Paid within 30 days</th>
<th>Paid within 31 - 44 days (up to 14 days late)</th>
<th>Paid within 45 - 60 days (up to 30 days late)</th>
<th>Not paid within 60 days (≥30 days late)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of invoices (‘000)</td>
<td>10.268</td>
<td>0.336</td>
<td>0.022</td>
<td>0.041</td>
<td>10.667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of invoices by number</td>
<td>96.26%</td>
<td>3.15%</td>
<td>0.21%</td>
<td>0.38%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value of invoices ($ ‘000)</td>
<td>31251.71</td>
<td>378.81</td>
<td>15.08</td>
<td>26.85</td>
<td>31,672.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of invoices by value</td>
<td>98.67%</td>
<td>1.20%</td>
<td>0.05%</td>
<td>0.08%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) The average time lapsed between invoice received and payments made by the Australian Taxation Office to small businesses was 26 days.

**Corporations and Markets Advisory Board**

(1) (a) None

(b) 3 days

**Inspector-General of Taxation**

(a) (i) 13%

(ii) 6%

(b) 20 days

**National Competition Council**

(1) From 3 December 2007 to 19 March 2009:

(a) i) Nil

(ii) Nil

(b) The Council recorded an average of 8 days from date of receipt of an invoice to the date payment was made to small businesses.

**Productivity Commission**

(1) From 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008

(a) (i) Nil

(ii) Nil

(b) 11 days

**Royal Australian Mint**

(1) For the period 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008, the Royal Australian Mint made payments to small business as follows:

(a) (i) 172 payments (14.71%) were not made within 30 days of receipt of goods and services and an invoice

(ii) 68 payments (5.82%) were not made within 60 days of receipt of goods and services and an invoice.

(b) The average time lapsed between invoice received and payments made by the Royal Australian Mint to small businesses is 27 days.

**The Treasury**

(1) (a) Treasury’s Financial Management Information System is unable to differentiate between payments to small business and other payments. The statistics below are based on ALL payments made by Treasury over the period 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008.
Tuesday, 11 August 2009

QUESTIONS IN WRITING

All Treasury Payments
1 July 2007 - 30 June 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paid within 31-60 days</th>
<th>Not paid within 60 days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(up to 30 days late)</td>
<td>(≥ 30 days late)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of invoices</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of invoices by number</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) The average time lapsed between invoice received and payment made for all invoices paid by Treasury between 1 July 2007 and 30 June 2008 was 14 days.

Small Business
(Question No. 671)

Mr Ciobo asked the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, in writing, on 19 March 2009:

From 3 December 2007 to 19 March 2009: (a) how many and what percentage of payments made by the Minister’s department to small businesses were not made within (i) 30, and (ii) 60 days of receipt of the goods or services and an invoice; and (b) what was the average time lapsed between invoice received and payments made by the Minister’s department to small businesses.

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

For the period 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008, and based on the D.I.I.S.R. Survey of Australian Government Payments to Small Business, the following payments were not made within 30 and 60 days:

(a) Payments to Small Business Number Percentage

| Not Made within 30 days | 459 | 6%   |
| Not Made within 60 days | 176 | 2%   |

(b) The average time lapsed between invoices received and payments made to small businesses is 27.8 days.

Small Business
(Question No. 675)

Mr Ciobo asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, in writing, on 19 March 2009:

(1) From 3 December 2007 to 19 March 2009: (a) how many and what percentage of payments made by the Minister’s department to small businesses were not made within (i) 30, and (ii) 60 days of receipt of the goods or services and an invoice; and (b) what was the average time lapsed between invoice received and payments made by the Minister’s department to small businesses.

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

The Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA) does not maintain information relating to the size of businesses it contracts with for the provision of goods and services. In responding to the question, DEWHA therefore has used the list of businesses identified through the most recent small business survey conducted by the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research for the period 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008.

(a) For the period from 3 December 2007 to 19 March 2009, the number and percentage of payments made by DEWHA to small businesses that were not made within (i) 30, and (ii) 60 days of the receipt of goods or services and an invoice were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Payments to Small Business Number Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Made within 30 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Made within 60 days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QUESTIONS IN WRITING
(b) The average time lapsed between invoice received and payments made by DEWHA to small businesses were 33.13 days.

**National Partnership Agreement on the National Building Economic Stimulus Plan**

(Question No. 692)

**Mr Morrison** asked the Minister for Housing, in writing, on 12 May 2009:

1. Is it a fact that 47,919 homes will be repaired under the $400 million allocated for social housing repairs in the $42 billion stimulus package; if so, how did the Government calculate the number of homes requiring repairs.

2. Will she release to the public, advice to the Government from State and Territory governments supporting that 47,919 homes require repairs.

3. What will be the average cost of repairs to the 38,000 homes undergoing minor repair work.

4. How many of the 47,919 homes undergoing repairs are currently uninhabitable.

5. What is the time frame for undertaking the minor and substantial repairs.

6. Will the Government enter into contractual arrangements with the States and Territories to define cost caps and deadlines for the repairs.

7. Will any of the repair work be contracted direct by the Government with tradespeople; if so, how many repair jobs and in what areas of Australia.

**Ms Plibersek**—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

1. The National Partnership Agreement on the Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan makes it clear that State and Territory Governments are responsible for identifying the repairs and maintenance work to be conducted. State and Territory Governments outlined to the Commonwealth the proposed repair and maintenance work that could be undertaken and these were approved by the Minister for Housing. Working with the States and Territories, the Commonwealth’s objective is to maximise the economic stimulatory impact of the funding and to maximise the improvements to social housing stock in Australia.

2. Details of projects approved were tabled by the Prime Minister in the House of Representatives on 27 May 2009.

3. The average cost of repair and maintenance work for all projects is $7,515.00 per dwelling, there is no separate breakdown of costs available for repair or maintenance work.

4. A total of 10,702 dwellings are either vacant now or will become uninhabitable within two years, without the approved repair and maintenance work.

5. The nature of repairs and maintenance vary significantly. Minor repairs are being completed promptly and all repairs and maintenance are scheduled to be completed by 30 June 2010.

6. No, there is an agreed implementation plan with each jurisdiction, and all repairs and maintenance work are scheduled to be completed by 30 June 2010.

7. State and Territory Governments are contracting directly with the building industry to complete these repairs.
Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Programs
(Question No. 693)

Mr Morrison asked the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, in writing, on 12 May 2009:
In respect of the $250 million Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program announced to the Australian Council of Local Government on 18 November 2008, as at (a) 1 February 2009, (b) 15 February 2009, (c) 1 March 2009, and (d) 15 March 2009, how many (i) councils had received approvals for expenditure, (ii) public announcements had been made advising specific details of these approvals, (iii) funding agreements relating to these approvals had been completed, and (iv) payments had been made to the councils in accordance with these agreements.

Mr Albanese—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:
The Australian Government has signed contracts and delivered funding to all 566 councils and shires (including the ACT) under the $250 million allocation of the Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program.

Ex-Service Organisations
(Question No. 695)

Mrs Markus asked the Minister for Defence, Personnel, Materiel and Science, in writing, on 12 May 2009:
(1) Are ex-service organisations entitled to access Australian Defence Force (ADF) bases to assist personnel during the transition from defence to civilian life.
(2) What information, or referral to ex-service organisations, is made available to ADF personnel upon discharge.
(3) Who determines whether ADF personnel can speak with ex-service organisations on ADF bases.

Mr Combet—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:
(1) and (3) Yes, however, ex-service organisations do not have an automatic entitlement to enter ADF bases. Organisations may be sponsored by units or individuals to come onto a base to conduct one-off briefings or provide services. The use of ADF facilities for ex-service organisations to provide advice or advocacy services on an ad-hoc basis is a matter for individual Unit Commanders under the sponsorship arrangements.
(2) Separating (discharging) ADF personnel are provided with information about ex-service organisations, including how to access them, during separation interviews. If the ADF member requests advocacy assistance with compensation claims, they are referred to the regional Training and Information Program chairperson, who is responsible for connecting the ADF member to an appropriately trained ex-service organisation representative.
Information is also disseminated during ADF Transition Seminars that include presentations by ex-service organisations and Training and Information Program representatives, as well as ex-service organisation information stands.
ADF personnel may refer themselves to ex-service organisations and can obtain information about them through the promotional material contained in the Service newspapers.
Artillery Museum
(Question No. 704)

Mr Abbott asked the Minister representing the Minister for Defence, in writing, on 12 May 2009:

(1) What is the estimated cost of recent improvements to army building housing at the Artillery Museum at North Head, Sydney.

(2) Does he plan to relocate the Artillery Museum at North Head, Sydney, to Puckapunyal, Victoria; if so,

(a) what is the proposed timeframe,

(b) has a business case been prepared,

(c) what are the visitor number estimates, and

(d) how many museum volunteers does the Government expect might be available to help run the museum.

Mr Combet—The answer to the honourable member’s question, provided by Senator Faulkner’s predecessor, the Hon Joel Fitzgibbon MP, is as follows:

(1) Approximately $400,000 in 2008-09.

(2) No.

First Home Owner Grant Boost
(Question No. 707)

Mr Morrison asked the Minister for Housing, in writing, on 12 May 2009:

What has been the total cost of the media advertising campaign for the First Home Owner Grant Boost; and have State and Territory governments contributed towards any of these costs; if so, what sum of money has each State and Territory government contributed.

Ms Plibersek—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

The total cost to 30 April 2009 of the First Home Owners Boost campaign is $4,893,945. State and Territory governments have not contributed to the costs of this campaign.

Australian Defence Force: Recruitment
(Question No. 708)

Mr Bevis asked the Minister for Defence Personnel, Material and Science, in writing, on 12 May 2009:

In the calendar year (a) 2007 and (b) 2008, how many Australian Defence Force applications were rejected because the applicants had diabetes?

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

The Defence Force Recruiting candidate management database does not record specific, diagnosed medical conditions for unsuccessful candidates. Medical conditions are recorded in terms of broad medical categories. A candidate with diabetes would be categorised as having an endocrine condition, a category used for all abnormalities of the hormonal regulation system. A manual search of all records would place an excessive burden on the medical staff resources of Defence Force Recruiting, and as such, it is not possible to answer the question.
Business Enterprise Centres
(Question No. 711)

Mrs Hull asked the Minister for Small Business, Independent Contractors and the Service Economy, in writing, on 12 May 2009:

(1) What involvement has the New South Wales (NSW) Government had in enhancement funding for Business Enterprise Centres (BEC) recently provided by the Australian Government to some BECs of up to $330,000, including in Albury and Bathurst.

(2) What input has the NSW Government had in assessing and distributing enhancement funding for BECs.

(3) What were the criteria for determining what BECs would receive enhancement funding.

(4) What are the names of BECs that have not received enhancement funding.

(5) On what date were applications for enhancement funding first called for.

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

(1) The Government took to the election a commitment to provide ongoing Commonwealth funding of between $100,000 and $350,000 per year to 36 existing Business Enterprise Centres located in suburban, rural and regional Australia, to strengthen the capacity of those centres to provide advice to small businesses. The New South Wales Government was not involved in the funding under this commitment.

(2) The New South Wales Government was not involved in assessing and distributing funding under this commitment.

(3) The decision in the 2008-09 Budget to fund 36 Business Enterprise Centres reflects a commitment developed and announced by the Labor Party when in opposition prior to the 2007 election.

(4) Funding was confirmed in the 2008-09 Budget for the 36 Business Enterprise Centres. No other Business Enterprise Centres were funded under this commitment. A list of funded Business Enterprise Centres is attached.

(5) The decision in the 2008-09 Budget to fund 36 Business Enterprise Centres reflects a commitment developed and announced by the Labor Party when in opposition prior to the 2007 election.

Table of Funded Business Enterprise Centres

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entity Name</th>
<th>Trade Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Annual Funding GST Exc</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 ACT/NSW</td>
<td>Queanbeyan Enterprise Centre Inc</td>
<td>Capital Region BEC</td>
<td>1 Farrer Place, Queanbeyan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 NSW</td>
<td>Business Enterprise Centre St George &amp; Sutherland Shire Ltd</td>
<td></td>
<td>Unit 1A 29-33 Waratah St, Kirrawee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 NSW</td>
<td>Central Coast Business Mentor Services Inc</td>
<td>Central Coast Business Enterprise Centre</td>
<td>Zenith Building 1st Floor, 6 Reliance Drive, Tuggerah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 NSW</td>
<td>Business Enterprise Centre Cabonne, Orange, Blayney Inc</td>
<td>Central West Business Enterprise Centre</td>
<td>144 Lords Place, Orange</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| No. | State | Entity Name | Trade Name | Address | Annual Funding
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>The Eastern Suburbs Business Enterprise Centre Ltd</td>
<td>Cleary Business Enterprise Centre</td>
<td>Level 19, 323 Castlereagh Street, Sydney.</td>
<td>$350,000 GST Exc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>Hunter Region Business Enterprise Centre Inc</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cnr Barton &amp; Merthyr St, Kurri Kurri</td>
<td>$300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>Macarthur Business Enterprise Centre Ltd</td>
<td></td>
<td>L8 171 Queen St, Campbelltown</td>
<td>$350,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>Northern Rivers Enterprise Development Agency Inc</td>
<td>Northern Rivers Business Enterprise Centre</td>
<td>L3 Rous Water Bld 218 Molesworth St, Lismore</td>
<td>$250,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>Penrith City &amp; District Business Advisory Centre Ltd</td>
<td>Penrith Valley Business Enterprise Centre</td>
<td>Suite 1, Level one, 111 Henry St, Penrith</td>
<td>$350,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>NT</td>
<td>Business Enterprise Centre (Darwin Region) Inc</td>
<td>BEC Darwin</td>
<td>20 Catterthun St, Winnellie</td>
<td>$300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>Thuringowa Enterprise Centre Inc</td>
<td>North Queensland Small Business Development Centre</td>
<td>184-188 Vickers Rd North, Condon</td>
<td>$300,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>Caboolture Business Enterprise Centre Assoc Inc</td>
<td>Caboolture Business Enterprise Centre</td>
<td>39 Aerodrome Rd, Caboolture</td>
<td>$300,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>Ipswich Shared Workspace Ltd</td>
<td>Ipswich Enterprise Centre</td>
<td>26 East St, Ipswich</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Eastside Business Enterprise Centre Inc</td>
<td></td>
<td>294 Payneham Rd, Payneham</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Inner Southern Business Enterprise Centre Inc</td>
<td></td>
<td>903B South Rd, Clarence Gardens</td>
<td>$300,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Inner West Business Enterprise Centre Inc</td>
<td></td>
<td>L1 30-32 Stirling St, Thebarton</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>North West Business Development Centre Inc</td>
<td></td>
<td>6 Todd St, Port Adelaide</td>
<td>$300,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Northern Adelaide Business Enterprise Centre Inc</td>
<td></td>
<td>95 Womma Rd, Elizabeth West</td>
<td>$250,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>City of Salisbury</td>
<td>Salisbury Business &amp; Export Centre</td>
<td>Innovation House, Mawson Lakes</td>
<td>$250,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Entity No</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>Entity Name</td>
<td>Trade Name</td>
<td>Address</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Southern Success Business Enterprise Centre Inc</td>
<td>Business Enterprise Centre</td>
<td>Unit 5/209 Main South Rd, Morphett Vale</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>North East Development Agency Inc</td>
<td>Business Enterprise Centre Tea Tree Gully</td>
<td>114 Tolley Rd, St Agnes</td>
<td>250 000</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>TAS</td>
<td>Break O’Day Business Enterprise Board Inc</td>
<td>Break O’Day Business Enterprise Centre</td>
<td>34 Quail St, St Helens</td>
<td>100 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>TAS</td>
<td>Community Potential Foundation Ltd.</td>
<td>Business and Employment</td>
<td>45 Best St, Devonport</td>
<td>500 000</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>TAS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>29 Wilson St, Burnie</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>TAS</td>
<td>Meander Valley Enterprise Centre Inc</td>
<td>Eureka BEC</td>
<td>175 Collins St, Hobart</td>
<td>100 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>Ballarat Business Enterprise Centre Inc</td>
<td>Eureka BEC</td>
<td>15 Dawson Street South, Ballarat</td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>Box Hill Institute of Tafe</td>
<td>Box Hill Business Enterprise Centre</td>
<td>Bld 8 L2 456 Elgar Rd, Box Hill</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>Murray Hume Business Enterprise Centre Inc</td>
<td></td>
<td>1/320 Urana Rd, Albury</td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>VIC</td>
<td></td>
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<td>3 Stanley St, Wodonga</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>WA</td>
<td>Belmont Business Enterprise Centre Inc</td>
<td>Small Business Centre Belmont</td>
<td>7 Fairbrother St, Belmont</td>
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<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>WA</td>
<td>Leschenault Enterprise Centre Inc</td>
<td>Small Business Centre Bunbury</td>
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<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>WA</td>
<td>Coastal Business Centre Inc</td>
<td></td>
<td>Fremantle Prison, Knutsford St, Fremantle</td>
<td>250 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>WA</td>
<td>Swan Region Business Enterprise Centre Inc</td>
<td>Small Business Centre East Metro</td>
<td>40 Helena St, Midland</td>
<td>300 000</td>
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<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>WA</td>
<td>South East Metro Business Enterprise Centre Inc</td>
<td>Metro Business Enterprise Centre</td>
<td>33-37 Murray Rd South, Welshpool</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>WA</td>
<td>South Coast Business Development Organisation Inc</td>
<td>Small Business Centre South West Metro</td>
<td>Suite 34, 33 Crompton Rd, Rockingham</td>
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<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>WA</td>
<td>Stirling Business Enterprise Centre Inc</td>
<td>Small Business Centre Stirling</td>
<td>45 Delawney St, Balcatta</td>
<td>300 000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABC Learning Centres
(Question No. 714)

Mr Haase asked the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, in writing, on 12 May 2009:
In respect of the frozen ABC Learning Centre shares, why has there been no communication with Centrelink regarding shareholders not receiving dividends, given this affects the calculation of their age pensions.

Ms Macklin—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:
Legislation and policy exists to address the situation where listed securities become frozen. Centrelink has applied these rules and has not required further guidance.
Social security legislation defines listed securities as financial investments. This means for income test purposes the deeming rules are applied to the gross market value of the investment regardless of whether dividends are paid. The actual returns from the customer’s investments, whether in the form of capital growth, dividends or interest, are not used for income assessment, rather the current deeming rates are used to calculate assessable income.
For assets test purposes, the net market value (gross value less any encumbrance secured against the asset) is assessed.
To determine the asset value for shares, the last selling price for shares on the Australian Stock Exchange is used. Updated prices are applied to assessments at automatic bulk updates on 20 March and 20 September every year and when a customer asks for a re-assessment.
If a financial investment fundamentally fails the Minister is able to provide an exemption from the deeming rules in certain circumstances. Customers wanting to request a deeming exemption should contact their local Centrelink Financial Information officer to discuss the appropriateness of the request in their circumstances and the documentation required to progress a request. Where a deeming exemption is granted, the actual returns, if any, are assessed under the income test.

Asylum Seekers
(Question No. 719)

Dr Stone asked the Minister representing the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, in writing, on 12 May 2009:
How many people who are currently seeking asylum in Australia have previously sought asylum and been rejected.

Mr McClelland—The Minister for Immigration and Citizenship has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:
People who have applied previously for a Protection visa may not make a further application unless the Minister exercises a non-compellable power under section 48B of the Migration Act.
As at 8 May 2009, there were on hand 382 requests (counted by persons) for the Minister to exercise that power.
This figure excludes people who did not arrive in the Migration Zone who may have applied for a Protection visa previously and for whom a Refugee Status Assessment, the outcome of which determines whether they will be permitted to apply again, was not complete.
Energy Efficient Homes Package
(Question No. 720)

Mr Truss asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, in writing, on 12 May 2009:
Are subsidies under the Energy Efficient Homes Package Homeowner Insulation Program available to homeowners living in retirement under a long term lease agreement.

Mr Garrett—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:
Yes, people living in independent units such as in many retirement villages or aged care facilities can access the insulation assistance, provided they own (Homeowner Insulation Program) or rent (Low Emission Assistance Plan for Renters) their home and meet the other eligibility criteria. Ownership eligibility extends to people who occupy a dwelling under a lifetime/99 year lease arrangement.

Wimmera Mallee Pipeline Project
(Question No. 726)

Mr Forrest asked the Prime Minister, in writing, on 13 May 2009:
(1) Is he aware of a significant Australian Labor Party 2007 election commitment to provide funding of $124 million for the completion of the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline, and that only $99 million of this has been forthcoming from the Government.
(2) Has he been advised when the balance of $25 million will be made available to fund vital fire service requirements for the associated local government areas and to resolve the difficulties associated with rehabilitation of the Horsham irrigation district.

Mr Rudd—I am advised that the answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:
Labor’s national plan to tackle the water crisis included a commitment to provide “Up to $124 million further investment in the Wimmera Mallee pipeline project to ensure the project is completed and water savings delivered as soon as possible”.
The Government has approved funding of $99 million to fast-track completion of the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline and consistent with the Government’s commitment, a further $25 million is potentially available to complete this project, should it be required.
Whilst the pipeline will provide a reliable and pressurised water supply that will enhance fire fighting capacity, the purpose of this investment is to improve water supply security for a large part of the north-west region of Victoria and to provide water to enhance environmental outcomes. These objectives are consistent with those of the Government’s $12.9 billion Water for the Future framework, from which this project is being funded.
Regarding funding for fire services requirements, States and Territories have primary responsibility for preparing and responding to emergencies within their jurisdictions. However, as part of the budget, the Government announced a ‘Disaster Resilience Australia Package’ valued at $79.3 million, aimed at strengthening efforts to prepare for and combat major natural disasters, including fires. The Commonwealth also provides funding of $14 million per year under the National Aerial Firefighting Arrangements to assist the States and Territories lease specialised fire fighting aircraft.
Regarding the rehabilitation of the Horsham Irrigation District (Wimmera Irrigation Area), Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water was successful in obtaining $80,000 in funding under Round 1 of the Australian Government Irrigation Modernisation Planning Assistance program. I understand Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water has publicly announced that, in close consultation with the Wimmera Irrigators
and Diverters Consultative Committee, it will develop a business case to facilitate the permanent closure of the Wimmera irrigation system.

Prime Minister and Cabinet: Intergovernmental Agreements
(Question No. 727)

Mr Andrews asked the Prime Minister, in writing, on 13 May 2009:

In respect of any intergovernmental agreements that exist in the Minister’s portfolio: (a) how many exist; (b) what are their (i) names, and (ii) objectives and purposes; (c) what are the names of the parties to each; and (d) will the Minister provide a copy of each; if not, why not.

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

For the purposes of answering this question the term “intergovernmental agreements” is defined as:

- agreements between the Australian Government and State and Territory governments; and
- agreements between the Australian Government and any foreign government;

which are signed or authorised at ministerial level. Inter-agency agreements which may exist are not necessarily included.

Intergovernmental agreements which are signed at meetings of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) are listed on the COAG website, http://www.coag.gov.au/, with the exception of agreements that may have been subsequently amended outside of the COAG process or agreements which have expired.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) has advised that treaties (also known as agreements, conventions, protocols) create binding obligations at international law. These are a type of intergovernmental agreement. DFAT maintains a website which lists all treaties to which Australia is a signatory, http://www.dfat.gov.au/treaties/.

In addition to intergovernmental agreements listed on the COAG and DFAT websites, the answers for the Prime Minister and Cabinet portfolio are:

(a) How many exist: two.

b) (i) Names: Canada-Australia Public Policy Initiative Agreement.

c) (ii) Objectives and purposes: To implement a joint public policy program between Canada and Australia with three elements: 1) an interchange program to formalise exchanges of public servants; 2) a joint public policy retreat; and 3) a public lecture series.

An Agreement on Australia’s National Counter-Terrorism Arrangements. The Purpose of this Agreement is to establish a framework to enhance Australia’s counter-terrorism capability through a cooperative partnership between all jurisdictions.
In respect of any intergovernmental agreements that exist in the Minister’s portfolio: (a) how many exist; (b) what are their (i) names, and (ii) objectives and purposes; (c) what are the names of the parties to each; and (d) will the Minister provide a copy of each; if not, why not.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
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<tr>
<td>e) Will the Minister provide a copy:</td>
<td>Yes, a copy is attached. Yes, a copy of the text of the agreement which was signed on 24 October 2002 is attached.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) (i) Name</td>
<td>(b) (ii) Objectives &amp; purposes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations</td>
<td>The objective of the framework for federal financial relations is the improvement of the well-being of all Australians through: (a) collaborative working arrangements, including clearly defined roles and responsibilities and fair and sustainable financial arrangements, to facilitate a focus by the Parties on long term policy development and enhanced government service delivery; (b) enhanced public accountability through simpler, standardised and more transparent performance reporting by all jurisdictions, with a focus on the achievement of outcomes, efficient service delivery and timely public reporting; (c) reduced administration and compliance overheads; (d) stronger incentives to implement economic and social reforms; (e) the on-going provision of Goods and Services Tax (GST) payments to the States and Territories equivalent to the revenue received from the GST;</td>
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**QUESTIONS IN WRITING**
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<tr>
<th>(b) (i) Name</th>
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<th>(c) Name of parties</th>
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<tr>
<td>Corporations Agreement 2002 (as amended)</td>
<td>To facilitate and supplement the legislative foundation for Australia’s national scheme of corporate regulation, relying in part on State referrals in accordance with paragraph 51(xxvii) of the Constitution</td>
<td>The Commonwealth of Australia, the State of New South Wales, the State of Victoria, the State of Queensland, the State of South Australia, the State of Western Australia, the State of Tasmania, the Northern Territory of Australia, and the Australian Capital Territory</td>
<td>The Corporations Agreement is publicly available on the Treasury website at the following address: <a href="http://www.treasury.gov.au/contentitem.asp?pageId=035&amp;ContentID=495">http://www.treasury.gov.au/contentitem.asp?pageId=035&amp;ContentID=495</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Memorandum of understanding on establishing a bilateral seminar program between the Australian Treasury and the National Development and Reform Commission of the People’s republic of China</td>
<td>The Parties will promote mutual exchanges on topics including but not limited to: the global and regional macroeconomic environment; other economic policy challenges and experiences of mutual interest (including but not limited to fiscal policy, financial sector reform and tax policy); and the evolution of the global and regional economic architecture (ASEAN, ASEAN+3, East Asia Summit and other emerging forums). The purpose is to enhance mutual understanding between the Parties by sharing knowledge and experience on economic reform in both countries, focusing on policy approaches and</td>
<td>The Australian Treasury and the National Development and Reform Commission of the People’s republic of China</td>
<td>Copy can be obtained from the House of Representatives Table Office.</td>
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<td>Heads of Government Agreement: Exemption of Certain Public Sector Superannuation Schemes from the Superannuation Industry (Supervision) Act 1993</td>
<td>To ensure national standards are applied to certain aspects of superannuation without distinguishing between employees of the public and private sector</td>
<td>The Commonwealth and the State and Territory governments</td>
<td>Copy can be obtained from the House of Representatives Table Office.</td>
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<tr>
<td>41 comprehensive bilateral tax treaties for the avoidance of double taxation on income</td>
<td>To avoid the double taxation on income</td>
<td>The Commonwealth of Australia, Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Canada, China, Czech Republic, Denmark, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kiribati, Korea (Republic of), Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Papua</td>
<td>Copies of these treaties can be found on the Treasury website at <a href="http://www.treasury.gov.au/contentitem.asp?NavId=052&amp;ContentID=625">http://www.treasury.gov.au/contentitem.asp?NavId=052&amp;ContentID=625</a> or the DFAT website at <a href="http://www.dfat.gov.au/treaties/">http://www.dfat.gov.au/treaties/</a></td>
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<td>4 bilateral agreements for the avoidance of double taxation on airline profits</td>
<td>To avoid the double taxation on airline profits</td>
<td>The Commonwealth of Australia, China, France, Greece and Italy</td>
<td>Copies of these treaties can be found on the Treasury website at <a href="http://www.treasury.gov.au/contentitem.asp?NavId=052&amp;ContentID=625">http://www.treasury.gov.au/contentitem.asp?NavId=052&amp;ContentID=625</a> or the DFAT website at <a href="http://www.dfat.gov.au/treaties/">http://www.dfat.gov.au/treaties/</a></td>
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<td>5 bilateral tax information exchange agreements (TIEA) and additional benefits treaties with these TIEA countries</td>
<td>To facilitate the exchange of information with respect to taxes</td>
<td>The Commonwealth of Australia, Antigua &amp; Barbuda, Bermuda, Isle of Man and Netherlands Antilles</td>
<td>Copies of these treaties can be found on the Treasury website at <a href="http://www.treasury.gov.au/contentitem.asp?NavId=052&amp;ContentID=625">http://www.treasury.gov.au/contentitem.asp?NavId=052&amp;ContentID=625</a> or the DFAT website at <a href="http://www.dfat.gov.au/treaties/">http://www.dfat.gov.au/treaties/</a></td>
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<td>Competition Principles Agreement</td>
<td>The Agreement sets out the principles agreed by governments for implementing the National Competition Policy, including on prices oversight, structural reform of public monopolies, review and reform of restrictive regulations</td>
<td>The Commonwealth of Australia, the State of New South Wales, the State of Victoria, the State of Queensland, the State of South Australia, the State of Western Australia, the State of Tasmania, the Northern Territory of Australia, and the Australian Capital</td>
<td>Agreement is publicly available at <a href="http://ncp.ncc.gov.au/docs/cpa%20amended%202007.pdf">http://ncp.ncc.gov.au/docs/cpa%20amended%202007.pdf</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Conduct Code Agreement</td>
<td>The Agreement sets out the basis for extending the coverage of the Trade Practices Act under the National Competition Policy. It committed state and territory governments to extending the prohibitions against anti-competitive behaviour in the Trade Practices Act to virtually all businesses in Australia. In addition, it required each government to notify the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission when it enacts legislation that relies on section 51 of the Trade Practices Act. Section 51 enables state and territory governments to exempt conduct from the prohibitions against anti-competitive behaviour in Part IV of the Trade Practices Act.</td>
<td>The Commonwealth of Australia, the State of New South Wales, the State of Victoria, the State of Queensland, the State of South Australia, the State of Western Australia, the State of Tasmania, the Northern Territory of Australia, and the Australian Capital Territory</td>
<td>Agreement is publicly available at <a href="http://ncp.ncc.gov.au/docs/Conduct%20Code%20Agreement%20amended.pdf">http://ncp.ncc.gov.au/docs/Conduct%20Code%20Agreement%20amended.pdf</a></td>
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<td>Agreement to Implement the National Competition</td>
<td>The Agreement set out the reform commitments agreed by governments,</td>
<td>The Commonwealth of Australia, the State of New South Wales, the State of Victoria,</td>
<td>Agreement is publicly available at <a href="http://ncp.ncc.gov.au/docs/Agreement%20to%20Implement%20the%20National%20Competition.pdf">http://ncp.ncc.gov.au/docs/Agreement%20to%20Implement%20the%20National%20Competition.pdf</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Policy and Related Reforms</td>
<td>covering the National Competition Policy reforms, national markets in electricity and gas, water reform and national road transport regulations, and provided for payments by the Australian Government to the states and territories where they achieve satisfactory progress with reform implementation.</td>
<td>the State of Queensland, the State of South Australia, the State of Western Australia, the State of Tasmania, the Northern Territory of Australia, and the Australian Capital Territory</td>
<td><a href="attachment_b_ncp_review.pdf">attachment_b_ncp_review.pdf</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition and Infrastructure Reform Agreement</td>
<td>To establish a simpler and consistent national approach to economic regulation of significant infrastructure.</td>
<td>The Commonwealth of Australia, the State of New South Wales, the State of Victoria, the State of Queensland, the State of South Australia, the State of Western Australia, the State of Tasmania, the Northern Territory of Australia, and the Australian Capital Territory</td>
<td>Agreement is publicly available at <a href="http://www.coag.gov.au/coag_meeting_outcomes/2006-02-10/docs/attachment_b_ncp_review.rtf">http://www.coag.gov.au/coag_meeting_outcomes/2006-02-10/docs/attachment_b_ncp_review.rtf</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorandum of Agreement for the purposes of section 44ZZM of the Trade Practices Act 1974 (Cth)</td>
<td>Conferral of powers on the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) under the Victorian Gas Industry Act</td>
<td>The Commonwealth of Australia, the State of Victoria</td>
<td>Copy can be obtained from the House of Representatives Table Office.</td>
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<td>the United States of America Relating to Co-operation on Antitrust Matters [Australian Treaty Series 1982 No.13]</td>
<td>Antitrust laws and policies, to facilitate the notification, consultation and resolution of such conflicts with due regard to mutual respect for each party's sovereignty and considerations of comity.</td>
<td>Government of Australia and Government of the United States of America</td>
<td>Copy can be obtained from the House of Representatives Table Office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of the United States of America on Mutual Antitrust Enforcement Assistance [Australian Treaty Series 1999 No. 22]</td>
<td>To improve the effectiveness of the enforcement of antitrust laws of both countries through cooperation and mutual legal assistance on a reciprocal basis.</td>
<td>Government of Australia and Government of the United States of America</td>
<td>Copy can be obtained from the House of Representatives Table Office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Business Reporting – Payroll Tax Arrangements</td>
<td>Objectives: To simplify and reduce the burden of business-to-government reporting in respect of payroll tax. Outcomes: to reduce reporting burden for payroll tax through the removal of unnecessary obligations; Harmonise common reporting requirements for payroll tax; and Develop a new reporting framework for payroll tax.</td>
<td>The Commonwealth of Australia, the State of New South Wales, the State of Victoria, the State of Queensland, the State of South Australia, the State of Western Australia, the State of Tasmania, the Northern Territory of Australia, and the Australian Capital Territory</td>
<td>Copy can be obtained from the House of Representatives Table Office.</td>
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Immigration and Citizenship: Intergovernmental Agreements
(Question No. 732)

Mr Andrews asked the Minister representing the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, in writing, on 13 May 2009:

In respect of any intergovernmental agreements that exist in the Minister’s portfolio: (a) how many exist; (b) what are their (i) names, and (ii) objectives and purposes; (c) what are the names of the parties to each; and (d) will the Minister provide a copy of each; if not, why not.

Mr McClelland—The Minister for Immigration and Citizenship has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

I cannot divulge the precise details requested in the question, for the following reasons:

Many of the formal arrangements between governments are confidential. In such cases, it is inappropriate to disclose the contents without the consent of the other signatory. Release of information and inability to maintain confidentiality can potentially disadvantage Australia in future negotiations with other countries and would be contrary to Australia’s national interest.

However, publicly available information about some Intergovernmental Agreements can be obtained from the COAG website http://www.coag.gov.au. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade also maintains a website: http://www.dfat.gov.au/treaties/ that lists all treaties (agreements, conventions and protocols that create binding obligations under international law) to which Australia is a signatory.

Finance and Deregulation: Intergovernmental Agreements
(Question No. 733)

Mr Andrews asked the Minister representing the Special Minister of State, in writing, on 13 May 2009:

In respect of any intergovernmental agreements that exist in the Minister’s portfolio:

(a) how many exist;
(b) what are their (i) names, and (ii) objectives and purposes;
(c) what are the names of the parties to each; and
(d) will the Minister provide a copy of each; if not, why not.

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

(a) to (d) Please refer to the responses to Questions in Writing No. 739 asked of the Minister for Finance and Deregulation.

Foreign Affairs and Trade: Intergovernmental Agreements
(Question Nos 734 and 735)

Mr Andrews asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Trade, in writing, on 13 May 2009:

In respect of any intergovernmental agreements that exist in the Minister’s portfolio: (a) how many exist; (b) what are their (i) names, and (ii) objectives and purposes; (c) what are the names of the parties to each; and (d) will the Minister provide a copy of each; if not, why not.

Mr Stephen Smith—On behalf of the Minister for Trade and myself, the answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:
For the purposes of answering this question it is assumed that the term “intergovernmental agreements” means Australian treaties listed in the Australian Treaties Library. The Australian Treaties Library website is:
http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/dfat/ (which can also be found on the DFAT website: http://www.dfat.gov.au/treaties/.)

Accordingly my answers are as follows:
(a) On 30 June 2009, the number of treaties maintained by DFAT with the Australian Treaties Library was 2659. I am responsible for all Australian treaties (although other ministers may also have auxiliary responsibility for given treaties owing to their subject matter). Accordingly, I consider that, for the purposes of answering the question, all 2659 treaties maintained by DFAT within the Australian Treaties Library exist in my portfolio, rather than the portfolio of the Minister for Trade.

(b) (i) The names and texts of these treaties can be found in the Australian Treaties Library (known as Austlii) which has the website address: http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/dfat/. This website can also be found on the DFAT website. To provide the detailed information sought would entail a significant diversion of resources and, when the names and texts of these treaties are freely available from the Australian Treaties Library, I do not consider that the additional work can be justified.

(ii) The objectives and purposes of these treaties are usually set out in the preamble of each treaty. Where there is no preamble to the treaty then the object and purpose of the treaty should be clear from the text of the treaty. To provide the detailed information sought would entail a significant diversion of resources and, in these circumstances, I do not consider that the additional work can be justified.

(c) To provide the detailed information sought would entail a significant diversion of resources and, in these circumstances, I do not consider that the additional work can be justified.

(d) The 2659 treaty texts are freely available from the Australian Treaties Library. To provide the detailed information sought would entail a significant diversion of resources and, in these circumstances, I do not consider that the additional work can be justified.

Health and Ageing: Intergovernmental Agreements
(Question No. 737)

Mr Andrews asked the Minister for Health and Ageing, in writing, on 13 May 2009:
In respect of any intergovernmental agreements that exist in the Minister’s portfolio: (a) how many exist; (b) what are their (i) names, and (ii) objectives and purposes; (c) what are the names of the parties to each; and (d) will the Minister provide a copy of each; if not, why not.

Ms Roxon—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:
(a) The Health and Ageing portfolio has 328 current intergovernmental agreements.
(b) See attached table.
(c) See attached table.
(d) Where agreements are publicly available on the internet, references to these are provided in the attached table. National Partnership agreements under the Government’s new, streamlined federal financial arrangements are made available at www.coag.gov.au as they are signed. Due to the number and size of the intergovernmental agreements, the Department will make available copies of agreements on request, except where agreements are commercial in confidence. Consultations with signatory jurisdictions would be required prior to the provision of some agreements.
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Objective &amp; Purpose</th>
<th>Parties</th>
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<tr>
<td>National Health-care Agreement</td>
<td>The objective is to improve health outcomes for all Australians and sustainability of the Australian health system</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia (with each of the Governments of) Northern Territory Australian Capital Territory Queensland South Australia Victoria Western Australia New South Wales Tasmania</td>
<td><a href="http://www.coag.gov.au">www.coag.gov.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Health Care Agreements between the Commonwealth and States &amp; Territories governments 2003-2008</td>
<td>The purpose is to provide the states and territories with funding for the provision of public hospital services. The objective is to secure access for the community to public hospital services based on the Medicare principles.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia (with each of the Governments of) Northern Territory Australian Capital Territory Queensland South Australia Victoria Western Australia New South Wales Tasmania</td>
<td><a href="http://www.health.gov.au">www.health.gov.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Partnership Agreement for Hospital and Health Workforce Reform</td>
<td>To improve the efficiency of public hospital services; improve the volume and quality of subacute care services; and improve functioning of public hospital emergency departments</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia (with each of the Governments of) Northern Territory Australian Capital Territory Queensland South Australia Victoria Western Australia New South Wales Tasmania</td>
<td><a href="http://www.coag.gov.au">www.coag.gov.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Partnership Agreement on Preventive Health</td>
<td>To support changes in lifestyle and embed healthy behaviours to reduce the impact of disease and invest in initiatives that support people staying healthy</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia (with each of the Governments of) Northern Territory Australian Capital Territory Queensland South Australia Victoria Western Australia New South Wales Tasmania</td>
<td><a href="http://www.coag.gov.au">www.coag.gov.au</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>National Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap in Indigenous Health Outcomes</td>
<td>To contribute to closing the gap in health outcomes and achieving key goals as agreed by COAG</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia (with each of the Governments of) Australian Capital Territory New South Wales South Australia Queensland Northern Territory Victoria Western Australia Australia</td>
<td><a href="http://www.coag.gov.au">www.coag.gov.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elective Surgery Waiting List Reduction Plan Stage 1 (8 Agreements)</td>
<td>The aim of the Plan is that by the end of the four years the backlog of patients waiting longer than clinically recommended for elective surgery will be reduced across Australia.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia (with each of the Governments of) Northern Territory Australian Capital Territory Queensland South Australia Victoria Western Australia New South Wales Tasmania</td>
<td>Available on request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Medical Stockpile Memorandum of Understanding</td>
<td>To establish a national reserve of essential vaccines, antibiotics, antiviral drugs, chemical and radiological antidotes and personal protective equipment for health workers.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia (with each of the Governments of) Northern Territory Australian Capital Territory Queensland South Australia Victoria Western Australia New South Wales Tasmania</td>
<td>Commercial in confidence.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Public Health Outcome Funding Agreements</strong></td>
<td>To provide broadband funding over the period 2004-2005 to 2008-2009 for application across the priorities of Communicable Diseases, Cancer Screening, Health Risk Factors (Alcohol and Tobacco), Sexual and Reproductive health, and Women’s health, flexibly applied by each jurisdiction in accordance with its own needs.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia (with each of the Governments of) Northern Territory Australian Capital Territory Queensland South Australia Victoria Western Australia New South Wales Tasmania</td>
<td>Available on request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organ Transplantation Services</strong></td>
<td>To contribute towards the costs of the capital program for tissue typing services and the operating costs for tissue typing services.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia (with each of the Governments of) New South Wales South Australia Commonwealth of Australia and the Tasmanian Government</td>
<td>Commercial in confidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Launceston Integrated Care Centre</strong></td>
<td>To improve access to a broader range of better coordinated health services for people of Northern Tasmania with a focus on chronic and complex conditions, and provide renal services operating from a satellite site.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia and the Tasmanian Government</td>
<td>Available on request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tasmanian Patient Transport and Accommodation Initiative</strong></td>
<td>The objective is to provide a range of facilities and services to assist patients access hospital care.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia and the Tasmanian Government</td>
<td>Available on request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rheumatic Heart Disease Register and Control Program</strong></td>
<td>To improve the control of Acute Rheumatic Fever and the management of the resultant condition, Rheumatic Heart Disease, through patient tracking, secondary prophylaxis monitoring.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia (with each of the Governments of) Northern Territory Queensland Western Australia</td>
<td>Available on request.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Healthy Kids Health Checks</td>
<td>To support medical practitioners and practice nurses to undertake healthy kids’ checks on four-year-olds and promote early detection of lifestyle risk factors, delayed development and illness.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia (with each of the Governments of) Northern Territory Australian Capital Territory Queensland South Australia Victoria Western Australia New South Wales Tasmania</td>
<td>Available on request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowel Cancer Screening for 50 year olds Under a National Initiative</td>
<td>To support follow-up for national bowel cancer screening program participants with a positive result.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia (with each of the Governments of) Northern Territory Australian Capital Territory Queensland South Australia Victoria Western Australia New South Wales Tasmania</td>
<td>Available on request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OzFoodNet</td>
<td>For enhanced food-borne disease surveillance to provide a better understanding of the causes and incidence of food borne disease in the community and to provide an evidence base for policy formulation.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia (with each of the Governments of) Northern Territory Australian Capital Territory Queensland South Australia Victoria Western Australia New South Wales Tasmania</td>
<td>Available on request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Public Health Pneumococcal Disease Surveillance</td>
<td>To measure the incidence of pneumococcal disease in the community and to provide an evidence base for policy formulation.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia (with each of the Governments of) Northern Territory Australian Capital Territory Queensland South Australia Victoria New South Wales Tasmania</td>
<td>Available on request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satellite Renal Dialysis Facilities in remote Northern Territory Communities</td>
<td>To improve access to renal dialysis services for remote communities in the Northern Territory, to help reduce the pressure on existing renal services.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia and the Northern Territory Government</td>
<td>Available on request.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bringing Nurses Back into the Workforce Program</td>
<td>To support an increase in the number of nurses in the health workforce by attracting qualified nurses currently outside the Australian nursing workforce back into the sector.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia (with each of the Governments of) Northern Territory Australian Capital Territory Queensland South Australia Victoria Western Australia New South Wales Tasmania</td>
<td>Available on request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping Public Patients in Public Hospitals Waiting for Nursing Homes</td>
<td>The objective is to assist long stay older patients in hospitals who no longer require acute care and rehabilitation.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia (with each of the Governments of) Northern Territory Australian Capital Territory Queensland South Australia Victoria Western Australia New South Wales Tasmania</td>
<td>Available on request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aged Care Assessment Program (ACAP) Funding Agreements</td>
<td>To comprehensively assess the needs of frail older people and assist them gain access to the most appropriate types of care, including approval for Commonwealth Government subsidised care services.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia (with each of the Governments of) Northern Territory Australian Capital Territory Queensland South Australia Victoria Western Australia New South Wales Tasmania</td>
<td>Available on request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HACC Review Funding Agreements</td>
<td>To manage and fund the delivery of Home and Community Care services to frail older Australians, younger people with disabilities and their carers.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia (with each of the Governments of) Northern Territory Australian Capital Territory Queensland South Australia Victoria Western Australia New South Wales Tasmania</td>
<td>Available on request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grafton Base Hospital Redevelopment</td>
<td>The objective is to redevelop surgery services operating theatres &amp; EDs</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia and the New South Wales Government</td>
<td>Available on request.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bacchus Marsh Hospital Capital Upgrades</td>
<td>The objective is to upgrade facilities at the hospital.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia and the Victorian Government</td>
<td>Available on request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Lakes Health Precinct Renal Project</td>
<td>The objective is to construct a renal dialysis unit.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia and the Queensland Government</td>
<td>Available on request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmanian Hospitals and Community Health Services Initiative</td>
<td>The objective is to support the implementation of the Tasmanian Health Plan and address public hospital pressures.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia and the Tasmanian Government</td>
<td>Available on request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heads of Agreement for the Management, Operation and Funding of the</td>
<td>The Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services will operate and manage the Mersey Community Hospital (MCH) from 1 September 2008 to 30 June 2011.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia and the Tasmanian Government</td>
<td><a href="http://www.health.gov.au">www.health.gov.au</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mersey Community Hospital.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kempsey District Hospital - CT Scanner</td>
<td>Funding for the purpose of a Computed Tomography (CT) Scanner and Ultrasound machine for Kempsey District Hospital. The objective of the funding is to assist the State, through its purchase of a CT scanner and ultrasound machine for Kempsey District Hospital, to deliver diagnostic and patient management services to patients in this area.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia and the New South Wales Government.</td>
<td>Available on request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westmead Hospital - PET Scanner</td>
<td>The State will purchase, install and commission a PET scanner to be located near the new Cancer Centre at Westmead Hospital, in compliance with the PET technical standards. The objective of the grant is for the State to ensure that the PET scanner is used for the provision of PET diagnostic and patient management services to patients.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia and the New South Wales Government.</td>
<td>Available on request.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Calvary Mater Newcastle Hospital - PET/CT scanner</td>
<td>Funding to assist the State with the purchase of a PET/CT scanner at Calvary Mater Newcastle Hospital. The objective of the funding is to assist the State to increase the number of patients able to receive PET services at the Calvary Mater Newcastle hospital.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia and the New South Wales Government.</td>
<td>Available on request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRI at Cairns Base Hospital</td>
<td>The objective of the funding is for the Commonwealth to provide up to $4 million for the purchase and installation of an MRI unit at Cairns Base Hospital to improve access to MRI services for residents of Cairns and Far North Queensland.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia and the Queensland Government.</td>
<td>Available on request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radiation Oncology unit at Cairns Base Hospital</td>
<td>The objective of the funding is for the Commonwealth to provide up to $8.3 million towards the construction of a new radiation oncology unit to be located at the Cairns Base Hospital. This project aims to improve access to cancer care for residents of Cairns and Far North Queensland.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia and the Queensland Government.</td>
<td>Available on request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemotherapy services at Cairns Base Hospital</td>
<td>The objective of the funding is for the Commonwealth to provide up to $5 million towards the relocation and expansion of chemotherapy services at Cairns Base Hospital. This project aims to improve cancer care for residents of Cairns and Far North Queensland.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia and the Queensland Government.</td>
<td>Available on request.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integrated Cancer Care Centre at Lismore Base Hospital</td>
<td>The objective of the funding is for the Commonwealth to provide up to $22 million for the development of a new Integrated Cancer Care Centre at Lismore Base Hospital. This project aims to provide radiotherapy and chemotherapy services to improve sustainable regional access to cancer care in the Lismore region. It should be noted that $3.5 million of this funding is contingent on the facility being operational by March 2010.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia and the Queensland Government.</td>
<td>Available on request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaccine Preventable Disease (VPD) Surveillance Program comprising the</td>
<td>To improve the national surveillance of VPD, especially surveillance of measles, haemophilus influenzae type b infections and invasive meningococcal disease by providing resources to improve data collection in the National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System (NNDSS) dataset;</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia (with each of the Governments of) Northern Territory Australian Capital Territory Queensland South Australia Victoria Western Australia New South Wales Tasmania</td>
<td>Available on request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Immunisation Program Support Activities (NIPSA), Invasive Pneumococcal Disease (IPD) Surveillance and Varicella Surveillance Programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Aedes albopictus elimination in the Torres Strait Program</td>
<td>To control and possibly eliminate the Aedes albopictus (mosquito) from the Torres Strait and educate Torres Strait communities regarding mosquito control and the prevention of dengue fever.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia and the Queensland Government</td>
<td>Available on request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Way Forward; Research and Development</td>
<td>To support the establishment of Access Point Demonstration Projects to develop a single point of entry for clients to access community care.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia (with each of the Governments of) Northern Territory Australian Capital Territory Western Australia Queensland South Australia Victoria</td>
<td>Commercial in confidence.</td>
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QUESTIONS IN WRITING
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<tr>
<td>COAG’s ‘Better access to primary care in rural and remote areas’</td>
<td>The purpose of this initiative is to improve access to primary health care services for rural and remote communities. The objective is to achieve a net increase in services by allowing Medicare benefits to be claimed in respect of nonadmitted primary care services.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia (with each of the Governments of) Queensland Western Australia Northern Territory</td>
<td>Available on request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illicit Drug Diversion Initiative</td>
<td>An initiative aimed at diverting non-violent drug offenders away from the criminal justice system and into appropriate assessment, education and treatment services.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia (with each of the Governments of) Northern Territory Australian Capital Territory Queensland South Australia Victoria Western Australia New South Wales Tasmania</td>
<td>Available on request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needle &amp; Syringe Programs</td>
<td>Increasing Education, Counselling and Referral Services through Needle &amp; Syringe Programs and increase the accessibility through pharmacies and other outlets, and provide information and training</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia (with each of the Governments of) Northern Territory Australian Capital Territory Queensland South Australia Victoria Western Australia New South Wales Tasmania</td>
<td>Available on request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Perinatal Depression Plan</td>
<td>To improve prevention and early detection of antenatal and postnatal depression and provide better support and treatment for expectant and new mothers experiencing depression.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia (with each of the Governments of) Northern Territory Australian Capital Territory Queensland South Australia Victoria Western Australia New South Wales Tasmania</td>
<td>Available on request.</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for the Health Professions</td>
<td>To establish a single National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for all health professions by 1 July 2010.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia (with each of the Governments of) Northern Territory Australian Capital Territory Queensland South Australia Victoria Western Australia New South Wales Tasmania</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nhwt.gov.au">www.nhwt.gov.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Cancer Centre Adelaide</td>
<td>To provide funding for the design, planning, and construction of a Children’s Cancer Centre at the Women’s and Children’s Hospital in Adelaide</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia and the South Australia Government</td>
<td>Commercial in confidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding between the Australian Government and the Northern Territory Government on Enhancing Primary Health Care in the Northern Territory</td>
<td>To improve access to quality health care and deliver more efficiently and effectively to remote and Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia and the Northern Territory Government</td>
<td>Available on request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project to improve access to renal dialysis services in the remote communities in the Northern Territory.</td>
<td>This project aims to improve access to dialysis and related support services for people from remote communities in the Northern Territory through measures that complement the Northern Territory Government’s existing strategies and approaches to renal service delivery.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia and the Northern Territory Government</td>
<td>Available on request.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Framework Agreement under the National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health (NSFATSIH) 2003-2013</td>
<td>Collaboration in resource allocation, joint planning and priority setting for service delivery between key stakeholders in Indigenous health within the states and territories.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia and the Queensland Government</td>
<td>Available on request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torres Strait Framework Agreement under the National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health (NSFATSIH) 2003-2013</td>
<td>Collaboration in resource allocation, joint planning and priority setting for service delivery between key stakeholders in Indigenous health within the states and territories.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia and the Queensland Government</td>
<td>Available on request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Territory Agreement on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health</td>
<td>Collaboration in resource allocation, joint planning and priority setting for service delivery between key stakeholders in Indigenous health within the states and territories.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia and the Northern Territory Government</td>
<td>Available on request.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Framework Agreement under the National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health (NSFATSIH) 2003-2013 Agreement on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health (Victoria)</td>
<td>Collaboration in resource allocation, joint planning and priority setting for service delivery between key stakeholders in Indigenous health within the states and territories.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia and the Victorian Government</td>
<td>Available on request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Framework Agreement under the National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health (NSFATSIH) 2003-2013 Agreement on the Health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People (NSW)</td>
<td>Collaboration in resource allocation, joint planning and priority setting for service delivery between key stakeholders in Indigenous health within the states and territories.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia and the New South Wales Government (Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of NSW)</td>
<td>Available on request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Framework Agreement under the National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health (NSFATSIH) 2003-2013 Agreement on South Australian Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing</td>
<td>Collaboration in resource allocation, joint planning and priority setting for service delivery between key stakeholders in Indigenous health within the states and territories.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia and the South Australian Government</td>
<td>Available on request.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Framework Agreement under the National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health (NSFATS IH) Australian Capital Territory Framework Agreement on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health</td>
<td>Collaboration in resource allocation, joint planning and priority setting for service delivery between key stakeholders in Indigenous health within the states and territories.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia and the Australian Capital Territory Government</td>
<td>Available on request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memoranda of Understanding for the s100 Supply Arrangements for State-controlled Remote Area Aboriginal Health Services</td>
<td>Supply of PBS medicines to State/Territory operated and/or funded remote area Aboriginal health services under the provisions of section 100 of the National Health Act 1953</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia (with each of the Governments of)</td>
<td>Available on request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacetical Reform Program</td>
<td>To provide access for certain public hospital patients to subsidised medicines under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) on a cost neutral basis.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia (with each of the Governments of)</td>
<td>Available on request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Arrangements for Commonwealth Grants to the States/Territories for the Supply of Highly Specialised Drugs</td>
<td>To provide access to highly specialised drugs for certain public hospital patients to subsidised medicines under the PBS</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia (with each of the Governments of)</td>
<td>Available on request.</td>
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<td>Food Regulation Agreement</td>
<td>To give effect to a national approach to food regulation within Australia.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia (with each of the Governments of) Northern Territory Australian Capital Territory Queensland South Australia Victoria Western Australia New South Wales Tasmania</td>
<td><a href="http://www.coag.gov.au">www.coag.gov.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Gene Technology Agreement</td>
<td>To facilitate a national gene technology regulation scheme.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia (with each of the Governments of) Northern Territory Australian Capital Territory Queensland South Australia Victoria Western Australia New South Wales Tasmania</td>
<td><a href="http://www.coag.gov.au">www.coag.gov.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Health Information Agreement</td>
<td>To ensure the availability of nationally consistent quality health and health services data to support important policy and program development, and improvements in the quality, efficiency, effectiveness and accountability of health services provided to individuals or populations.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia (with each of the Governments of) Northern Territory Australian Capital Territory Queensland South Australia Victoria Western Australia New South Wales Tasmania</td>
<td><a href="http://www.aihw.gov">www.aihw.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cancer Service Network National Demonstration</td>
<td>To improve outcomes and reduce disparities in outcomes for people affected by cancer by providing high quality, clinically effective and coordinated cancer services across Australia.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia (with each of the Governments of) Northern Territory Queensland South Australia Victoria Western Australia New South Wales Tasmania</td>
<td>Available on request.</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Community Services Information Agreement</td>
<td>To ensure the availability of nationally consistent quality data on community services to support essential policy and program development, improvements in the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of community services, and accountability requirements</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia (with each of the Governments of) Northern Territory, Australian Capital Territory, Queensland, South Australia, Victoria, Western Australia, New South Wales, Tasmania</td>
<td><a href="http://www.aihw.gov">www.aihw.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Housing Data Agreement</td>
<td>To provide a framework for the collecting of information to enhance our understanding of how housing contributes to the achievement of whole of government outcomes, departmental outcomes and research agenda and priorities in each jurisdiction.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia (with each of the Governments of) Northern Territory, Australian Capital Territory, Queensland, South Australia, Victoria, Western Australia, New South Wales, Tasmania</td>
<td><a href="http://www.aihw.gov">www.aihw.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarence GP Super Clinic</td>
<td>To provide funding to establish a GP Super Clinic at the Hobart Eastern Shores - Clarence, Tasmania to deliver multidisciplinary integrated healthcare</td>
<td>The Commonwealth of Australia and the Government of Tasmania</td>
<td>Commercial in confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palmerston GP Super Clinic</td>
<td>To provide funding to establish a GP Super Clinic at Palmerston, Northern Territory to deliver multidisciplinary integrated healthcare services</td>
<td>The Commonwealth of Australia and the Government of the Northern Territory.</td>
<td>Commercial in confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreement on National Indigenous Housing Information</td>
<td>To provide a framework for information development that is nationally relevant and, wherever possible, assists the aspirations of individual jurisdictions or agencies to develop their own specific local objectives, service standards, and data or performance indicators.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia (with each of the Governments of) Northern Territory, Australian Capital Territory, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia, New South Wales, Tasmania</td>
<td><a href="http://www.aihw.gov">www.aihw.gov</a></td>
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<td>National Blood Agreement</td>
<td>To implement a coordinated national approach to policy setting, governance and management for the Australian blood sector</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia (with each of the Governments of) Northern Territory, Australian Capital Territory, Queensland, South Australia, Victoria, Western Australia, New South Wales, Tasmania</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nba.gov.au">www.nba.gov.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding in relation to the establishment of a National Managed Fund to provide Blood and Blood Products liability cover for Australian Red Cross Blood Service</td>
<td>To establish a discretionary fund to cover future liability claims made against the Australian Red Cross Blood Service in relation to the supply of blood and blood-related products within Australia.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia (with each of the Governments of) Northern Territory, Australian Capital Territory, Queensland, South Australia, Victoria, Western Australia, New South Wales, Tasmania</td>
<td>Commercial in confidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreement for the Provision of Innovative Health Services for Homeless and at Risk Youth</td>
<td>To contribute to improving health outcomes for homeless and at risk youth by improving access to mainstream, innovative and specialised health services which respond to the complex needs of homeless and at-risk youth.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia (with each of the Governments of) Northern Territory, Australian Capital Territory, Queensland, South Australia, Victoria, Western Australia, New South Wales, Tasmania</td>
<td>Available on request. Note that from 1 July 2009, the funding for these services will be rolled into the National Healthcare Agreement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding regarding Embryo Research</td>
<td>To ensure that Tasmanian government officers who become aware of potential breaches of the Research Involving Human Embryos Act 2002 notify NHMRC as soon as practical.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia and the Tasmanian Government</td>
<td>Available on request.</td>
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<td>The National Industrial Chemicals Notification &amp; Assessment Scheme (NICNAS) Memorandum of Understanding with the States and Territories</td>
<td>The MOU was signed in 1991 to formally record arrangements to facilitate the operation the Act under which NICNAS was established, and States’ and Territories’ legislation relating to industrial chemicals. The MOU Group exists as a conduit for the free flow of information and needs between the States and Territories and NICNAS on occupational health and safety, environmental and health matters relating to the use of chemicals in Australia.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia (with each of the Governments of) Northern Territory Australian Capital Territory Queensland South Australia Victoria Western Australia New South Wales Tasmania</td>
<td>Available on request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding Between the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia and the Department of Health, Housing and Community Services of Australia</td>
<td>Aims to facilitate the exchange of information, legislation, and experts, cooperation between public health institutions/organisations, training and education opportunities and cooperation in scientific research as deemed mutually beneficial.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia and the Government of the Republic of Indonesia</td>
<td>Available on request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding on Health Cooperation between the Department of Health and Ageing [then Department of Health, Housing, Local Government and Community Services] of the Government of Australia, and the Ministry of Public Health of the People’s Republic of China</td>
<td>Provides the framework within which detailed proposals for programs of cooperation in public medical research are to be jointly considered between the Parties on the basis of equality, reciprocity and mutual benefit.</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia and the Government of the People’s Republic of China</td>
<td>Available on request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Objective &amp; Purpose</td>
<td>Parties</td>
<td>Refer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreement on Medical Treatment between the Government of Australia and the Government of New Zealand</td>
<td>The purpose of each treaty is to provide reciprocal access to public health facilities for residents travelling between Australia and the other country</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia and the Government of New Zealand</td>
<td><a href="http://www.info.dfat.gov.au/Treaties">www.info.dfat.gov.au/Treaties</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreement on Medical Treatment between Australia and Ireland</td>
<td>The purpose of each treaty is to provide reciprocal access to public health facilities for residents travelling between Australia and the other country</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia and the Government of Ireland</td>
<td><a href="http://www.info.dfat.gov.au/Treaties">www.info.dfat.gov.au/Treaties</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reciprocal Agreement between Australia and Italy in the matter of Health Assistance</td>
<td>The purpose of each treaty is to provide reciprocal access to public health facilities for residents travelling between Australia and the other country</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia and the Government of Italy</td>
<td><a href="http://www.info.dfat.gov.au/Treaties">www.info.dfat.gov.au/Treaties</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands concerning the provision of Medical Treatment</td>
<td>The purpose of each treaty is to provide reciprocal access to public health facilities for residents travelling between Australia and the other country</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia and the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands</td>
<td><a href="http://www.info.dfat.gov.au/Treaties">www.info.dfat.gov.au/Treaties</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Objective &amp; Purpose</td>
<td>Parties</td>
<td>Refer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreement on Medical Treatment for Temporary Visitors between the Government of Australia and the Government of the Kingdom of Sweden</td>
<td>The purpose of each treaty is to provide reciprocal access to public health facilities for residents traveling between Australia and the other country</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia and the Government of the Kingdom of Sweden</td>
<td><a href="http://www.info.dfat.gov.au/Treaties">www.info.dfat.gov.au/Treaties</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreement on Medical Treatment for Temporary Visitors between Australia and the Republic of Finland</td>
<td>The purpose of each treaty is to provide reciprocal access to public health facilities for residents traveling between Australia and the other country</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia and the Government of the Republic of Finland</td>
<td><a href="http://www.info.dfat.gov.au/Treaties">www.info.dfat.gov.au/Treaties</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreement on Medical Treatment for Temporary Visitors between the Government of Australia and the Government of the Kingdom of Norway</td>
<td>The purpose of each treaty is to provide reciprocal access to public health facilities for residents traveling between Australia and the other country</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Australia and the Government of the Kingdom of Norway</td>
<td><a href="http://www.info.dfat.gov.au/Treaties">www.info.dfat.gov.au/Treaties</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finance and Deregulation: Intergovernmental Agreements

(Question No. 739)

Mr Andrews asked the Minister for Finance and Deregulation, in writing, on 12 May 2009:

In respect of any intergovernmental agreements that exist in the Minister’s portfolio:

(a) how many exist;
(b) what are their (i) names, and (ii) objectives and purposes;
(c) what are the names of the parties to each; and
(d) will the Minister provide a copy of each; if not, why not.

Mr Tanner—The answer to the honourable member’s questions are as follows:

(a) 34.
(b) and (c) Refer attached spreadsheet.
(d) Yes, copies of two IGAs can be obtained from the House of Representatives Table Office: The Papua New Guinea Australia Finance Twinning Scheme (PAFTS) and the National Partnership Agreement to Deliver a Seamless National Economy. Copies of the other 32 IGAs relating to the Australian Electoral Commission are not readily available and to commit resources required to provide them would be too resource intensive.
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy: Intergovernmental Agreements
(Question No. 741)

Mr Andrews asked the Minister representing the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, in writing, on 12 May 2009:

In respect of any intergovernmental agreements that exist in the Minister’s portfolio: (a) how many exist; (b) what are their (i) names, and (ii) objectives and purposes; (c) what are the names of the parties to each; and (d) will the Minister provide a copy of each; if not, why not.

Mr Albanese—The Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

As at 12 May 2009:

(a) How many intergovernmental agreements exist?

Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy (DBCDE)

(One in consultation with Australia Post)

International = 11
Domestic = 0

The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA)

International = 12
Domestic = 6

The Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and Special Broadcasting Service (SBS)

The ABC and SBS have advised they have no relevant intergovernmental agreements.

(b) to (d)

Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy

International agreements available on the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) website

(6)

DFAT has advised that treaties (also known as agreements, conventions or protocols) create binding obligations at international law. These are a type of intergovernmental agreement. DFAT maintains a website which lists all treaties to which Australia is a signatory (http://www.dfat.gov.au/treaties/). The table below provides further information on intergovernmental agreements available on the DFAT website relevant to the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of agreement</th>
<th>Names of parties (to each agreement)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seventh Additional Protocol to the Constitution (of 10 July 1964) of the Universal Postal Union (UPU); the Universal Postal Convention and Final Protocol; the General Regulations of the Universal Postal Union; and the Rules of Procedures of Congress. NB: The agreement from the 24th Universal Postal Congress held July-August 2008 (the Eight Additional Protocol to the Constitution) is not yet finalised.</td>
<td>Members of the UPU consist of 191 countries. The Members list is available at: <a href="http://www.upu.int/members/en/members.html">http://www.upu.int/members/en/members.html</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Objectives and purposes of agreement
The objective and purpose of the agreement is to develop rules for international mail exchange and the functions of the Universal Postal Union (UPU). The Convention comprises the rules applicable throughout the international postal service and provisions concerning letter post and parcel post services. The Constitution contains the fundamental rules of the UPU, providing for its legal foundation. The General Regulations comprise provisions which ensure the application of the Constitution and the day-to-day working of the UPU.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of agreement</th>
<th>Names of parties (to each agreement)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Constitution of the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT).</td>
<td>The APT has 34 Members, 4 Associate Members and 117 Affiliate Members. A list of APT members is available at <a href="http://www.apt.int/member/members.html">http://www.apt.int/member/members.html</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Objectives and purposes of agreement
The objective of the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT) is to foster the development of telecommunication services and information infrastructure throughout the region with a particular focus on the expansion thereof in less developed areas. Specifically the APT may:

(a) Promote the expansion of telecommunication services and information infrastructure and the maximization of the benefits of information and telecommunications technology for the welfare of the people in the region;

(b) Develop regional cooperation in areas of common interest, including radio communications and standards development;

(c) Undertake studies relating to developments in telecommunication and information infrastructure technology and policy and regulation in coordination with other international organizations, where pertinent;

(d) Encourage technology transfer, human resource development and the exchange of information for the balanced development of telecommunication services and information infrastructure within the region; and

(e) Facilitate coordination within the region with regard to major issues pertaining to telecommunication services and information infrastructure with a view to strengthening the region’s international position.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of agreement</th>
<th>Names of parties (to each agreement)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Constitution and Convention.</td>
<td>The ITU has 191 member states who can be party to the treaty. A list of ITU of members is available at <a href="http://www.itu.int/members/index.html">http://www.itu.int/members/index.html</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Objectives and purposes of agreement
Establishes a global framework for the use of international telecommunication and radiocommunication services, and governs the functioning and management of the International Telecommunication Union, and the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference periodically has the authority to revise the Constitution and Convention to improve the use of telecommunication services and the functioning of the ITU. The Conference was last held on 6–24 November 2006 and agreed to minor revisions. Australia approved these revisions on 17 April 2008.
### International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Radio Regulations

**Objectives and purposes of agreement**

International harmonisation of radiofrequency spectrum used for communication services.

The ITU World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC) periodically revises the Radio Regulations to facilitate international harmonisation of radiofrequency spectrum. The WRC last met from 20 October to 16 November 2007 and agreed to revise selected Radio Regulations. Australia approved these revisions on 13 March 09.

### International Telecommunication Regulations

**Objectives and purposes of agreement**

International agreement on the operation of international telecommunication services, including charging and accounting arrangements.

An ITU World Conference on International Telecommunications has the authority to revise the International Telecommunication Regulations. The last equivalent Conference was held in Melbourne in 1988. No conference has been held since then.

### International Telecommunications Satellite Organisation (ITSO) Agreement

**Objectives and purposes of agreement**

International agreement provides intergovernmental oversight of Intelsat Ltd satellite orbital locations and its obligations to least developed countries.

An ITSO Assembly of Parties meeting has the authority to revise the ITSO Agreement. The Assembly last met on 6-10 October 2008 and revised one Article of the Agreement. Australia has not yet agreed to this amendment.

### Memorandum of Understanding between The Government of Australia and The Government of the Republic of India concerning Cooperation in Information and Communications Technology

**Objectives and purposes of agreement**

The MOU was signed in New Delhi on 21 October 2005. The MOU was intended to provide the opportunity for government and industry to build stronger ties and explore partnering opportunities between the two countries. The MOU expires on 21 October 2009.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of agreement</th>
<th>Names of parties (to each agreement)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding on mutual enforcement assistance in commercial email matters among the following agencies of the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia: the United States Federal Trade Commission, the United Kingdom's Office of Fair Trading, the United Kingdom's Information Commission, Her Majesty's Secretary of State for Trade and Industry in the United Kingdom, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, and the Australian Communications Authority.</td>
<td>This agreement is between agencies within governments and is of less than treaty status. Countries involved include: Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding between the National Office for the Information Economy of Australia and the Australian Communications Authority and the Korea Information Security Agency concerning cooperation in the Regulation of Spam.</td>
<td>This agreement is between agencies within governments and is of less than treaty status. Countries involved include: Australia and South Korea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint Statement between the Department of Industry of Canada and the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts of Australia concerning cooperation in the field of Anti-Spam Policies and Strategies.</td>
<td>This agreement is between agencies within governments and is of less than treaty status. Countries involved include: Australia and Canada.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A copy is available at:
Name of agreement | Names of parties (to each agreement)  
--- | ---  
Joint Statement between the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, Australia and the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology of the Kingdom of Thailand concerning cooperation in the fields of Telecommunications and Information Technology. | This agreement is between agencies within governments and is of less than treaty status. Countries involved include: Australia and Thailand.  
Objectives and purposes of agreement  
This agreement forge closer links between the agencies in Australia and Thailand in the provision of information and mutual assistance and cooperation in telecommunications and Information Technology matters.  

**Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA)**

International Intergovernmental Agreements not available on the DFAT website

Intergovernmental Agreements where the Australian Communications and Media Authority is the lead agency:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of agreement</th>
<th>Names of parties (to each agreement)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internet Watch Foundation - UK (IWF) – ACMA Memorandum of Understanding signed by ACMA or its predecessor.</td>
<td>Australia and the United Kingdom.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Objectives and purposes of agreement**  
To facilitate a reciprocal exchange of URL’s of known potentially illegal child abuse websites for their potential inclusion in national filtering projects.  
A copy can be provided upon request to ACMA. |

**Objectives and purposes of agreement**

The Seoul-Melbourne agreement is a multilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) focusing on co-operative anti-spam measures. The MoU brings together 12 Asia-Pacific communications and Internet agencies in the fight against spam.  
This agreement is between agencies within governments and is of less than treaty status.  
Countries involved include: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Chile, China, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, Norway, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.  
Objectives and purposes of agreement  
The ‘London Action Plan’ on spam enforcement cooperation draws together government agencies and private sector organisations in 21 countries to fight spam and address spam related problems, such as online fraud and deception, phishing, and dissemination of viruses. The participants also open the Action Plan for participation by other interested government and public agencies, and by appropriate private sector representatives, as a way to expand the network of entities engaged in spam enforcement cooperation.  

Memorandum of Understanding between the Australian Communications and Media Authority and the New Zealand Department of Internal Affairs.  
This agreement is between agencies within governments and is of less than treaty status.  
Countries involved include: Australia and New Zealand  
Objectives and purposes of agreement  
The agreement is intended to establish channels of communication between the agencies on anti-spam matters.  
A copy can be provided upon request to ACMA.

MDA - ACMA Memorandum of Understanding  
This Memorandum of Understanding signed by ACMA or its predecessor.  
Objectives and purposes of agreement  
To provide a framework for consultation on matters of mutual interest.  
A copy can be provided upon request to ACMA.

NetSafe New Zealand – ACMA  
This Memorandum of Understanding signed by ACMA or its predecessor.  
Objectives and purposes of agreement  
To facilitate cooperation and information sharing on areas of mutual interest.  
A copy can be provided upon request to ACMA.
### QUESTIONS IN WRITING

**Name of agreement** | **Names of parties (to each agreement)**
--- | ---
(SPAM) Australia-Taiwan Memorandum of Understanding [Australian Commerce & Industry Office - Taipei Economic & Cultural Office]. Memorandum of Understanding signed by other body, however ACMA is responsible for the implementation in Australia. Objectives and purposes of agreement For cooperation in the Regulation of SPAM. A copy can be provided upon request to ACMA. | Australia and Taiwan.

**Name of agreement** | **Names of parties (to each agreement)**
--- | ---
Satellite Coordination Multilateral Memorandum of Understanding (Regions 1 and 3 Multilateral GSO/MSS Intersystem Coordination). Memorandum of Understanding signed by ACMA or its predecessor. Objectives and purposes of agreement Establishes an ongoing multilateral process to coordinate and share the orbit/spectrum resource used by ‘L band’ mobile satellite systems in ITU Regions 1 and 3 (Europe and Asia-pacific). Coordination for the Frequency Bands 1525-1544/1545-1559 MHz 1626.5-1645.5/1646.5-1660.5 MHz. A copy can be provided upon request to ACMA. | Australia, Italy, Indonesia, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, European Space Agency, UK and Russia.

**Name of agreement** | **Names of parties (to each agreement)**
--- | ---
APECTEL Mutual Recognition Agreement. Mutual Recognition Agreements signed by other bodies however ACMA is the lead agency. Objectives and purposes of agreement To provide for mutual recognition of conformity assessment of telecommunications equipment. Promote trade liberalisation and economic cooperation with co-signatories of these arrangements. A copy is available at http://www.acma.gov.au/webwr/_assets/main/lib100711/apec%20mra%20text.pdf | Australia, Brunei; Canada; Chile; China; Hong Kong; Indonesia; Japan; Korea; Malaysia; Mexico; New Zealand; Papua New Guinea; Peru; the Philippines; Russian Federation; Singapore; Taiwan; Thailand; USA; Vietnam.

**Name of agreement** | **Names of parties (to each agreement)**
--- | ---
CEPT (European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations) Mutual Recognition of Amateur licensing arrangements. Mutual Recognition Agreements signed by other bodies however ACMA is the lead agency. | CEPT Countries.
Objectives and purposes of agreement

In accordance with Recommendation T/R 61-02 CEPT countries accept Australia’s Amateur Operator’s Certificate of Proficiency (Advanced) for the purpose of granting long term licences in CEPT countries. Replaces previous recognition of Australia’s Amateur Operator’s Certificate of Proficiency (Unrestricted Level).

A copy can be provided upon request to ACMA.

Name of agreement | Names of parties (to each agreement)
--- | ---
CEPT (European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations) Mutual Recognition of Amateur licensing arrangements, Mutual Recognition Agreements signed by other bodies however ACMA is the lead agency. | CEPT Countries.

Objectives and purposes of agreement
On the basis of the issue of the Radiocommunications (Overseas Amateurs Visiting Australia) Class Licence 2008, in accordance with Recommendation T/R 61-01 CEPT countries allow Australian Amateurs holding the Advanced Licence to operate in CEPT countries for a short period without holding a CEPT licence.

A copy can be provided upon request to ACMA.

Name of agreement | Names of parties (to each agreement)
--- | ---
Chinese Taipei EME (Electromagnetic Energy) Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) [Australian Commerce & Industry Office and Taipei Economic & Cultural Office]. MRA signed by other bodies however AMCA is responsible for implementing in Australia. | Australia and Taiwan.

Objectives and purposes of agreement
Mutual acceptance of test reports between Taiwan (Chinese Taipei) and Australia. Facilitate trade with respect to radiocommunications products.

A copy can be provided upon request to ACMA.

**Domestic**

A copy of the following ACMA domestic agreements can be provided upon request to ACMA-subject to security issues.

Name of agreement
ACMA – Victorian Police Force. Memoranda of Understanding signed by ACMA or its predecessor.

Objectives and purposes of agreement
To set out the process of referring illegal online material (particularly overseas hosted material) to law enforcement.

QUESTIONS IN WRITING
### Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts: Intergovernmental Agreements  
(Question No. 742)

**Mr Andrews** asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, in writing, on 12 May 2009:

In respect of any intergovernmental agreements that exist in the Minister’s portfolio: (a) how many exist; (b) what are their (i) names, and (ii) objectives and purposes; (c) what are the names of the parties to each; and (d) will the Minister provide a copy of each; if not, why not.

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

I refer the Honourable Member to the COAG website and the DFAT website that list intergovernmental agreements.

---

**Name of agreement**  
ACMA – NSW Police Force.  
Memoranda of Understanding signed by ACMA or its predecessor.  
Objectives and purposes of agreement  
To set out the process of referring illegal online material (particularly overseas hosted material) to law enforcement.

**Name of agreement**  
ACMA – Queensland Police Force.  
Memoranda of Understanding signed by ACMA or its predecessor.  
Objectives and purposes of agreement  
To set out the process of referring illegal online material (particularly overseas hosted material) to law enforcement.

**Name of agreement**  
ACMA – South Australian Police Force.  
Memoranda of Understanding signed by ACMA or its predecessor.  
Objectives and purposes of agreement  
To set out the process of referring illegal online material (particularly overseas hosted material) to law enforcement.

**Name of agreement**  
ACMA – West Australian Police Force.  
Memoranda of Understanding signed by ACMA or its predecessor.  
Objectives and purposes of agreement  
To set out the process of referring illegal online material (particularly overseas hosted material) to law enforcement.

**Name of agreement**  
ACMA – Tasmanian Police Force.  
Memoranda of Understanding signed by ACMA or its predecessor.  
Objectives and purposes of agreement  
To set out the process of referring illegal online material (particularly overseas hosted material) to law enforcement.

The precise detail requested in the question is not readily available and I am not prepared to authorise the commitment of resources required to provide a detailed response.

**Attorney-General's: Intergovernmental Agreements**

(Question No. 743)

Mr Andrews asked the Attorney-General, in writing, on 13 May 2009:

In respect of any intergovernmental agreements that exist in the Minister’s portfolio: (a) how many exist; (b) what are their (i) names, and (ii) objectives and purposes; (c) what are the names of the parties to each; and (d) will the Minister provide a copy of each; if not, why not.

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

I am advised that the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) maintains a list of intergovernmental agreements that are signed at their meetings on their website, http://www.coag.gov.au/, with the exception of agreements that may have been subsequently amended outside of the COAG process. I am advised that the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade maintains a website, http://www.dfat.gov.au/treaties/ that lists all treaties to which Australia is a signatory.

The precise detail requested in the question is not readily available and I am not prepared to authorise the commitment of resources required to provide a detailed response.

**Human Services: Intergovernmental Agreements**

(Question No. 744)

Mr Andrews asked the Minister for Human Services, in writing, on 13 May 2009:

In respect of any intergovernmental agreements that exist in the Minister’s portfolio: (a) how many exist; (b) what are their (i) names, and (ii) objectives and purposes; (c) what are the names of the parties to each; and (d) will the Minister provide a copy of each; if not, why not.

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

Department of Human Services

(a) 22 intergovernmental agreements exist that are on the public record (refer table below).

(b) Please see table below.

(c) Please see table below.

(d) Please see table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of Agreement</th>
<th>Objective/Purpose of the Agreement</th>
<th>Names of Parties in Agreement</th>
<th>Availability of copies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Rehabiliation Service Provider Agreement</td>
<td>Provision of vocational rehabilitation services</td>
<td>SA WorkCover and CRS Australia</td>
<td>No #</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Rehabiliation Service Provider Agreement</td>
<td>Provision of vocational rehabilitation services</td>
<td>Transport Accident Commission Vic and CRS Australia</td>
<td>No #</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Rehabiliation Service Provider Agreement</td>
<td>Provision of vocational rehabilitation services</td>
<td>Vic Police</td>
<td>No #</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Rehabiliation Service Provider Agreement</td>
<td>Provision of injury prevention services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QUESTIONS IN WRITING
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of Agreement</th>
<th>Objective/Purpose of Agreement</th>
<th>Names of Parties in Agreement</th>
<th>Availability of copies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Rehabilitation Service Provider Agreement</td>
<td>Provision of vocational rehabilitation services</td>
<td>Melbourne City Council</td>
<td>No #</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Rehabilitation Service Provider Agreement</td>
<td>Provision of vocational rehabilitation services</td>
<td>Vic WorkCover and CRS Australia</td>
<td>No #</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Greater Dandenong, Vic</td>
<td>Pre employment screening assessments</td>
<td>City of Greater Dandenong and CRS Australia</td>
<td>No #</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Casey, Vic</td>
<td>Pre employment screening assessments</td>
<td>City of Casey and CRS Australia</td>
<td>No #</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mornington Peninsula Shire, Vic</td>
<td>Injury prevention services</td>
<td>Mornington Peninsula Shire and CRS Australia</td>
<td>No #</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vic Roads</td>
<td>Pre employment screening assessments</td>
<td>CRS Australia and Vic Roads</td>
<td>No #</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources / OH&amp;S Common Use Agreement 39104, WA</td>
<td>Provision of OH&amp;S services to State Government organisations and agencies</td>
<td>CRS Australia WA SW and the Department of Treasury and Finance</td>
<td>No #</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dept of Tourism, Regional Development and Industry (DTRDI), QLD</td>
<td>Provision of workstation assessments and other injury prevention services</td>
<td>DTRDI and CRS Australia</td>
<td>No #</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rockhampton City Council, QLD</td>
<td>Provision of pre employment screenings</td>
<td>Rockhampton Regional Council and CRS Australia</td>
<td>No #</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraser Coast City Council, QLD</td>
<td>Injury prevention services</td>
<td>Fraser Coast Council and CRS Australia</td>
<td>No #</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ergon Energy, QLD (State Government corporation)</td>
<td>Provision of injury management services</td>
<td>Ergon Energy and CRS Australia</td>
<td>No #</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ergon Energy, QLD (State Government corporation)</td>
<td>Provision of workstation assessments and other injury prevention services</td>
<td>Ergon Energy and CRS Australia</td>
<td>No #</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Aging, Disability and Home Care, NSW (DADHC) Preferred Provider Agreement Australia Post Service Level Agreement, NSW</td>
<td>Provision of Occupational Rehabilitation Services</td>
<td>DADHC and CRS Australia, NSW</td>
<td>No #</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia Post Service Level Agreement, NSW</td>
<td>Provision of Occupational Rehabilitation Services</td>
<td>Australia Post and CRS Australia, NSW</td>
<td>No #</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title of Agreement</td>
<td>Objective/Purpose of the Agreement</td>
<td>Names of Parties in Agreement</td>
<td>Availability of copies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provision of Work Capacity Assessments by CRS for Department of Aging, Disability and Home Care (DADHC), NSW</td>
<td>Work Capacity Assessments</td>
<td>DADHC and CRS Australia</td>
<td>No #</td>
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<tr>
<td>United Nations Convention on the Recovery Abroad of Maintenance – 1956</td>
<td>The purpose of the Convention is to facilitate the recovery of maintenance to which a person (that is in the territory of one of the Contracting Parties) claims to be entitled from another person (that is subject to the jurisdiction of another Contracting party).</td>
<td>Refer to link below <a href="http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetailsIII.aspx?&amp;src=UNTSONLINE&amp;mtdsg_no=XX~1&amp;chapter=20&amp;Temp=mtdsg3&amp;lang=en">http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetailsIII.aspx?&amp;src=UNTSONLINE&amp;mtdsg_no=XX~1&amp;chapter=20&amp;Temp=mtdsg3&amp;lang=en</a></td>
<td>Refer to link below <a href="http://treaties.un.org/g/doc/Treaties/1957/05/19570525%2001-08%20AM/Ch_X_X_1p.pdf">http://treaties.un.org/g/doc/Treaties/1957/05/19570525%2001-08%20AM/Ch_X_X_1p.pdf</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of New Zealand on Child and Spousal Maintenance – 2000</td>
<td>The purposes of the Agreement are as follows:: to agree on the jurisdiction of the administrative or judicial authorities of the Contracting States; to facilitate recognition and enforcement of decisions; to exchange information and to provide for mutual cooperation in the collection and payments of monies in relation to child and spousal maintenance.</td>
<td>Australia and New Zealand</td>
<td>Refer to link below <a href="http://austlii.law.uts.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol_reg/csacsr1998536/sch1.html">http://austlii.law.uts.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol_reg/csacsr1998536/sch1.html</a></td>
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The purpose of the Agreement is to establish a uniform and effective framework for the enforcement of maintenance obligations and the recognition of maintenance decisions.

Medicare Australia

(a) Medicare Australia has one agreement listed on the public record (refer table below)
(b) Please see table below
(c) Please see table below
(d) Please see table below

Centrelink

(a) to (d) A large number of agreements are in place that detail arrangements for the provision of support services, co-location of services and other partnership arrangements as part of Centrelink’s normal operations. The precise detail requested in the question is not readily available and I am not prepared to authorise the commitment of resources required to itemise these agreements.

Australian Hearing

(a) to (d) Nil

QUESTIONS IN WRITING
**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry: Intergovernmental Agreements**

**Question No. 745**

Mr Andrews asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, in writing, on 13 May 2009:

In respect of any intergovernmental agreements that exist in the Minister’s portfolio: (a) how many exist; (b) what are their (i) names, and (ii) objectives and purposes; (c) what are the names of the parties to each; and (d) will the Minister provide a copy of each; if not, why not.

Mr Burke—The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

The information requested by Mr Andrews on intergovernmental agreements (agreements) is available through two coordinating Commonwealth agency websites. Treaties (also known as agreements, conventions, protocols) are managed by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and are made available on their website (http://www.dfat.gov.au/treaties/). This website lists all treaties to which Australia is a signatory to. The Council of Australian Government provides a list of agreements which are signed at their meetings on their website (http://www.coag.gov.au/).

Agreements for the Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry portfolio which are not listed on the abovementioned websites, but are on the public record, are provided at Attachment A.

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<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Name of Agreement</th>
<th>Date of Agreement</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Names of parties</th>
<th>Agreement Attached</th>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The Montreal Process – The Santiago Declaration. – The Quebec City Declaration.</td>
<td>2/1995</td>
<td>To establish a set of agreed criteria and indicators for the measurement and monitoring of forest resources by signatory nations.</td>
<td>To promote and uphold the conservation and sustainable management of temperate and boreal forests on the national level by declaration signatories.</td>
<td>Member countries: Argentina, Australia, Canada, Chile, China, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, the United States of America and Uruguay.</td>
<td>The Santiago Declaration: <a href="http://www.rinya.maff.go.jp/mpci/rep-pub/1995/santiago_e.html#preface">http://www.rinya.maff.go.jp/mpci/rep-pub/1995/santiago_e.html#preface</a>  The Quebec City Declaration: <a href="http://www.rinya.maff.go.jp/mpci/meetings/15_e.html">http://www.rinya.maff.go.jp/mpci/meetings/15_e.html</a></td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Plantations for Australia: The 2020 Vision</td>
<td>10/1997</td>
<td>To increase Australia’s plantations, based on a notional target of trebling the area of commercial tree crops to around 3</td>
<td>To enhance regional wealth creation and international competitiveness of the Australia’s timber industry.</td>
<td>Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments and the plantation timber growing and processing</td>
<td><a href="http://www.plantations2020.com.au/vision/index.htm">http://www.plantations2020.com.au/vision/index.htm</a></td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Intergovernmental Agreement on a National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality</td>
<td>Progressively signed by each jurisdiction between 11/2000 and 23/5/2002</td>
<td>The Goal of the Action Plan is to motivate and enable regional communities to use coordinated and targeted action to: i) prevent, stabilise and reverse trends in salinity, particularly dryland salinity, affecting the sustainability of production, conservation of biological diversity and the viability of our infrastructure; and ii) improve water quality and secure reliable allocations for human uses, industry and the environment.</td>
<td>The purpose of this Agreement is to establish the arrangements between governments, in accordance with the National Action Plan on Salinity and Water Quality. The IGA requires the Commonwealth and the Territory Governments to enter into a bilateral agreement to implement the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality and in this respect the bilateral agreement: (a) identifies roles and responsibilities for the implementation of the National Action Plan; (b) details arrangements for the Territory, including, institutional arrangements and transitional arrangements; (c) details multilateral arrangements required where regions or activities are multi-jurisdictional; (d) includes criteria that will be the basis for accreditation by the Parties of draft.</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Bilateral Agreement for the Implementation of the intergovernmental agreement on a national plan for salinity and water quality between the Commonwealth of Australia and the Australian Capital Territory</td>
<td>20/12/2006</td>
<td>As signatories to the Intergovernmental Agreement on a National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality (‘IGA’) the Commonwealth and the Territory Governments have committed to establish the arrangements necessary to motivate and enable regional communities to use coordinated and targeted action to: (a) prevent, stabilise and reverse trends in salinity, particularly dryland salinity, affecting the sustainability of production, conservation of biological diversity and the viability of our infrastructure; and (b) improve water quality and secure reliable allocations for human uses, industry.</td>
<td>The Commonwealth Government and Australian Capital Territory Government.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.naps.wq.gov.au/publications/agreements/agreements/pubs/bilateral-act.pdf">http://www.naps.wq.gov.au/publications/agreements/agreements/pubs/bilateral-act.pdf</a></td>
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<td>NRM plans and the process for accrediting draft NRM plans within a jurisdiction; (e) establishes a framework for the development of Partnership Agreements with regional NRM bodies; (f) identifies appropriate standards and targets to be reflected in accredited natural resource management plans; (g) notes agreed policy reforms and milestones; (h) identifies capacity building measures based on an agreed forward plan; (i) outlines the principles and arrangements for the provision of devolved funding to regions for the implementation of accredited regional plans, including arrangements for the provision of Foundation Funding to regional NRM bodies to assist them to develop and refine plans; (j) outlines commitment by the Parties to a National Action Plan communication strategy; (k) identifies principles for the development and exchange of information by the Parties; and (l) details accountability mechanisms, program management and dispute resolution arrangements for the Parties.</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Agreement between Commonwealth of Australia and State of New South Wales, Relating to the national action plan for salinity and water quality initiative of the council of Australian Governments</td>
<td>17/05/2002</td>
<td>As signatories to the Intergovernmental Agreement on a National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality (‘IGA’) the Commonwealth and Northern Territory Governments have committed to establish the arrangements necessary to motivate and enable regional communities to use coordinated and targeted action to: (a) prevent, stabilise and reverse trends in salinity, particularly dryland salinity, affecting the sustainability of production, conservation of biological diversity and the viability of our infrastructure; and (b) improve water quality and secure reliable allocations for human uses, industry and the environment.</td>
<td>The Parties intend that this Agreement provide an effective, integrated and coherent framework to deliver and monitor the NAP.</td>
<td>The Commonwealth Government and New South Wales State Government.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.naps.wq.gov.au/publications/agreements/pubs/bilateral-nsw.pdf">http://www.naps.wq.gov.au/publications/agreements/pubs/bilateral-nsw.pdf</a></td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Agreement between the Commonwealth of Australia and the Northern Territory of Australia for the implementation of the intergovernmental agreement on a national action plan for salinity and water quality Revised March 2005</td>
<td>07/02/2003</td>
<td>As signatories to the Intergovernmental Agreement on a National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality (‘IGA’) the Commonwealth and Northern Territory Governments have committed to establish the arrangements necessary to motivate and enable regional communities to use coordinated and targeted action to: (a) prevent, stabilise and reverse trends in salinity, particularly dryland salinity, affecting the sustainability of production, conservation of biological diversity and the viability of our infrastructure; and (b) improve water quality and secure reliable allocations for human uses, industry and the environment.</td>
<td>The IGA requires the Commonwealth and the Territory Governments to enter into a bilateral agreement to implement the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality and in this respect the bilateral agreement: (a) identifies roles and responsibilities for the implementation of the National Action Plan; (b) details arrangements for the Territory, including, institutional arrangements and transitional arrangements; (c) details multilateral arrangements required where regions or</td>
<td>The Commonwealth Government and Northern Territory Government.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.naps.wq.gov.au/publications/agreements/pubs/bilateral-nt.pdf">http://www.naps.wq.gov.au/publications/agreements/pubs/bilateral-nt.pdf</a></td>
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|   |                  |                  | the viability of our infrastructure; and (b) improve water quality and secure reliable allocations for human uses, industry and the environment. | activities are multi-jurisdictional; (d) includes criteria that will be the basis for accreditation by the Parties of draft NRM plans and the process for accrediting draft NRM plans within a jurisdiction; (e) establishes a framework for the development of Partnership Agreements with regional NRM bodies; (f) identifies appropriate standards and targets to be reflected in accredited natural resource management plans; (g) notes agreed policy reforms and milestones; (h) identifies capacity building measures based on an agreed forward plan; (i) outlines the principles and arrangements for the provision of devolved funding to regions for the implementation of accredited regional plans, including arrangements for the provision of Foundation Funding to regional NRM bodies to assist them to develop and refine plans; (j) outlines commitment by the Parties to a National Action Plan communication strategy; (k) identifies principles for the development and exchange of information by the Parties; and (l) details accountability mechanisms, program management and dispute resolution. |                     | }
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>An Agreement be-</td>
<td>01/03/2002</td>
<td>As signatories to the Intergovernmental Agreement on a National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality (‘IGA’) the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments have committed to establish the arrangements necessary to motivate and enable regional communities to use coordinated and targeted action to: (a) prevent, stabilise and reverse trends in salinity, particularly dryland salinity, affecting the sustainability of production, conservation of biological diversity and the viability of our infrastructure; and (b) improve water quality and secure reliable allocations for human uses, industry and the environment.</td>
<td>The IGA infers that the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments will enter into a Bilateral Agreement that implements the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality. In this respect this Bilateral Agreement: (a) identifies roles and responsibilities for the implementation of the National Action Plan; and (b) details arrangements for Queensland priority regions, including priority investment region boundaries, institutional arrangements and transitional arrangements; and (c) details multilateral arrangements required where regions or activities are multi-jurisdictional; and (d) includes criteria that will be the basis for accreditation by the Parties of draft NRM plans and the process for accrediting draft NRM plans within a jurisdiction; and (e) establishes a framework for the development of Partnership Agreements with regional NRM bodies; and Page 4 of 66 (f) identifies appropriate standards and targets to be reflected in accredited natural resource management plans; and (g) notes agreed policy reforms and mile-</td>
<td>The Commonwealth Government and Queensland State Government.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.naps.wq.gov.au/publications/agreements/pubs/bilateral-qld.pdf">http://www.naps.wq.gov.au/publications/agreements/pubs/bilateral-qld.pdf</a></td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>An Agreement between the Commonwealth of Australia and the State of South Australia for the implementation of the intergovernmental agreement on a national action plan for salinity and water quality</td>
<td>08/06/2001</td>
<td>As signatories to the Intergovernmental Agreement on a National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality (‘IGA’) the Commonwealth and South Australia have committed to establish the arrangements necessary to motivate and enable regional communities to use coordinated and targeted action to: (a) prevent, stabilise and reverse trends in salinity, particularly dryland salinity, affecting the sustainability of production, conservation of bio-</td>
<td>The purpose of this Agreement is to detail commitments by the Commonwealth and South Australia, beyond those already agreed in the IGA, to implement the National Action Plan, including commitments to: (a) establishing regional targets and national standards for natural resource management, particularly for salinity and water quality; (b) establishing appropriate institutional arrangements for the priority regions of</td>
<td>The Commonwealth Government and South Australian State Government.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.napsaq.gov.au/publications/agreements/bilateral-sa.pdf">http://www.napsaq.gov.au/publications/agreements/bilateral-sa.pdf</a></td>
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logical diversity and the viability of our infrastructure; and (b) improve water quality and secure reliable allocations for human uses, industry and the environment.

Lower Murray (SA - NSW - Vic); Mt Lofty Ranges-Northern Agricultural Districts-Kangaroo Island (SA), and South East (SA);

(c) the criteria and process for government accreditation of Integrated Natural Resource Management (INRM) Plans developed by the community;

(d) multi-lateral arrangements required where regions or activities cross jurisdictional boundaries;

(e) government investment in salinity and water quality actions to implement accredited catchment/regional plans and, where appropriate, foundation funding to catchment/regional bodies to assist them to develop and refine plans;

(f) arrangements for early consideration and implementation of agreed priority projects;

(g) capacity building activities to assist communities and landholders to develop and implement INRM Plans, including through national programs and state specific activities;

(h) land and water policy reforms, with milestones, to create an improved governance framework and secure government investments and community action in the long term;

(i) clearly articulated
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<td>18</td>
<td>An Agreement between the Commonwealth of Australia and the State of Tasmania for the implementation of the intergovernmental agreement on a national action plan for salinity and water quality</td>
<td>13/02/2002</td>
<td>As signatories to the Intergovernmental Agreement on a National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality (‘IGA’) the Commonwealth and Tasmania have committed to establish the arrangements necessary to motivate and enable regional communities to use coordinated and targeted action to: (a) prevent, stabilise and reverse trends in salinity, particularly dryland salinity, affecting the sustainability of production, conservation of biological diversity and the viability of our infrastructure; and (b) improve water quality and secure reliable allocations for human uses, industry and the environment.</td>
<td>The purpose of this Agreement is to detail commitments by the Commonwealth and Tasmania, beyond those already agreed in the IGA, to implement the National Action Plan, including commitments to: (a) establishing regional targets and national standards for natural resource management, particularly for salinity and water quality; (b) establishing appropriate institutional arrangements for the Tasmanian National Action Plan Priority Region; (c) the criteria and process for government accreditation of a Regional Plan developed by the community; (d) government investment in salinity</td>
<td>The Commonwealth Government and Tasmanian State Government.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.naps.wq.gov.au/publications/agreements/pubs/bilateral-tas.pdf">http://www.naps.wq.gov.au/publications/agreements/pubs/bilateral-tas.pdf</a></td>
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and water quality actions to implement the accredited catchment/regional plan and, where appropriate, foundation funding to the catchment/regional body to assist it to develop and refine its plan;  
(e) arrangements for early consideration and implementation of agreed priority projects;  
(f) capacity building activities to assist communities and landholders to develop and implement a Regional Plan, including through national programs and state-specific activities;  
(g) land and water policy reforms, with milestones, to create an improved governance framework and to secure government investments and community action in the long term;  
(h) clearly articulated roles for the Commonwealth, Tasmanian and local governments and for industry, business and the community to provide an effective, integrated and coherent framework to deliver and monitor implementation of the National Action Plan;  
(i) a public communication program to support widespread understanding of all aspects of the National Action Plan so as to promote behavioural change and community support; and
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>An Agreement between the Commonwealth of Australia and the State of Victoria for the implementation of the Intergovernmental agreement on a national action plan for salinity and water quality</td>
<td>02/10/2001</td>
<td>As signatories to the Intergovernmental Agreement on a National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality (‘IGA’) the Commonwealth and Tasmania have committed to establish the arrangements necessary to motivate and enable regional communities to use coordinated and targeted action to: (a) prevent, stabilise and reverse trends in salinity, particularly dryland salinity, affecting the sustainability of production, conservation of biological diversity and the viability of our infrastructure; and (b) improve water quality and secure reliable allocations for human uses, industry and the environment.</td>
<td>(j) developing protocols and resolving disputes between the Parties. The purpose of this Agreement is to establish the framework for implementation of a National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality in Victoria in accordance with the Intergovernmental Agreement, including commitments to: a) establishing regional targets and national standards for natural resource management, particularly for salinity and water quality; b) the criteria and process for government accreditation of integrated natural resource management plans, particularly regional catchment strategies, developed by the community; c) multi-lateral arrangements required where regions or activities cross jurisdictional boundaries; d) government investment in salinity and water quality actions to implement accredited catchment/regional plans and, where appropriate, foundation funding to catchment/regional bodies to assist them to develop and refine plans; e) arrangements for early consideration and implementation of agreed priority actions; f) capacity building</td>
<td>The Commonwealth Government and Victorian State Government.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.naps.wq.gov.au/publications/agreements/pubs/bilateral-vic.pdf">http://www.naps.wq.gov.au/publications/agreements/pubs/bilateral-vic.pdf</a></td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>An Agreement between the Commonwealth of Australia and the State of Western</td>
<td>11/09/2003</td>
<td>As signatories to the Intergovernmental Agreement on a National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality (‘IGA’), the Commonwealth and Tasmania have committed activities to assist communities and landholders to develop and implement regional/catchment plans, including where appropriate through national programs and statewide activities; g) land and water policy reforms, with milestones, to create an improved governance framework and secure government investments and community action in the long term; h) clearly articulated roles for the Commonwealth, Victorian and local governments, agencies, CMAs, and for industry, business and the community to provide an effective, integrated and coherent framework to deliver and monitor implementation of the National Action Plan; i) a public communication program to support widespread understanding of all aspects of the National Action Plan so as to promote behavioural change and community support; and j) developing protocols and resolving disputes between the Parties.</td>
<td>The purpose of this Agreement is to detail commitments by the Commonwealth and Western Australia, beyond those already agreed in the IGA, to implement the NAP.</td>
<td>The Commonwealth Government and Western Australian State Government.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.naps.wa.gov.au/publications/agreements/pub/bilateral-wa.pdf">http://www.naps.wa.gov.au/publications/agreements/pub/bilateral-wa.pdf</a></td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Australia for the implementation of the intergovernmental agreement on a national action plan for salinity and water quality</td>
<td></td>
<td>Submitted to establish the arrangements necessary to motivate and enable regional communities to use coordinated and targeted action to: (a) prevent, stabilise and reverse trends in salinity, particularly dryland salinity, affecting the sustainability of production, conservation of biological diversity and the viability of our infrastructure; and (b) improve water quality and secure reliable allocations for human uses, industry and the environment.</td>
<td>including commitments to: (a) clearly articulate roles for the Commonwealth, Western Australian Government, Regional NRM Groups and local governments and also for industry, business and the community to provide an effective, integrated and coherent framework to deliver and monitor implementation of the NAP; (b) arrangements for priority regions, including priority investment region boundaries, institutional arrangements and Transitional arrangements; (c) multilateral arrangements where regions or activities are multi-jurisdictional; (d) criteria that will be the basis for accreditation by the Parties of draft NRM strategies and the process for accrediting draft NRM strategies within a jurisdiction; (e) a framework for the development of Partnership Agreements with regional NRM bodies; (f) appropriate standards and targets to be reflected in accredited natural resource management plans; (g) agreed land and water policy reforms, with milestones, to create an improved governance framework and secure government investments and community action in the long term</td>
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## QUESTIONS IN WRITING

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<td>21</td>
<td>Bilateral Agreement between the Commonwealth and the Australian Capital Territory to deliver the Natural Heritage Trust</td>
<td>27/03/2003</td>
<td>In particular, the Commonwealth and the Territory jointly seek to fulfil the three overarching objectives of the Natural Heritage Trust described by the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council on 3 May 2002, namely:</td>
<td>Through this Agreement, the Commonwealth and the Territory wish to reflect their intent to work as joint Investment partners, with the community and other Stakeholders, in Natural Resource Management activities.</td>
<td>The Commonwealth Government and Australian Capital Territory Government.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nht.gov.au/publications/agreements/pub/bilaterals-act.pdf">http://www.nht.gov.au/publications/agreements/pub/bilaterals-act.pdf</a></td>
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<td>Heritage Trust</td>
<td>(a) biodiversity conservation - the conservation of Australia’s biodiversity through the protection and restoration of terrestrial, freshwater, estuarine and marine ecosystems and habitat for native plants and animals; (b) sustainable use of natural resources - the sustainable use and management of Australia’s land, water and marine resources to maintain and improve the productivity and profitability of resource based industries; and (c) community Capacity Building and institutional change - support for individuals, landholders, communities, industry and organisations with skills, knowledge, information and institutional frameworks to increase capacity to implement biodiversity conservation, and sustainable resource use and management; which will be delivered in the Territory through three Programs: Landcare, Bushcare and Rivercare</td>
<td>14/08/2003</td>
<td>Through this Agreement, the Parties (the Commonwealth and the State of New South Wales) wish to reflect their intent to work as joint investment partners, with the community and other stakeholders, in natural resource management activities.</td>
<td>The Commonwealth Government and New South Wales State Government.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nht.gov.au/publications/agreements/pub/bilaterals-nsw.pdf">http://www.nht.gov.au/publications/agreements/pub/bilaterals-nsw.pdf</a></td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>Bilateral Agreement between the Commonwealth of Australia and the Northern Territory of Australia to deliver the Natural Heritage Trust</td>
<td>05/06/2003</td>
<td>By signing this Agreement, the Commonwealth and the Northern Territory wish to reflect their intention to jointly work as investment partners in natural resource management activities, with the community and other stakeholders, to fulfil the three overarching objectives of the Natural Heritage Trust Extension (‘the Trust’) namely:</td>
<td>This Agreement will implement the Trust in accordance with the Framework for the Extension of the Natural Heritage Trust (Attachment A) as agreed by the NRM Ministerial Council on 11 October 2002.</td>
<td>The Commonwealth Government and Northern Territory Gov-ernment.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nht.gov.au/publication/s/agreements/pub/s/bilaterals-nt.pdf">http://www.nht.gov.au/publication/s/agreements/pub/s/bilaterals-nt.pdf</a></td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Bilateral Agreement between the Commonwealth of Australia and the State of Queensland to Deliver the Natural Heritage Trust in Queensland</td>
<td>18/06/2004</td>
<td>(a) biodiversity conservation - the conservation of Australia’s biodiversity through the protection and restoration of terrestrial, freshwater, estuarine and marine ecosystems and habitat for native plants and animals; (b) sustainable use of natural resources - the sustainable use and management of Australia’s land, water and marine resources to maintain and improve the productivity and profitability of resource based industries; and (c) community capacity building and institutional change - support for individuals, landholders, communities, industry and organisations with skills, knowledge, information and institutional frameworks to increase capacity to implement biodiversity conservation, and sustainable resource use and management.</td>
<td>Through this Agreement, the Commonwealth and the State wish to reflect their intent to work as joint investment partners, with the community and other stakeholders, in natural resource management activities.</td>
<td>The Commonwealth Government and Queensland State Government.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nht.gov.au/publications/agreements/bilaterals-qld.pdf">http://www.nht.gov.au/publications/agreements/bilaterals-qld.pdf</a></td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>Bilateral Agreement between the Commonwealth of Australia and the State of South Australia to deliver the Natural Heritage Trust</td>
<td>17/04/2003</td>
<td>In particular, the Commonwealth and South Australia jointly seek to fulfil the three overarching objectives of the Trust described by the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council on 3 May 2002, namely: a) biodiversity conservation - the conservation of Australia’s biodiversity through the protection and restoration of terrestrial, freshwater, estuarine and marine ecosystems and habitat; b) sustainable use of natural resources - the sustainable use and management of Australia’s land, water and marine resources to maintain and improve the productivity and profitability of resource-based industries; and c) community capacity building and institutional change - support for individuals, landholders, communities, industry and organisations with skills, knowledge, information and institutional frameworks to increase capacity to implement biodiversity conservation, and sustainable resource use and management.</td>
<td>Through this Agreement, the Commonwealth and South Australia wish to reflect their intent to work as joint investment partners, with the community and other stakeholders, in natural resource management activities.</td>
<td>The Commonwealth Government and South Australian State Government.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nht.gov.au/publications/agreements/pub/bilaterals-sa.pdf">http://www.nht.gov.au/publications/agreements/pub/bilaterals-sa.pdf</a></td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>Bilateral Agreement between the Commonwealth of Australia and the State of Tasmania to deliver the extension of the Natural Heritage Trust</td>
<td>05/06/2003</td>
<td>In particular, the Commonwealth and Tasmania jointly seek to fulfil the three overarching objectives of the Trust agreed by the NRM Ministerial Council on 3 May 2002, namely: (a) biodiversity conservation – the conservation of Australia’s biodiversity through the protection and restoration of terrestrial, freshwater, estuarine and marine ecosystems and habitat for native plants and animals; (b) sustainable use of natural resources – the sustainable use and management of Australia’s land, water and marine</td>
<td>Through this Agreement, the Commonwealth and the State wish to reflect their intent to work as joint investment partners, with the community and other stakeholders, in natural resource management activities.</td>
<td>The Commonwealth Government and Tasmanian State Government.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nht.gov.au/publications/agreements/bilaterals-tas.pdf">http://www.nht.gov.au/publications/agreements/bilaterals-tas.pdf</a></td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>Bilateral Agreement to Deliver the Natural Heritage Trust Extension Between the Commonwealth of Australia and the State of Victoria</td>
<td>12/12/2002</td>
<td>In particular, the Commonwealth and the State of Victoria jointly seek to fulfil the three overarching objectives of the second phase of the Trust (the Trust Extension) agreed by the NRM Ministerial Council on 3 May 2002, namely: (i) biodiversity conservation - the conservation of Australia’s biodiversity through the protection and restoration of terrestrial, freshwater, estuarine and marine ecosystems and habitat for native plants and animals; (ii) sustainable use of natural resources - the sustainable use and management of Australia’s land, water and marine resources to maintain and improve the productivity and profitability of resource based industries; and (c) community capacity building and institutional change – support for individuals, landholders, communities, industry and organisations with skills, knowledge, information and institutional frameworks to increase capacity to implement biodiversity conservation, and sustainable resource use and management.</td>
<td>Through this Agreement, the Commonwealth and the State of Victoria wish to reflect their intent to work as joint investment partners, with the community and other stakeholders, in natural resource management activities</td>
<td>The Commonwealth Government and Victorian State Government.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nht.gov.au/publications/agreements/pub/bilaterals-vic.pdf">http://www.nht.gov.au/publications/agreements/pub/bilaterals-vic.pdf</a></td>
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28 Bilateral Agreement to Deliver the Natural Heritage Trust Extension Between the Commonwealth of Australia and the State of Western Australia 17/12/2002 | In particular, the Commonwealth and Western Australia jointly seek to fulfil the three overarching objectives of the Trust agreed by the NRM Ministerial Council on 3 May 2002, namely: (a) biodiversity conservation - the conservation of Australia’s biodiversity through the protection and restoration of terrestrial, freshwater, estuarine and marine ecosystems and habitat for native plants and animals; (b) sustainable use of natural resources - the sustainable use and management of Australia’s land, water and marine resources to maintain and improve the productivity and profitability of resource based industries; and (c) community capacity building and institutional change - support for individuals, landholders, communities, industries; and (iii) community capacity building and institutional change - support for individuals, landholders, communities, industry and organisations with skills, knowledge, information and institutional frameworks to increase capacity to implement biodiversity conservation, and sustainable resource use and management. | Through this Agreement, the Commonwealth and the State wish to reflect their intent to work as joint investment partners, with the community and other stakeholders, in natural resource management activities. | The Commonwealth Government and Western Australian State Government. | http://www.nht.gov.au/publications/agreements/pub/bilaterals-wa.pdf

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<td>29</td>
<td>Government and Livestock Industry Cost Sharing Deed in respect of Emergency Animal Disease Responses (also known as the Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement – EADRA)</td>
<td>20/3/2002</td>
<td>Establish a mechanism to facilitate the making of rapid responses to, and the control and eradication or containment of, certain animal diseases.</td>
<td>As per objectives – joint government and industry cost sharing arrangements and infrastructure to facilitate emergency animal disease responses</td>
<td>The Commonwealth Government, all state and territory governments; livestock industry representative industry bodies representing cattle, sheep, pigs, etc. (refer attached agreement)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au/programs/eadp/eadra.htm">http://www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au/programs/eadp/eadra.htm</a></td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>Government and Plant Industry Cost Sharing Deed in respect of Emergency Plant Pest Responses (also known as the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed – EPPRD)</td>
<td>26/10/2005</td>
<td>Establish a mechanism to facilitate the making of rapid responses to, and the control and eradication of, emergency plant pests.</td>
<td>As per objectives – joint government and industry cost sharing arrangements and infrastructure to facilitate emergency plant pest responses</td>
<td>The Commonwealth Government, all state and territory governments; plant industry representative industry bodies representing grains, cotton, rice, etc. (refer attached agreement)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.planthealthaustralia.com.au/epprd">www.planthealthaustralia.com.au/epprd</a></td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>Intergovernmental agreement on a National System for the Prevention and Management of Marine Pest Incursions</td>
<td>15/4/2005</td>
<td>The objectives of the National System are to: (a) Prevent the introduction to Australia of exotic marine species; (b) Prevent the translocation within Australia of exotic marine species; (c) Provide emergency preparedness and response capacity</td>
<td>The purpose of this Agreement is to set out a framework to develop, implement and continuously improve the National System for the Prevention and Management of Marine Pest Incursions in Australia.</td>
<td>The Commonwealth Government, the Victorian State Government, the Queensland State Government, Western Australian State Government, South Australian State Government, Tasmania State Government, the</td>
<td><a href="http://www.environment.gov.au/coasts/imps/publications/intergovernmental-agreement.html">http://www.environment.gov.au/coasts/imps/publications/intergovernmental-agreement.html</a></td>
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<td>32</td>
<td>Schedule of Aircraft Disinfection Procedures</td>
<td>30/9/2008</td>
<td>To ensure consistency in disinfection procedures between Australia and New Zealand.</td>
<td>To establish joint administrative arrangements for aircraft disinfection between MAF Biosecurity New Zealand (formerly the MAF Quarantine Service) and AQIS.</td>
<td>New Zealand MAF Quarantine Service (MQS) and (AQIS)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.daff.gov.au/aqis/avm/aircraft/disinsection/procedures">http://www.daff.gov.au/aqis/avm/aircraft/disinsection/procedures</a></td>
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