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FORTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION—FOURTH PERIOD

Governor-General
His Excellency General the Hon. Sir Peter Cosgrove AK, MC (Retd)

House of Representatives Office holders
Speaker—Hon. Bronwyn Kathleen Bishop MP
Deputy Speaker—Hon. Bruce Craig Scott MP
Second Deputy Speaker—Mr Robert George Mitchell
Members of the Speaker’s Panel—Mrs Karen Lesley Andrews MP,
Mr Russell Evan Broadbent MP, Mr Alexander George Hawke MP,
Mr Ian Reginald Goodenough MP, Mrs Natasha Louise Griggs MP,
Mr Ewen Thomas Jones MP, Mr Craig Kelly MP, Hon. Charles Christian Porter MP,
Mr Donald James Randall MP, Mr Ross Xavier Vasta MP, Mr Brett David Whiteley MP

Leader of the House—Hon. Christopher Pyne MP
Deputy Leader of the House—Hon. Luke Hartsuyker MP
Manager of Opposition Business—Hon. Anthony Stephen Burke MP
Deputy Manager of Opposition Business—Hon. Mark Dreyfus QC MP

Party Leaders and Whips
Liberal Party of Australia
Leader—Hon. Anthony John Abbott MP
Deputy Leader—Hon. Julie Isabel Bishop MP
Chief Government Whip—Hon. Philip Maxwell Ruddock MP
Government Whips—Mr Scott Buchholz MP and Ms Nola Bethwyn Marino MP

The Nationals
Leader—Hon. Warren Errol Truss MP
Deputy Leader—Hon. Barnaby Thomas Gerard Joyce MP
Chief Whip—Mr Mark Maclean Coulton MP
Deputy Whip—Mr George Robert Christensen MP

Australian Labor Party
Leader—Hon. William Richard Shorten MP
Deputy Leader—Hon. Tanya Joan Plibersek MP
Chief Opposition Whip—Mr Christopher Patrick Hayes MP
Opposition Whips—Ms Jill Griffiths Hall MP and Ms Joanne Catherine Ryan MP

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## Members of the House of Representatives

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<tr>
<td>Wicks, Mrs Lucy Elizabeth</td>
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</table>
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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Division</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Denison, TAS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Williams, Mr Matthew</td>
<td>Hindmarsh, SA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wilson, Mr Richard James</td>
<td>O'Connor, WA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wood, Mr Jason Peter</td>
<td>La Trobe, VIC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wyatt, Mr Kenneth George AM</td>
<td>Hasluck, WA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zappia, Mr Antonio</td>
<td>Makin, SA</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PARTY ABBREVIATIONS
ALP—Australian Labor Party; LP—Liberal Party of Australia; NATS—The Nationals;
IND—Independent; NATSWA—The Nationals WA; CLP—Country Liberal Party;
AUS—Katters Australia Party; AG—Australian Greens; PUP—Palmer United Party

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Clerk of the Senate—R Laing
Clerk of the House of Representatives—D Elder
Secretary, Department of Parliamentary Services—C Mills
Parliamentary Budget Officer—P Bowen
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<td>The Hon. Tony Abbott MP</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Senator the Hon. Nigel Scullion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service</td>
<td>Senator the Hon. Eric Abetz</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Women</td>
<td>Senator the Hon. Michaelia Cash</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister</td>
<td>The Hon. Josh Frydenberg MP</td>
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<td>The Hon. Alan Tudge MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development</td>
<td>The Hon. Warren Truss MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Deputy Prime Minister)</td>
<td>The Hon. Jamie Briggs MP</td>
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<tr>
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<td>(Deputy Leader of the House)</td>
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<td>Attorney-General</td>
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<td>(Vice-President of the Executive Council)</td>
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<td>(Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Justice</td>
<td>The Hon. Michael Keenan MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>The Hon. Joe Hockey MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Small Business</td>
<td>The Hon. Bruce Billson MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acting Assistant Treasurer</td>
<td>Senator the Hon. Mathias Cormann</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer</td>
<td>The Hon. Steven Ciobo MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Agriculture</td>
<td>The Hon. Barnaby Joyce MP</td>
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<td>Senator the Hon. Richard Colbeck</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Human Services</td>
<td>Senator the Hon. Marise Payne</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Social Services</td>
<td>Senator the Hon. Concetta Fierravanti-Wells</td>
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<td>The Hon. Paul Fletcher MP</td>
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<td>The Hon. Peter Dutton MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Sport</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Defence</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon. David Johnston</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Veterans' Affairs</td>
<td>Senator the Hon. Michael Ronaldson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC</td>
<td>Senator the Hon. Michael Ronaldson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Defence</td>
<td>The Hon. Stuart Robert MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence</td>
<td>The Hon. Darren Chester MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for the Environment</strong></td>
<td>The Hon. Greg Hunt MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Environment</td>
<td>Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Immigration and Border Protection</strong></td>
<td>The Hon. Scott Morrison MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Immigration and Border Protection</td>
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<td><strong>Minister for Finance</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon. Mathias Cormann</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special Minister of State</td>
<td>Senator the Hon. Michael Ronaldson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance</td>
<td>The Hon. Michael McCormack MP</td>
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Each box represents a portfolio. **Cabinet Ministers are shown in bold type.** As a general rule, there is one department in each portfolio. However, there is a Department of Human Services in the Social Services portfolio and a Department of Veterans' Affairs in the Defence portfolio. The title of a department does not necessarily reflect the title of a minister in all cases.
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<td>Hon Bill Shorten MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister Assisting the Leader for Science</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Kim Carr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister Assisting the Leader for Small Business</td>
<td>Hon Bernie Ripoll MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Small Business</td>
<td>Julie Owens MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Cabinet Secretary</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Jacinta Collins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Opposition</td>
<td>Hon Michael Danby MP</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Dr Jim Chalmers MP</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Deputy Leader of the Opposition</strong></td>
<td>Hon Tanya Plibersek MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Development</td>
<td>Senator Claire Moore</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC</td>
<td>Hon David Feeney MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Leader of the Opposition in the Senate</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon Penny Wong</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Trade and Investment</td>
<td>Dr Jim Chalmers MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Trade and Investment</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon Stephen Conroy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Defence</td>
<td>Hon David Feeney MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Defence</td>
<td>Gai Brodtmann MP</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Shadow Minister for Infrastructure and Transport</strong></td>
<td>Hon Anthony Albanese MP</td>
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<td>Shadow Minister for Cities</td>
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<td>Shadow Minister for Tourism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Regional Development and Local Government</td>
<td>Hon Julie Collins MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Development and Infrastructure</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for External Territories</td>
<td>Hon Warren Snowdon MP</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Shadow Treasurer</strong></td>
<td>Hon Chris Bowen MP</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Shadow Minister for Competition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Financial Services and Superannuation</td>
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<tr>
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Thursday, 2 October 2014

The SPEAKER (Hon. Bronwyn Bishop) took the chair at 09:00, made an acknowledgement of country and read prayers.

DOCUMENTS

Broadband

Presentation

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Minister for Immigration and Border Protection) (09:01): For the information of honourable members, I present the independent cost-benefit analysis of broadband and review of regulation—Volume 1—National Broadband Network market and regulatory report and Volume 2—The costs and benefits of high-speed broadband.

BILLs

Freedom of Information Amendment (New Arrangements) Bill 2014

First Reading

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Morrison.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Minister for Immigration and Border Protection) (09:02): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.


The bill will streamline arrangements for the exercise of privacy and freedom of information (FOI) functions from 1 January 2015. The Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) will be abolished. The Australian Privacy Commissioner will continue to be responsible for functions under the Privacy Act 1988 as an independent statutory office holder within the Australian Human Rights Commission.

The Administrative Appeals Tribunal will have sole responsibility for external merits review of FOI decisions. Mandatory internal review of decisions of FOI decisions before a matter can proceed to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal will ensure access to low-cost and timely review for applicants. The tribunal will receive a funding boost to assist with processing FOI reviews.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman will be responsible for investigating complaints about actions taken by an agency under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (the FOI Act). The Attorney-General will be responsible for FOI guidelines and collection of statistics on agency and ministerial FOI activity.

The measures in the bill will save $10.2 million over four years, part of the government's continuing commitment to repair the budget.
Merits review of FOI decisions

The OAIC was established by the former Labor government in 2010 to bring together oversight of privacy protection and access to government information into one agency.

This created an unnecessarily complex system, with multiple levels of external merits review for FOI matters. It also led to duplication in FOI and privacy complaint handling which has contributed to delays in these matters.

The bill will create administrative efficiencies and reduce the burden on FOI applicants by providing that the Administrative Appeals Tribunal is the sole external merits review body. This aligns with other merits review processes across the Australian government.

Under the new arrangements, those applicants who wish to seek review of an FOI decision will first be required to seek internal review. If an applicant is not satisfied with the internal review decision, they may apply for full merits review at the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

The OAIC will endeavour to finalise as many FOI review applications as possible. However, there will be some reviews that are unable to be finalised before 31 December 2014.

Those applicants whose FOI review applications have not been finalised before 31 December 2014 will not be disadvantaged by the new arrangements. The bill provides for the transfer of applications which have not been finalised to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. No application or other fee will be payable in relation to transferred applications. This ensures that no applicant who has sought external merits review will be disadvantaged by these changes.

This bill does not affect the legally enforceable right of every person under the FOI Act to request access to documents of an agency or official documents of a minister. Nor does it make any changes to the objects of the FOI Act or the matters that agencies and ministers are required to consider in making decisions on FOI requests.

The bill simply removes an unnecessary and anomalous layer of external merits review for FOI decisions. This will deliver an improved and simplified merits review system for FOI decisions and will realign responsibility and accountability for external merits review of FOI decisions with the process applicable to other government decisions.

FOI complaints

Those applicants who wish to make a complaint about an agency's handling of their FOI application will be able to make their complaint directly to the Ombudsman. This removes the current duplication between the OAIC and the Ombudsman in relation to the investigation of these complaints.

Any unresolved complaints which have been made will be transferred to the Ombudsman for completion.

Privacy functions

The bill also provides for an Australian Privacy Commissioner, as an independent statutory office holder within the Australian Human Rights Commission. The commissioner will continue to be responsible for the exercise of privacy functions under the Privacy Act and related legislation.
The government is committed to protecting the privacy of all Australians. The current Privacy Commissioner, Mr Timothy Pilgrim, will remain as the Australian Privacy Commissioner, which will mean business as usual for the Australian Privacy Commissioner and his relationships with business.

The commissioner and the staff supporting him will be able to seamlessly continue their measured approach to privacy protection, working cooperatively with private sector organisations and government agencies to achieve a high level of understanding and voluntary compliance.

This approach has assisted business stakeholders to view privacy as an important aspect of commercial regulation and a fundamental part of the economic infrastructure that supports business activities.

We are also committed to reducing the size of government and rationalising government agencies. That is why the independent Australian Privacy Commissioner will be housed within the Australian Human Rights Commission. This arrangement will not impact on the independence of the Australian Privacy Commissioner as he carries out his privacy functions, nor on the Australian Human Rights Commission as it fulfils its important human rights functions. The Australian Privacy Commissioner will not be a member of the commission nor will he subject to its direction.

Separate funding will be appropriated to the Australian Human Rights Commission for its human rights functions and for the Australian Privacy Commissioner's privacy functions. The existing staff of the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner responsible for supporting the Privacy Commissioner will become staff of the AHRC assigned to the commissioner to support him to undertake his functions.

Conclusion

These institutional arrangements will reduce the size of government, streamline the delivery of government services and reduce duplication. It will mean business as usual for privacy and largely restore the system for the management of freedom of information in place before the establishment of the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner on 1 November 2010.

This bill makes it easier for applicants to exercise their rights under privacy and FOI legislation.

Debate adjourned.

**Parliamentary Entitlements Legislation Amendment Bill 2014**

**First Reading**

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Andrews.

Bill read a first time.

**Second Reading**

Mr ANDREWS (Menzies—Minister for Social Services) (09:09): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

On 9 November 2013, the government announced changes to the parliamentary entitlements framework to strengthen the rules governing parliamentarians' business expenses. On 13 May

Firstly, in relation to changes to the parliamentary entitlements framework announced on 9 November 2013, the bill limits the domestic travel entitlement of dependent children of senior officers from those under 25 years of age, to those under 18 years of age, by amending the definition of ‘dependent child’.

The bill establishes a 25 per cent penalty loading on any adjustment (either voluntary or involuntary) of a parliamentarian’s claim for prescribed travel benefits. The provisions of the bill provide that the 25 per cent penalty loading on any adjustment will not be applied where the adjustment was made within 28 days after the claim was made; or where an adjustment was the result of an administrative error by the Department of Finance. For the purposes of the 25 per cent penalty loading on adjustments, the bill includes a provision for the Special Minister of State to determine, by legislative instrument, the prescribed travel benefits that are subject to a 25 per cent penalty loading.

In addition to the bill giving effect to these announced changes, it establishes a mechanism to minimise the risk that payments made in the course of administering the Parliamentary Entitlements Act 1990 or the Members of Parliament (Life Gold Pass) Act 2002 breach section 83 of the Constitution. The mechanism is comparable to mechanisms included in other acts, such as the Parliamentary Contributory Superannuation Act 1948.

As part of this mechanism, the bill establishes a statutory right for the Commonwealth to recover from a parliamentarian or former parliamentarian an amount equivalent to a payment made to, or on behalf of, a parliamentarian or former parliamentarian that is beyond entitlement under the Parliamentary Entitlements Act 1990. The bill also establishes a statutory right for the Commonwealth to recover from a parliamentarian the 25 per cent penalty loading.

Secondly, the bill amends the title of the Members of Parliament (Life Gold Pass) Act 2002 to the Parliamentary Retirement Travel Act 2002 to better reflect the entitlement following amendments in this bill.

In relation to the changes to the parliamentary retirement travel entitlement announced as part of the 2014-15 budget, the bill removes, ceases, limits and reduces travel entitlements under the Parliamentary Retirement Travel Act 2002 as well as places requirements on travel under the parliamentary retirement travel entitlement.

The bill removes the entitlement to parliamentary retirement travel for all current parliamentarians who did not meet the qualifying period for parliamentary retirement travel on or before 13 May 2014. The bill also removes the parliamentary retirement travel entitlement for the spouse or de facto partner, or surviving spouse or de facto partner, of a parliamentary retirement travel entitlement holder, or of a sitting member who has satisfied the qualifying period for parliamentary retirement travel, other than the spouse or de facto
partner, or surviving spouse or de facto partner, of a former Prime Minister who has retired from the parliament.

The bill requires that parliamentarians who met the qualifying period for the parliamentary retirement travel entitlement on or before 13 May 2014 retire before 1 January 2020 in order to be entitled to access parliamentary retirement travel. This requirement does not apply to the Prime Minister or former prime ministers.

The bill requires that all parliamentary retirement travel, including travel by the spouse or de facto partner of a retired former Prime Minister, be for the public benefit.

The bill ceases the parliamentary retirement travel entitlement of former parliamentarians who qualified for parliamentary retirement travel when they left the parliament on or before 13 May 2011. The bill limits the parliamentary retirement travel entitlement of former parliamentarians who qualified for parliamentary retirement travel when they left the parliament after 13 May 2011 to five return domestic trips per year, from the date of their retirement for the lesser of three years or the next end of a parliament that occurs after their retirement.

The bill ceases the parliamentary retirement travel entitlement of former ministers (other than former prime ministers), presiding officers and leaders of the opposition who qualified for parliamentary retirement travel when they left parliament on or before 13 May 2008. The bill also limits the parliamentary retirement travel entitlement of former ministers, presiding officers or a Leader of the Opposition who qualified for parliamentary retirement travel when they left the parliament after 13 May 2008 to 10 return domestic trips per year, from their retirement date to whichever is lesser of six years or the second end of a parliament that occurs after their retirement.

The closure of the parliamentary retirement travel entitlement scheme to parliamentarians who enter or re-enter the parliament on or after 6 March 2012 currently applies to all parliamentarians, including those who become Prime Minister in the future. The bill removes this restriction on future prime ministers' entitlement to parliamentary retirement travel.

The bill reduces the parliamentary retirement travel entitlement for a former prime minister who has qualified for parliamentary retirement travel on his or her retirement to 30 return domestic trips per year. The bill also reduces the parliamentary retirement travel entitlement for the spouse or de facto partner of a retired former prime minister who has qualified for parliamentary retirement travel on his or her retirement to 20 return domestic trips per year.

The bill includes a constitutional safety net provision to address any risk that amendments to the Parliamentary Retirement Travel Act 2002 may result in an acquisition of property other than on just terms. This provision is similar to the provision in section 32 of the Members of Parliament (Life Gold Pass) Act 2002.

These are sensible reforms to improve accountability in the spending of taxpayers' money, which will strengthen the parliamentary entitlements system.

I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.
Social Services and Other Legislation Amendment (Seniors Supplement Cessation) Bill 2014

First Reading

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Andrews.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr ANDREWS (Menzies—Minister for Social Services) (09:16): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

This bill will reintroduce one measure from the 2014 budget, which was originally introduced as schedule 1 to the Social Services and Other Legislation Amendment (2014 Budget Measures No. 1) Bill 2014.

The measure will, from 20 September 2014, cease payment of the seniors supplement for holders of the Commonwealth seniors health card or the Veterans' Affairs gold card.

The measure will help ensure that payments to senior Australians remain targeted to those who need them the most.

However, other benefits will continue to be available to cardholders, including discounts on medicines under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, health safety net thresholds, and lower fees on medical services.

Recognising the government's commitment to abolish the carbon tax, while keeping in place the associated payment increases, this bill will rename the former clean energy supplement as the energy supplement, and maintain it at current levels by permanently removing indexation of the supplement.

The new energy supplement will be available to people who formerly received the clean energy supplement in association with their main income support payment, family payment or Veterans' Affairs payment, or through being a holder of the Commonwealth seniors health card or an eligible holder of the gold card. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

Social Services and Other Legislation Amendment (2014 Budget Measures No. 4) Bill 2014

First Reading

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Andrews.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr ANDREWS (Menzies—Minister for Social Services) (09:19): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

This bill reintroduces several measures previously introduced in the Social Services and Other Legislation Amendment (2014 Budget Measures No. 1) Bill 2014 and the Social Services and Other Legislation Amendment (2014 Budget Measures No. 2) Bill 2014.

The first reintroduced measure will implement some changes to Australian government payments. Firstly, from 1 July 2015, indexation of the income-free areas for all working-age
allowances (other than student payments), and the income test-free area for parenting payment single, will be paused for three years.

From royal assent, parenting payment single will be indexed to the consumer price index only, by removing benchmarking to male total average weekly earnings.

From 1 July 2015, indexation of several family tax benefit-free areas will be paused for three years.

Lastly, from 1 January 2015, indexation of the income-free areas and other means-test thresholds for student payments, including the student income bank limits, will be paused for three years.

The bill will introduce four family payment reforms from 1 July 2015. The first is to maintain the standard FTB child rates for two years in the maximum and base rate of family tax benefit part A and the maximum rate of family tax benefit part B.

The second measure will revise the family tax benefit end-of-year supplements to their original values and cease indexation.

Family tax benefit part B will be limited to families with children under six years of age, with transitional arrangements applying to current recipients with children above the new age limit for two years.

A new allowance will be introduced for single parents on the maximum rate of family tax benefit part A for each child aged six to 12 years inclusive, and not receiving family tax benefit part B.

The bill will extend and simplify the ordinary waiting period for all working-age payments from 1 January 2015.

Both the pensioner education supplement and the education entry payment will be ceased from 1 January 2015.

From 1 January 2015, the bill will extend youth allowance (other) to 22- to 24-year-olds in lieu of Newstart allowance and sickness allowance. Young people with full capacity will be required to learn, earn or Work for the Dole from 1 January 2015.

Lastly, from 1 January 2015, the bill will remove the three months' backdating of disability pensions under the Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986.

This bill forms part of a package of bills to support the sustainability of the social security system and the nation's budget. I commend this bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

Social Services and Other Legislation Amendment (2014 Budget Measures No. 5) Bill 2014

First Reading

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Andrews.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr ANDREWS (Menzies—Minister for Social Services) (09:22): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.
This bill will reintroduce several 2014 budget measures. The reintroduced measures will include further changes to Australian government payments.

One of these, applying from 1 July 2017, will pause indexation for three years of the income test free areas for all pensions (other than parenting payment single) and the deeming thresholds for all income support payments.

From 20 September 2017, the bill will ensure all pensions (other than parenting payment) are indexed to the consumer price index only, by removing benchmarking to male total average weekly earnings and indexation to the pensioner and beneficiary living cost index.

Also from 20 September 2017, the social security and veterans' entitlements income test deeming thresholds will be reset to $30,000 for single income support recipients, $50,000 combined for pensioner couples, and $25,000 for a member of a couple other than a pensioner couple.

Lastly, the bill will increase the qualifying age for age pension, and the non-veteran pension age, to 70, increasing by six months every two years and starting on 1 July 2025.

These structural savings will ensure the long-term sustainability of Australia's social security system and the nation's budget.

I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

Social Services and Other Legislation Amendment (2014 Budget Measures No. 6) Bill 2014

First Reading

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Andrews.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr ANDREWS (Menzies—Minister for Social Services) (09:26): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

This bill will reintroduce a number of measures that were previously introduced in the Social Services and Other Legislation Amendment (2014 Budget Measures No. 1) Bill 2014 and the Social Services and Other Legislation Amendment (2014 Budget Measures No. 2) Bill 2014.

Most of the reintroduced measures are from the 2014 budget. The first will, from 20 September 2014, rename the clean energy supplement as the energy supplement, and permanently cease indexation of the payment.

The second budget measure will implement two changes to Australian government payments—pausing indexation for two years from 1 July 2015 of the assets value limits for all working age allowances, student payments and parenting payment single, and pausing indexation for three years from 1 July 2017 of the assets test free areas for all pensions (other than parenting payment single).

From royal assent, disability support pension recipients under age 35 will be reviewed against revised impairment tables and the program of support requirements applied.
From 1 January 2015, the bill will limit the six-week overseas portability period for student payments.

The bill will also include amendments that generally limit the overseas portability period for disability support pension to 28 days in a 12-month period from 1 January 2015.

Amendments will exclude from the social security and veterans' entitlements income test any payments made under the new Young Carer Bursary Programme from 1 January 2015.

Untaxed superannuation income will be included in the assessment for the Commonwealth seniors health card (with products purchased before 1 January 2015 by existing cardholders exempt from the new arrangements), and the portability period for cardholders will be extended from six to 19 weeks.

From 1 January 2015, relocation scholarship assistance for students relocating within and between major cities will be removed.

In the last of the budget measures, three family payment reforms will be implemented from 1 July 2015. The first of these will limit the family tax benefit part A large family supplement to families with four or more children.

Amendments will remove the family tax benefit part A per-child add-on to the higher income free area for each additional child after the first.

The bill will improve targeting of family tax benefit part B by reducing the primary earner income limit from $150,000 a year to $100,000 a year.

Lastly, in a non-budget amendment, the bill will add the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission decision of 29 August 2013 as a pay equity decision under the Social and Community Services Pay Equity Special Account Act 2012, allowing payment of Commonwealth supplementation to service providers affected by that decision.

I commend the bill to the House.

Leave granted for second reading debate to continue immediately.

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (09:29): In rising to speak on the Social Services and Other Legislation Amendment (2014 Budget Measures No. 6) Bill 2014 I can advise the people of Australia of good news and bad news. Let me turn to the good news first of all.

Nearly five months ago in my budget reply on behalf of the Labor Party and the people of Australia, I gave a solemn pledge to Australia's pensioners at this very dispatch box. I said:

Labor will not surrender the security of your retirement.
We will fight for a fair pension.
And Labor will prevail.

Today we have most certainly prevailed. Labor has kept the faith with 3.7 million pensioners. We have kept our promise to Australians who have worked hard all their lives, who have paid their taxes all their lives and who have made a contribution to our communities, to our nation and to their own families.

In the five months since the Hockey-Abbott budget my colleagues and I have travelled the nation talking with older Australians, and they are worried. They are deeply worried about the effect of this government's plan to cut up to $80 a week from their pension. They know this
government lied to them before the last election. It promised, right up to the very end of the election period, that there would be no cuts to pensions. Now they are worried that because of Prime Minister Abbott, Treasurer Hockey and the gang who sit in government they will not be able to afford to cool their home in summer and to heat their home in winter. They are worried that they will not be able to buy their grandkids a treat. They will not be able to take their pet to the vet.

Let us be clear: these Australians that Labor fights for do not think that the world owes them a living. They do not seek a life in the lap of luxury. They do not live on a king's ransom. These Australians that Labor fights for have worked for everything they have, and it is their hard work which has made our nation great. They have stood up to the Abbott government's cruel cuts to their security and to their dignity, and they have prevailed. I say on behalf of Labor to the pensioners of Australia: this is your victory over Minister Kevin Andrews and Tony Abbott. This is your victory and this is the government's defeat.

Today, the government have finally faced up to the reality and they have faced the facts: this Prime Minister has no mandate for his cruel cuts to pensions, and no amount of headshaking by the Minister for Social Security can make black white. There is no mandate. Tony Abbott's broken promises to age pensioners, disability support pensioners, carer payment recipients and veterans have been exposed and they have been defeated.

Let me just say at this point my congratulations to our shadow spokesperson for pensions and families, Jenny Macklin, the member for Jagajaga. Every political party in Australia wishes they had one like her, but Labor does have one. Thank you and well done.

What she and all my colleagues behind me have done is expose the plot of the Abbott government to take $23 billion away from the age pension over the next 10 years. They have exposed this plot. Question time after question time, the opposition has asked the Prime Minister, 'Why are you cutting the indexation rate of pensioners?' And all this mealy-mouthed mob opposite ever do is say, 'Pensions are going up.' What a cheap stunt this mob opposite are. They think the people are as stupid as they believe them to be.

We all know that by reducing the indexation rate of pensions they are cutting the real pension by up to $80 a week. And, no matter how often that rotten bunch of twisters opposite say these things, it does not make them true. I love this mob opposite! They are always saluting the flag—they are at every parade possible. They love our veterans, they say—except when it comes to the veterans' pensions. It is Labor who has stopped a $65 million cut to war pensions. There are 280,000 people receiving a pension from the Department of Veterans' Affairs: 140,000 service pensioners and 84,004 war widow and widower pensioners. These pensioners were going to be up to $80 per week worse off over the next 10 years, but Labor have won the battle for them; just as they have represented this country, we have kept faith with the contract that we should look after them in their later years.

We have stopped the plot to increase the age pension eligibility age to 70. This mob opposite say, 'Well, we are all living longer so everyone should work longer.' What a bunch of rotten twisters. The biggest injury this mob opposite will ever face will be a paper cut! And yet they ask every other Australian, whose bodies may be weary and worn out, to keep working. To show the rottenness of increasing the minimum retirement age to 70, it will mean that we have the highest pension age across the OECD. Why is it that this is a government that always asks the most vulnerable to do the hardest and heaviest lifting? If we had used this
tortured analogy of our windbag Treasurer Hockey about 'lifters and leaners', the lifters are everyone in Australia except the Liberal Party. They are just the leaners sitting opposite. They talk about lifting the eligibility age to 70. They are so incompetent. They cannot even work out that most workers comp jurisdictions in Australia only go to the age of 65 or 67. So they want people to work to 70 and yet they have made no provision to lift workers comp, making it impossible to employ many people to the age of 70. But that is a mere detail for these dilettantes opposite. They would not know how real people earn their money.

Then, of course, there is the family tax benefit B changes. Because of Labor, more than 700,000 single-income and single-parent families will not lose their family tax benefit B over three years as a result of the savage cuts that Tony Abbott tried to inflict upon families merely because the youngest child is over six years old. There are 700,000 single-income and single-parent families who are going to have their payments kept safe because of the Labor Party.

And, of course, one of the meanest dog whistles—and this is a government addicted to dog whistling; they have never seen an issue they cannot get the dog whistle out on—is their attack on young job seekers. They probably like to demonise—we know they love to—and stigmatise groups in this community. I suppose that is a topic for a later time. But what they are doing to young job seekers under the age of 30—they are so enamoured of dividing this society—is make the young unemployed go six months without an income.

Of course, we saw people desert the sinking ship of this idea on the weekend. We do not know if it was an elegant leak from the Minister for Social Services; he said it was not him. Well, who was it? This is not a game of Cluedo, Government. We know who it was; we do not need to have the guessing games. It was the Treasurer and the Prime Minister. I do not know if they have set the Minister for Social Services up as a patsy; I do not know if he is their bunny or if he is their brain surgeon. Whatever the description, the outcome is the same: they wanted to attack young job seekers.

So there are 100,000 young people who will not have to face six months of poverty. We do not know that the coalition's plan is not earn or learn; it is earn or learn or starve. They want to create a divided society where our young are sleeping over the grates to get warm, where they are begging, where they are forced to do even worse things just to make ends meet. This government loves families so much it wants to privatise the cost of people to the age of 30 back to families. It is a disgrace, and Labor have stood them up.

What I said, though, is that there is good news and there is bad news. The good news is that Labor, being a strong opposition, have looked the government in the face and we have not blinked. We have seen the worst they can throw at Australian pensioners and we have prevailed on behalf of Australian pensioners. Unfortunately, there is one dirty deal that is still sneaking through. The Liberals have an addiction to lecturing us about working with the Greens, but they cannot wait to slip out behind the bike shed and do a deal with the Greens.

And the dirty, dirty deal they have done with the Greens—you don't have to look too sad, Kevin; this one is probably not your brainchild either—I am afraid to say, is to scrap the senior supplement. That affects anyone who has a Commonwealth seniors health card.

This is a government that knows the price of everything and the value of nothing. As of last month, annual payments for people who are eligible for Commonwealth seniors health cards were worth $886.60 for singles and more than $1,300 for couples. Just so we clear up who
these forensic detectives are chasing down the welfare burrow: to be eligible for this you have to earn less than $50,000 a year; you are not someone who is getting a pension. People earning less than $50,000 a year in their older years who do not get a pension are not that well off, but they are obviously too rich for the tastes of these Liberals opposite. What a shame these people do not have $2 million in super; then they would get a kickback from this government. What is happening is that the couples who earn less than $80,000 a year do not get a pension. There are 280,000 people—once upon a time this arrogant mob opposite might have said, 'These are the Liberal heartland.' Not anymore, ladies and gentlemen—not anymore.

The next payment was due on 20 December. Clearly this is a government who has succeeded with the Greens—because the Greens do not necessarily understand how middle-income Australia lives; their voting base sometimes is the well-off too. But what we see here is an unholy coalition of the extreme right and the Greens combining to mug 280,000 Australians. Don't you love this silent minister for immigration at the table, head buried in his notes! What a disgraceful deal, and no doubt there are people in your electorate, courtesy of your deal with the Greens, who are going to be losing money. Well done, Scott—another good day at the office!

As I said, there is good news and there is bad news. We have the dirty deal done between the Greens and the Liberals. Why did I know they would do a deal with the Greens? Because Tony Abbott promised they would not do it before the last election. How do you know Tony Abbott is making a promise he is going to break? You watch his lips move.

What we say to pensioners in Australia is that unfortunately Joe Hockey, a bit like that Japanese lieutenant who was found in the mountains of the Philippines in 1974, is never going to give up the war. He is never going to give up the war against the pensioners. The Treasurer sees his budget as a war on pensioners. I am afraid to say that this morning this arrogant government, this most arrogant, out of touch government, has again tabled legislation seeking to resuscitate all of these dreadful cuts, which we have stopped this time. They want to bring it on again. They are an arrogant government. They are refusing to accept the verdict of the Australian people. If Labor were being selfish, we would say it is a good thing they have brought them on because it keeps reminding Australians what they are like. But I actually wish this government would stop torturing and hurting 3.7 million pensioners and making them unsure about their income security.

Now the Treasurer has said that he will not give up his war. Give up his war? Who is this man to say he is at war with Australia's pensioners? That is not why people voted for him. The Prime Minister yesterday in question time—not once, not twice, but on eight different occasions—said he was committed to all of his broken promises. He was committed to making sure that they would try this stunt of attacking ordinary people, average-income-earners, pensioners; he would keep trying it and trying it. And of course the finance minister did not want to be left out of this farce. He stands by it too.

Ms Plibersek: What does the Assistant Treasurer say?

Mr Shorten: We don't know. But, when the government unveiled their attacks on pensions, we said that if they wanted to rip away the pension they would have to come through the Labor Party. You would have to come through the Labor Party, we said. All Australians know that the Liberal Party and their country proxies, the Nationals, have tried
their best to come through the Labor Party to attack 3.7 million pensioners. But I can report to the parliament and to Australia they have failed on this occasion. We have met them and we have defeated them.

And we will make clear again that this government's retreat from this destroys the credibility of the budget and it destroys the credibility of the Prime Minister. It has taken the Prime Minister more than four months to realise that this unfair budget was not going to wash with Australians. It took Labor four minutes; it took Australians four minutes. But make no mistake: these arrogant characters who sit opposite, who have a 'born to rule' mentality and make whatever decisions they can to inflict pain and hurt on ordinary Australians, are introducing these measures again. Tony Abbott wants to cut your pensions. Tony Abbott wants to cut the funding to schools and the funding to hospitals. He wants to cut billions from schools and hospitals. He wants to increase your taxes. He has not given up on his GP tax. He wants to make you pay more for going to the doctor when you are sick.

The real solution to defeating these people and their rotten measures is not just defeating their legislation, as we have on this occasion; it is to defeat Tony Abbott. As long as Tony Abbott and the Liberal Party occupy the benches of government and occupy the seat of the Prime Minister, Australians will have to fear these people coming after their pensions. We did not ask the Liberals to make pensions an election issue. We did not ask them to do that, but they have and so we will answer them and we will prevail.

Do not look at what this Prime Minister says; look at what he does. He breaks his promises and he lied to people before the election. They have their plans for Australia—their rotten, nation-dividing, impoverishing plans, picking on the vulnerable through unfair changes without a mandate—in the top drawer. They have not put them in the bin. What Australia needs to do is put Tony Abbott and the Liberal Party in the bin of election politics, because that is the only way we will stop these people.

Look at the minister for immigration giving me one of his stares!

Mr Morrison interjecting—

Mr SHORTEN: It is the 'Minister for Homeland Security' now—whatever your title! We had better check with the foreign minister, sunshine. Returning to the topic, the current Prime Minister—

Mr Morrison interjecting—

Mr SHORTEN: We could call you the alternative Liberal Prime Minister—whatever you want to be called, General! But what I say to you is that we will fight these changes.

Today we have had a victory and pensioners have had a victory. Today the government has retreated in the face of public disapproval and the combined weight of outrage and the voice of ordinary people, and if we want to defeat these pension changes again—which they are so eager, so hungry to bring on—then we will defeat them at the election.

Make no mistake, Australia; this government wants to cut the indexation rate of pensions. They want to cut the rate of pension payments to veterans. They want to change the payments which go to young people under the age of 30 looking for work. They want to go after family tax benefit payments to hundreds of thousands of Australians. This is a government that has no plans for the future other than dividing this country, making the vulnerable pay more and creating a lack of confidence in the high street of Australian small businesses by their attacks
on pensions. The good news is that we have won today, and the better news is that at the next election we will hold this government to account and we shall succeed in our arguments there too,

Ms MACKLIN (Jagajaga) (09:46): What a humiliating backdown we have seen from this government today. Never before have I seen such a shambolic budget mess—shambolic, absolutely shambolic. We had a budget brought down by the Treasurer in May this year, and from budget night the Labor opposition have made it absolutely clear that we would fight these pension cuts every day until we defeated them. And today is that day. This government has been forced to back down and acknowledge that it cannot get these cuts through the parliament.

We have also said every day since budget night that we would stand with Australian families and fight for the $7½ billion that the government want to take out of the pockets of Australian families. Today, Labor has prevailed on behalf of Australian families. We know how hard it is for Australian families to make ends meet, but what does this lot opposite want to do? For an ordinary family, a single-income family on $65,000 with a couple of kids at school, this government's budget would leave that family $6,000 a year—each and every year—worse off. That is exactly what this minister, who claims he stands up for families, wants to do. The reality is of course that he wants to strip 10 per cent of those families' incomes. That is what this budget means in real dollars for those families.

But as we said on budget night, the cruellest measure of all in this budget, a measure that we could not actually believe when we saw it in the budget papers—because never before has Australia's social security system seen such cruelty—was the decision by this government to say to young Australians under the age of 30, 'If you cannot find a job and if you cannot find a training place, then we are going to leave you with absolutely nothing to live on.' What are they going to live on? They are saying to young Australians that for six months they will have nothing to live on. Then they will be told to go and work for the dole and, if after that period they still cannot find a job, they will go on nothing again. That is what this government is trying to introduce. Today Labor have said to this government that these measures are cruel and we will not support them. We have protected some of the most vulnerable people in this country. We have campaigned with pensioners—

Mr Pyne: Mr Deputy Speaker Broadbent, I rise on a point of order on relevance. The bill, No. 6, is about specific matters that the Labor Party is supporting. Neither the Leader of the Opposition nor now the shadow minister have addressed any of the issues in the bill. We have been very tolerant. Leaders of the Opposition are often given a great deal more latitude than others, but the shadow minister should actually address the provisions in the bill that are the ones the Labor Party are supporting, and so far she has not spoken to any of those at all.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Broadbent): I thank the Leader of the House for his contribution.

Ms MACKLIN: Just to pick up on the Leader of the House's point, Labor indicated our position four months ago. Four months you have had to figure out what you had to do to get agreement to the measures that Labor said we were prepared to support. But no, they are far too arrogant for that. They come in here today and finally present the bill that we are debating right now that does contain measures that Labor said four months ago we were prepared to support. But, because of their arrogance, they were not prepared to come and have a
discussion and figure it out. They were actually forced to this position because they knew that their bills were going to go down completely in the Senate and they would have ended up with nothing, absolutely nothing, if they proceeded with their genius strategy in the Senate.

Fortunately, we have got to the point where Labor has agreed to some sensible changes, and Labor has always been prepared to support sensible changes. But we will never support cuts to the pensions. We will never support what you want to do to young Australians, which is to leave them on their own and to say to them that they will have absolutely nothing to live on for six months. We will never support saying to families, 'We will take family tax benefit part B off you when your youngest child turns six.'

What does all this mean for their budget? What it means for their budget is that they will never get these measures through. They have reintroduced them again today to try and keep the numbers in their budget, but the truth is that when we see their budget numbers we all know that those numbers are inflated. What we have proven in this parliament yesterday and today is that these measures will never, ever get through Labor. Labor are going to do everything in our power to stop you cutting the pension, to stop these massive cuts to family payments and to stop the cruelty of your attack on young Australians. We will do everything to stop these measures. I sincerely hope for the most vulnerable Australians that Labor will continue to prevail.

Mr ANDREWS (Menzies—Minister for Social Services) (09:53): You would hardly know from the speech of the Leader of the Opposition or the speech of the shadow minister, the member for Jagajaga, that today the Labor Party in this House will pass a series of significant reforms to social security in this country and that those reforms will pass through the Senate and, in doing so, will amount to a saving of $2.7 billion to the budget. One would hardly know from having listened to the rhetoric of the Leader of the Opposition and the shadow minister that they are actually supporting the Social Services and Other Legislation Amendment (2014 Budget Measures No. 6) Bill 2014.

What are they supporting in this bill? Let me reiterate what this bill actually does. Firstly, it renames the clean energy supplement as the energy supplement and permanently ceases indexation of that payment. The Labor Party is supporting that measure. Secondly, it is pausing indexation for two years from 1 July 2015 of the assets value limit for all working age allowances, student payments and parenting payment single and pausing indexation for three years from 1 July 2017 of the assets test free areas for all pensions other than the parenting payment single. From royal assent, disability support pension recipients under the age of 35 years will be reviewed against revised impairment tables and the program of support requirements will apply. This is a measure which was promised in the budget and that will now pass this House not only with the support of the government but also with the support of the Labor Party—even though you would never know it from listening to the previous speeches.

From 1 January 2015 the bill will limit the six weeks overseas portability period for student payments. The bill also includes amendments that generally limit the overseas portability period for the disability support pension to 28 days in a 12-month period from 1 January 2015. There are further amendments. Untaxed superannuation income will be included in the assessment for the Commonwealth seniors health card, with products purchased before 1 January 2015 by existing cardholders exempt from the new arrangements, and the portability
period for cardholders will be extended from six to 19 weeks. From 1 January 2015 relocation scholarship assistance for students relocating within and between major cities will be removed. And in the last of the budget measures, three family payment reforms will be implemented from 1 July 2015. The first of these will limit the family tax benefit part A large family supplement to families with four or more children. Amendments will remove the family tax benefit part A per child add-on to the higher income-free area for each additional child after the first. The bill will improve targeting of family tax benefit part B by reducing the primary earner income limit from $150,000 to $100,000 a year. These are significant measures in this bill. The government introduced in the budget this year—

Mr Ruddock: Mr Deputy Speaker, am I allowed to ask the minister a question?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Broadbent): Chief Government Whip, under an intervention you are allowed. You have been misbehaving, so I would say that this is a continuation of that.

Mr Ruddock: Probably! I merely want to know whether it will be enough to pay off Labor's debt!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have to ask the minister whether he is prepared to accept the intervention.

Mr ANDREWS: I will take the question from the Chief Government Whip: will there be enough to pay off Labor's debt? Sadly, no. And we did not hear one mention of that by the Leader of the Opposition, because basically he is still in denial. He is in denial about the state of the Commonwealth finances that they left at the end of their term in office. We are galloping towards $123 billion of accumulated Commonwealth government deficits—the product of the previous Labor government. We are on a trajectory to $667 billion worth of Commonwealth debt—the trajectory left by the previous Labor government. We are paying in interest alone $1 billion per month and, if we were ever—God forbid—to get to $667 billion worth of Commonwealth debt, we would not just be paying $1 billion a month but we, as a country and as taxpayers, would be paying $3 billion a month in interest. That is the sad legacy of Labor in office. This government—unlike the kindergarten capers we had from the previous government—is committed to restoring the finances of the Commonwealth of Australia so that Australians can have financial security into the future. This is an important part of that. Secondly, we believe that Australians who are capable of working should be encouraged to be in work and not to be on welfare. We do not want to condemn people to welfare for years and, in some cases, decades of their lives, but instead encourage them to be in the workforce and be part of the productive part of this nation. That is why these measures are important.

We are glad that the Labor Party is prepared to support $2.7 billion worth of savings—not that you would have understood that from the speeches from the Leader of the Opposition or the member for Jagajaga—that are part of these measures. The other bills which have been reintroduced today have been reintroduced in a way in which we expect—with further consultations, negotiations and discussions with other members of the Senate—will also be able to achieve some further changes from the past. On that note, I commend the bill to the House.

Question agreed to.
Bill read a second time.
Message from the Governor-General recommending appropriation announced.

Third Reading

Mr ANDREWS (Menzies—Minister for Social Services) (10:00): by leave—I move:
That this bill be now read a third time.
Question agreed to.
Bill read a third time.

COMMITTEES

Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights

Report

Mr LAURIE FERGUSON (Werriwa) (10:01): On behalf of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights, I present the committee's 13th report of the 44th Parliament, entitled Examination of legislation in accordance with the Human Rights (Parliamentary Scrutiny) Act 2011: Bills introduced 22 - 25 September; legislative instruments received 6 - 12 September 2014.

Report made a parliamentary paper in accordance with standing order 39(e).

Mr LAURIE FERGUSON: by leave—I rise to speak to the tabling of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights' 13th report of the 44th Parliament.

It provides the committee's view on the compatibility with human rights as defined in the Human Rights (Parliamentary Scrutiny) Act 2011 of bills introduced into the parliament between 22 and 25 September and legislative instruments received during the period 6 to 12 September 2014. The committee has also considered responses to the committee's comments made in previous reports.

The committee considered 11 bills, all of which were introduced with a statement of compatibility. Of these, 10 do not require further scrutiny as they do not appear to give rise to human rights concerns. The committee has decided to defer its consideration of five bills.

The committee has identified one bill that it considers requires further examination and is seeking further information.

Of the bills considered, those which are scheduled for debate during the sitting week commencing 30 September 2014 include:

- the Automotive Transformation Scheme Amendment Bill 2014
- the Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre Supervisory Cost Recovery Levy Amendment Bill 2014
- the Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre Supervisory Cost Recovery Levy (Collection) Amendment Bill 2014
- the Australian Education Amendment Bill 2014
- the Rural Research and Development Legislation Amendment Bill 2014
- the Aged Care and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014
- the Health and Other Services (Compensation) Care Charges (Amendment) Bill 2014 and
The Private Health Insurance Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2014

The report outlines the committee's assessment of the compatibility of these bills with human rights—and I am pleased to report none of these bills raise any human rights concerns.

I draw members' attention to one bill in this report which is of particular interest and relevance to the committee's task of assessing legislation for compatibility with human rights—that is, the National Security Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2014.

In its report the committee notes that the statement of compatibility prepared by the Attorney-General's Department identifies a number of human rights engaged by the bill. However, the statement does not provide sufficient information on each proposed measure for the committee to presently and fully assess the compatibility of the bill with Australia's human rights obligations.

As had been previously stated, the committee requires a logical and evidence based assessment of whether a proposed limitation is reasonable, necessary and proportionate to achieving a legitimate objective. In the absence of detailed information in relation to the proposed measures it will be difficult for the committee to conclude that the proposed measures are indeed compatible with human rights.

For this reason, the committee is seeking further information from the Attorney-General's Department in relation to the engagement of a number of human rights, such as the right to be free from arbitrary detention, the right to an effective remedy, the right to freedom of expression, the right to freedom of movement and the right to a fair trial.

The committee is particularly disappointed the Attorney-General's Department has not given sufficient attention to the expectations set out in the committee's practice note No. 1, which states:

The committee relies on the statement to provide sufficient information about the purpose and effect of the proposed legislation, the operation of its individual provisions and how these may impact on human rights … The committee expects statements to set out the necessary information in a way that allows it to undertake its scrutiny tasks efficiently. Without this information, it is often difficult to identify provisions which raise human rights concerns in the time available.

I note that the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights is not the only legislative scrutiny committee to have raised issues in relation to this bill. The Scrutiny of Bills Committee previously raised a number of concerns with the Attorney-General and, promisingly for our deliberations, received a comprehensive response in relation to these concerns.

It is important to note that any characterisation of human rights as being in opposition to national security is inaccurate and also unproductive. The parliamentary committees such as this one have a critical function in ensuring there is the right balance struck between national security and human rights.

Indeed, Australia's current membership of the UN Security Council requires us to exercise important leadership in advancing both international peace and security, and at the same time advancing the protection of national security and human rights on the global stage.

With these comments, I commend the committee's 13th report of the 44th Parliament to the chamber.
Publications Committee

Report

Mr COULTON (Parkes—The Nationals Chief Whip) (10:07): I present a report from the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Publications sitting in conference with the Senate Standing Committee on Publications. Copies of this report are being placed on the table.

Report—by leave—agreed to.

BILLS

Automotive Transformation Scheme Amendment Bill 2014

Second Reading

Debate resumed on the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr MITCHELL (McEwen—Second Deputy Speaker) (10:07): Today I rise to talk about the Automotive Transformation Scheme Amendment Bill 2014, which is going to have huge impacts across the state I come from, Victoria, particularly in the northern suburbs with the closure of Ford, Holden and Toyota.

This government comes in with this mantra that the age of entitlement is over, so it is pulling funding from the automotive industry, which will spell disaster for many people in manufacturing and automotive sectors and for the supply chains that supply the three manufacturers in this country. What we have heard over the last couple of days is the government saying: 'It's all good. They've got to stand on their own two feet. They've got to look after themselves and, if they're not competitive, we shouldn't be supporting them.' They say that subsidies are outdated and we should not be subsidising industry, but at the same time they pump billions of dollars a year into the mining industry subsidies. Wherever you look across the country, there are subsidies in a whole range of things: banking, child care, private health insurance—all these things are subsidised by taxpayers because they are important to our country.

We are one of only 13 countries around the world that manufacture our own cars, and our own cars are of a very high standard. I remember growing up as a kid near the Ford factory, seeing the new models roll out and seeing the improvements that each model made in safety and comfort, all these things that happened over time. Today's modern car has just about everything you want bar a coffee machine. It is the development work that has been done by workers in this country who put together these motor vehicles.

I can remember the Prime Minister's exact words from before the election. I will quote him:

I want to see car-making survive in this country, not just survive but flourish.

That was what now Prime Minister Abbott said on 21 August 2013. He wanted to make it flourish. So what does he do? He pulls the money and support out, pulls out the strength behind the industry. Roughly $18 per car goes into it. He pulls that away, and in the end we have all three manufacturers walk away.
With Holden we have seen executives come out and say they are not manufacturing cars in Australia any more because we had the cigar-chomping Treasurer up there in his leadership spiel threatening and goading Holden to leave. He said: 'Go on, go. Leave if that's what you want to do.' And they did because they lost the support of the Australian government to manufacture cars.

We have been manufacturing cars in Australia for a long time. We invented the world's first ute. We have cars that have delivered safety standards right across the world, and components that we manufacture go right around the world, but they have always relied on having a strong, solid car industry here. Those opposite sit there and say the component manufacturers can still make their products with no problem. The problem is that, if you take from any business their largest source of income, which is local production—take away the thousands of components they make every year that go into our motor cars—their business case is not sustainable. We have seen that happen with in Gisborne with air conditioning components. You cannot take the base product away from a company and expect it to be able to manufacture. The cost base is not there. That is what happens.

We have people in the car industry—good, hardworking people who have worked a long time and are very proud of the products they make and deliver—who have been doing that for many years, and the question has to be what happens to those people. A 50-year-old manufacturer who has been working on a car assembly line all his life—where is he going to go? What is he going to do for a living? They on the other side say there will be new jobs and everyone will have a new job. It does not work that way. You would think that a party that claims to be the friend of business would have that basic understanding. These are highly technical jobs, and what this government has done by ripping out the car industry support is put many small businesses and jobs in small businesses at risk.

An example is a company that I know quite well. They do a little tiny part of the car industry: they service the cranes on the Toyota line. It is probably 0.1 per cent of Toyota's manufacturing process. It is a small business. You would think the Minister for Small Business would be standing up for these people, but he is not. They are now going to have to put off seven employees because that type of work is not going to be made available. That is one tiny company. That means seven families are going to lose their incomes.

They will tell you there are a few thousand automotive manufacturing workers gone and that is it. That is the tip of the iceberg. The iceberg is all the surrounding industries: the truck drivers who move the parts, the forklift drivers, the repairmen, the salesmen at truck manufacturing companies that sell the trucks that do these things. There are also the caterers, the cleaners, the engineers, the tool specialists plus all the service work that gets done. The list goes on and on.

We saw it with Nissan. One member opposite said yesterday that Ford announced its closure and sales dipped. Yes, it did dip. Blind Freddie could see that it was going to dip. Once a company announces it is pulling out of Australia, the sales drop off. It happened with Nissan when Nissan pulled out of Australia. They went to almost no sales at all. They have been able to maintain a small slice of the market but not the big slice of the market that they used to have. Once the message is out that we are not manufacturing the cars in Australia, people think, 'Well, maybe we're not buying them.' Maybe there is going to be an issue getting
parts, service or those sorts of things. That is why Ford and Holden have had dips in sales. But also remember that four of the top 10 selling cars in this country are Australian made.

People like their Fords, Holdens and Toyotas. They like Australian made cars because they know the quality is good. The quality is so good that Holden had a great export program selling the Caprice and Statesman to the United States as police cars. That was a really big boost for Holden sales but that was when the Australian dollar was at 85 or 86 US cents, so they manufactured the cars and made the sales at that price. When the Australian dollar went to US$1.06 it was not profitable, and Holden was you losing money hand over fist. That program had to stop. If you ask people in the United States who have used the Statesman cars as police cars they will tell you that they are fantastic motor vehicles—better than the old Ford Crown Victoria that the police were lumbered with for many decades because of protectionism in the US market.

We strongly oppose this legislation because it means the death knell for the automotive industry in this country. I worked in the automotive industry for 15 years and I know just how important this is and how big a reach it has right across our economy. There are many people in the Ford, Holden and Toyota factories who have been left in disbelief of this government because what it said before the election was totally opposite to what it did after the election. That has come across with a whole range of things. Prior to the debate on this bill we spent half an hour learning how Labor, standing up for pensioners, has forced this government to back down on the pension cuts—cuts they said, before the election, that they would never do. What did they do in their first budget? Bang!—they snipped the indexation for aged pensioners. They put pensioners on the scrap heap.

What this government have done affects young kids who lose their jobs—those in the automotive industry are a perfect example. If you are a 29-year-old with a family, buying a house and trying to start your life together, and you lose your job because this government made a decision to scrap the car industry—they scraped the support to keep the car industry going—you would be out of work and this government was proposing that you would not get benefits for up to six months. Thanks to the good, hard work of Labor and the Australian people that is not going to happen.

The question has to be asked: how is someone going to pay their rent, put food on the table and pay their bills? This government has no interest in manufacturing. It has no interest in the automotive sector. It has shown that it has no interest in vulnerable people. Whether you are an aged pensioner or a young person this government has you in its sights. We need to keep fighting and make sure that we stop that.

There is no doubt that, in workplaces in this day and age, there is an element of ageism. If you are in your fifties and you are going for a job it is very difficult. I have people coming into my office every day of the week—good people who have worked their whole lives, buying a house, raising a family and doing the right thing—who, when they lose their jobs, find it difficult. They can go for 30 or 40 jobs and not get put on. They know damn well that it is because of their age.

When people lose jobs in the automotive sector this scheme was to help them develop skills to try and find a job in a new industry. This is the second biggest drop in a single industry that we have seen since the Ansett collapse. The difference with the Ansett collapse
was that a lot of people found more work in the industry. It did not matter if you went to Tiger, Jetstar, Virgin or Qantas; you could fix the planes—they were the same sorts of jobs. But in automotive manufacturing you do not have that opportunity. This is an industry that is closing, not a big player.

This government should be condemned because even an organisation—not traditional Labor people—such as the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries have spoken about this. Yesterday, one member on the opposite side of the chamber said, 'We shouldn't need to listen to industry. Why should we? We'll make the decisions.' I said yesterday, and I will say it today: that is arrogance personified.

The Federation of Automotive Products Manufacturers have said:
The government continues to press on with the amendment bill knowing that a reduction in ATS funding will put in jeopardy up to 30,000 jobs in the component industry …

ABS figures show that in Victoria one per cent of the workforce will be gone; in South Australia it is 0.6 per cent. Then you have to look at the potential rolling impact on the vehicle manufacturing sector. The flat-earth policies of the free-trade think tanks, who opined that subsidies should be removed at all costs, invariably do not offer a solution. Those think tanks do not have a solution to the deindustrialisation and large-scale unemployment that their prescription of flat-earth policies will eventually bring.

The issue here is that there has been a quick, simple decision of the government to say, 'Let's remove this. We'll take the money out of the automotive industry, jobs and small business, and we will put it aside so that people earning $100,000 a year can get $50,000 from the government for having a baby.' It is just ridiculous.

The priorities of this government are screwed. The government really need to come back to earth and realise what they are doing to people right across country as they take away jobs, investment, support and, most importantly, confidence. If people do not have confidence they tighten their belts. When they tighten their belts it retracts the economy and the whole economy goes backwards. It is all because of a decision made by this government. The decision was not based on any policy or any factual evidence; it was based on ideology. The coalition do not care; they have never cared. The problem is that it will be ordinary Australians who pay for this government's bad decisions and bad governance.

Mr CRAIG KELLY (Hughes) (10:21): I rise to speak on the Automotive Transformation Scheme Amendment Bill 2014. I would like to note that I was not down to speak on this bill but I could not continue to sit by and listen to the complete gaggle of opposition speakers, one after the other, rabbit on about such nonsense and espouse such fictions, without joining the debate.

I will speak specifically to the bill. This bill is in response to the decisions of Holden and Toyota to cease manufacturing cars in Australia in 2016 and 2017. The Automotive Transformation Scheme is a legislative instrument which provides assistance to registered participants for the production of motor vehicles and engines for those who invest in eligible research and investment and allowable plant and equipment. Effectively, it is a government subsidy. What we will actually be doing is reducing the appropriation for the Automotive Transformation Scheme from $2.5 billion to $1.6 billion.

Mr Mitchell: It's a cut.
Mr CRAIG KELLY: Yes, the member for McEwen is right; this will save the budget $900 million. That may seem a lot of money, but I am sure the member for McEwen is aware that that $900 million will pay the interest bill on the debt left by the previous Labor government for about 23 days. Without paying any of the principle back, the interest bill run up by the previous Labor government is now costing this nation more than $1 billion a month. So that $900 million saving equates to 20-odd days worth of repayment of that debt—and we know that 70 per cent of that money simply flows out of the country because those government bonds had to be sold overseas to finance the previous six years of Labor government's reckless, wasteful and politically inspired spending.

It is heartbreaking to see any business close down. When Holden and Toyota close, in two and three years time, it will cause some heartbreak to those people who are unable to find jobs. It will also cause pain to the regional areas where those factories have been set up. We in this parliament are right to express our concerns for those workers, even though they will receive some generous redundancy payments. This government has put together a $155 million growth fund to help those workers find new and better jobs and to help businesses in those areas diversify into new markets. That is great for the workers in the car industry. But over the six years of the previous Labor government we saw a net loss of 519,000 jobs of people who were employed in small business. Where was the subsidy package for those people? Where were the tears of members of the Labor Party who were coming in and expressing their concerns for those 520,000 people? Where were they? They were completely and utterly silent as more than half a million jobs in the small business sector were lost.

As I have listened to this debate I have heard Labor speaker after Labor speaker attempt to create a fiction by saying that somehow the closure of the car manufacturing industry here in Australia all happened under a coalition government—that it is all the coalition government's fault—and if only Labor were back in power all these jobs would be saved. But let us look at the facts. The first of Australia's major car manufacturers to close down was Nissan back in 1992—surprise, surprise—under a Labor government.

Mr Mitchell interjecting—

Mr CRAIG KELLY: Then Mitsubishi followed in 2008, again under a Labor government. The member for McEwen may remember the closure of Mitsubishi in 2008. I think he was a member here then. When Ford announced its closure, in 2013, it was again under a Labor government. We have seen three major car companies close down when the Labor Party were actually in power, and yet we hear the idea that the coalition is somehow responsible for the closure of the car industry. We also hear the absolutely bald-faced hypocrisy of the Labor Party when Labor member after Labor member come into this chamber and claim the high moral ground, put their hands on their hearts and say, 'We are the supporters of Australian manufacturing.' They are the people who imposed the world's highest carbon tax on every Australian manufacturer in this country—which put every manufacturing company in this country at a comparative disadvantage with their competitors overseas who were not liable for that tax. If someone were producing an apple for an apple, the good produced here in Australia had the carbon tax on it and the good produced in a factory overseas did not have the carbon tax. That was one of the biggest hits to the manufacturing industry in this country. That is what the previous Labor government did. They voted time and time again, kicking and screaming, to retain the carbon tax. Of course, we know what will
happen if they are ever returned to the treasury bench. Yesterday we heard the member for Chisholm make the most extraordinary statement. She actually stood there and said how outraged she was that her electricity bill had come down nine per cent! I am sure there must be an outrage amongst all those struggling manufacturing companies in Australia that their electricity bills are coming down nine and 10 per cent.

Mr Ramsey: Fifteen.

Mr CRAIG KELLY: Fifteen, as my friend next to me advises me.

Mr Mitchell interjecting—

Mr CRAIG KELLY: From that statement by the member for Chisholm—and we also hear the member for McEwen interjecting over there—we know, as sure as night follows day, that if they were to come back into power they would reintroduce that carbon tax and continue to put Australian industries at a competitive disadvantage.

A responsible government needs to deal with the harsh and sometimes painful economic realities of the world. If we do not deal with those economic realities and instead—as the opposition does—deal simply in populist sentimentalities just to make ourselves feel virtuous for a short period of time, all we do is postpone that problem and make it worse and more painful to deal with down the track. One of the first harsh economic realities is that government subsidies, time after time, have been shown not to work. In fact, we have seen throughout our economic history that government subsidies often harm the very industries that they are meant to support. Adam Smith knew this back in the 1700s, when he wrote *The Wealth of Nations*:

... the bounty to the white-herring fishery is a tonnage bounty; and is proportioned to the burden of the ship, not to her diligence or success in the fishery; and it has, I am afraid, been too common for vessels to fit out for the sole purpose of catching, not the fish, but the bounty

That could well describe the multinational companies that are set up to manufacture cars here in Australia. They are not set up to produce cars that are fit for the market but to take the bounty from government.

Let's just go through some of the actual bounties that have been paid to these multinational car companies. The Productivity Commission has estimated that the automotive industry between 1997 and 2012—so we are talking about a 15-year period—received $30 billion in government support. Some $30 billion worth of subsidies flowed to that industry. During that time, it worked out, there were about five million vehicles produced, so that equated to a $5,748 subsidy of government support for every vehicle produced. In August 2008 the Productivity Commission chair, Gary Banks, warned that with the current levels of assistance or subsidies every single job saved in the car industry came at a cost of—wait for it—$300,000. Every job supposedly saved cost the economy and the taxpayer $300,000.

We have also seen the recent examples of Labor's failure, rolling out more subsidies to the car industry. We saw the Labor government hand out $34 million to Ford, $25 million to Toyota and $215 million to Holden. What did the previous Prime Minister say after handing out all this cash? She said:

This is exactly the type of investment we identified at the Future Jobs Forum and the PM's Manufacturing taskforce to help shore up the future of our manufacturing sector.
It's smart, it's competitive and best of all it will secure jobs, not only in Victoria but also across the nation.

We know it was dumb, we know it did not save jobs and we know it simply added to the debt burden that this government has to deal with. In fact, Paul Kelly, the Australian's editor at large, described this massive government subsidy scheme as 'one of the most epic failures in public subsidy in Australia's national history'.

Even despite all this industry assistance, this $30 billion worth of taxpayers' funds, unfortunately these car companies could not turn a profit. We saw Holden announce their worst loss ever before they announced they would close down—$553.8 million just for one calendar year, in 2013. That took their total losses to over $1 billion over the last eight years. We saw Ford announce its worst ever loss, $267 million—a $1.1 billion combined loss over the last eight years. These companies made it very clear that no more government support could have saved the car industry.

I know this is going to come as a surprise to members of the opposition, but there is simply no magic pudding. You cannot spend the money more than once, and a subsidy has to come from somewhere. When you subsidise one industry, all that you are doing is raising taxes on more efficient industries that are out there doing a job, creating employment and creating wealth for this country. The money has to come from somewhere and all you do when you raise subsidies to give to one industry is punish other industries, and that is exactly what we have seen. It comes at a net loss to the economy, a net loss to employment, and it reduces our total standard of living.

Look at some of the factors in the global car industry that caused the car industry in Australia to close down. In China there are now 240 million vehicles on their roads and they expect that to increase by 20 million vehicles every single year. Today there are something like one billion cars and trucks on the planet, and by 2050 that is expected to grow to 2.5 billion. So on the surface this is potentially a chance for Australia to export something to those markets, but what has happened is that, because of this increasing demand, we have seen so many countries in Asia develop their car industries. In fact, a recent Wall Street Journal article says there are 170 different car manufacturers in China today. The problem they have is that the global capacity of these new factories coming online to meet the demand is close to 100 million cars, but the demand at the moment is only something like 60 million cars. So there is close to a 40 million overcapacity in the industry.

It is unfortunate. We hate to see the car industry close. But what it will allow, as we have seen over the last decade, is for cars to become more affordable to Australians—cars of higher quality, with more comfort, better technology and accessories, better fuel performance and less pollution. They are safer and more reliable. As just one quick example, in 1960 it took 60 weeks of average male earnings for someone to buy a new Ford Falcon. Last year that same Ford Falcon—a far superior car—took just 30 weeks earnings. So yes, it is sad that the car industry is closing in Australia, but we cannot continue to throw subsidies to the industry, because those subsidies actually harm every other industry in the country and harm consumers. We are right to give $155 million in assistance to the former workers, but I commend this bill to the House. (Time expired)

Mr BUTLER (Port Adelaide) (10:36): Last December, I think it was, I came across a car industry executive who was leaving the ministerial wing here in Parliament House—someone
from South Australia whom I knew. I had a quick chat to him and it is fair to say he was
ashen faced. What he said to me was not about the detail of the discussions he was having
with the government at the time but about his deep concern that the ministerial wing was
populated with people who just did not understand the manufacturing industry. It is important
to say this was not about the Minister for Industry, Ian Macfarlane, who I think everyone in
the parliament, across the chamber, recognises understands manufacturing very well. He was
very concerned that the very senior ministers to whom the industry was talking at the time, as
Holden's fate hung in the balance, simply did not understand how supply chains work;
manufacturing, particularly the automotive sector; and the multiplier effect that operates,
particularly in the car industry. The member for Hughes did not really go to that point. But,
perhaps most importantly, from my perspective, simply do not understand the degree to which
urban communities have grown up around and depend upon and are nurtured by
manufacturing industries in cities like Adelaide, Melbourne and other parts of Australia.

I want to talk about the impact that this bill and the associated policies of this government,
the associated decisions of this government, particularly in the automotive industry, will have
on communities that I live in, that I have the privilege of representing, that my family has
lived in for many, many generations. The impact of policies made in this place on community
when it suits them is a favourite topic of those opposite. A favourite topic of the Prime
Minister was to stand up and say the carbon tax would wipe Whyalla off the map, would wipe
Gladstone off the map. It is a favourite topic when it suits them. But I want to talk about the
very, very serious impact that this bill is going to have on communities in Adelaide.

I have looked at speeches made by my colleagues: the member for Wakefield, who
represents the northern suburbs of Adelaide where the Holden factory is located and where so
many supply companies are also located; I have seen the speech by the member for Makin,
who understands this deeply and has responsibility for the opposition in this area; I listened to
the speech of the member for Corio from Geelong, who understands that deeply; the member
for Hotham; and a number of others. I will not go over the ground that they covered in talking
about the return on investment and the comparison of the support—the co-investment that the
Australian government makes and has made for many years to the car industry compared to
those other small number of nations that actually are able to manufacture a motor vehicle
from the design table to it rolling out into the showroom. I know that if you look at those
figures, Australia's support—the support from taxpayers to that industry—is significantly
lower per capita than nations like the United States, Germany and many, many others.

My electorate encompasses a range of suburbs in what is known as Northern Adelaide and
also the north-western suburbs of Adelaide. Over the last several months in particular, but
over the last few years as the future of the car industry has been deeply uncertain, I have
talked to so many members of those communities at functions, at street corner meetings on
Saturday mornings about the impact that that is going to have. It is not just the northern
suburbs and the north-western suburbs that will be impacted by this bill and associated
policies; it is important to say that the car industry and the manufacturing sectors that have
been able to spring up around that hub of the car industry have been utterly central to South
Australia's fortunes, particularly Adelaide's fortunes, really for the better part of 100 years.

Holden, as the member for Hughes described it, is now part of a multinational car
company. For a long time—not anymore, but for a long time—the largest car company in the
world, General Motors. But it began as a family business about 150 years ago in Adelaide doing work for horse-drawn carriages. It very quickly set up its operations in Port Adelaide in the heart of my electorate and transformed from a horse carriage business, as the car became increasingly ubiquitous in modern society, and became a car supply company. About 100 years ago it decided to move into car body building and in 1924, about 90 years ago, Holden, still in a family company, set up the largest car body building factory outside of North America and Europe in Woodville, just a couple of kilometres from my house and my children's school, actually. It is no longer a car factory; it is now Bunnings, which I think gives you a sense of the transformation of the world economy. But back then it was the largest car body building factory outside of North America and Europe.

The fortunes of Holden really changed in the 1930s for Adelaide. South Australia's economy was hit as hard as any economy in Australia by the great depression due to its very significant reliance on commodity products, particularly primary produce at the time. Its economy was very, very deeply hurt. At the same time, Holden, which suffered a big hit to the demand for its products, decided to seek support from overseas companies and was then bought out in 1931 by the American company General Motors, which still owns the Australian operation. At the same time Holden decided to consolidate its operations around the country and had pretty much a signed a contract to move all of its Adelaide operations to Fishermans Bend in Melbourne. Had that happened, the economy in South Australia, particularly in Adelaide, already devastated by the great depression to a greater degree than most parts of Australia, would have been even more devastated.

The state government at the time did a lot of work to convince Holden to keep their operation going in Woodville. I will not go through the list of policies that were put in place. Suffice it to say that that process really sparked the industrialisation of South Australia—the diversification of an economy that had been so overwhelmingly reliant on primary produce with a bit of manufacturing on the side became the sort of industrial powerhouse for the country that we knew it to be, starting in the thirties and continuing in the postwar government, particularly of Tom Playford and later. I am sure it is only coincidence that Ted Holden was elected at about that time to the legislative council, too, which I am sure helped cement his commitment to the state of South Australia.

That postwar shift in production methods, that postwar economic boom in Australia, allowed a company like General Motors Holden, around the country but including in Adelaide, to start to become more ambitious. Instead of just building car bodies essentially for overseas designs to put together in other factories, as we know very well, Holden became the first company to put together a car from scratch in Australia, rolling off the assembly line in Fishermans Bend in 1948 with a body built at that same factory I talked about in Woodville.

The member for Wakefield talks about this passionately and often. It was then decided that, from the operation in Woodville in the old north-western suburbs of Adelaide, we would build a new suburb called Elizabeth then in the far north of Adelaide and that that suburb would not only deal with the postwar boom, the migration boom and also the baby boom, but it would also be a suburb that would house its massive expansion in the car industry. That suburb was built in 1955 to pre-empt the building of the new Holden factory in 1958. Around that hub, a whole range of supply companies—to take up the member for Hughes' point, and I am sure the Minister for Small Business will be interested in this—and countless small
businesses sprang up in the Elizabeth area and the northern suburbs. They all, at the end of the day, depended on the stone that was dropped in the pond from the Holden factory, which was the behemoth in those northern suburbs. Generations of families have worked at Holden ever since—they have either worked at Holden or they have worked at the different supply companies that I talked about. My stepmother's mum, her dad and her brother all worked at Holden. Countless times I have gone to street-corner meetings, especially since the decision taken in December, to talk, particularly, to men—because it is still a predominantly male workforce in the automotive sector—whose fathers worked there, whose sons work there today or who hope their sons will be able to get a job there. These are good, secure, stable, relatively well-paying jobs that really underpin the economy of the northern suburbs of Adelaide. There are even bigger numbers in the supply companies.

This is not just in the northern suburbs. If you know the geography of Adelaide this is also in the north-western suburbs, where the bulk of the electorate of Port Adelaide is; that is where I live. Within two kilometres of my house there are four factories I can think of which are car component factories dependent upon the work of Holden and of Toyota in Victoria. These are the particular targets of this bill. We had hoped that these companies would be able to change and diversify their products to do something other than supply the Australian factories of Toyota and Holden. No-one underestimated the challenges involved in that diversification, given the degree to which factories are tooled to a particular purpose, but that already very difficult task is made so much harder by this bill.

The Minister for Agriculture, in question time yesterday, got up and had a great old time enjoying himself trying to point out how many members on that side understand the farming sector and how many members on the opposition side understand the farming sector. It is great entertainment when the Minister for Agriculture takes up precious time in question time doing that! But frankly I am not confident that members sitting around the cabinet table today—again, other than the Minister for Industry, for whom there is a great deal of respect in this parliament—or for that matter, members in the broader caucus of government, have a great deal of understanding of the significant degree to which so many communities in the north and north-western suburbs of Adelaide and parts of Melbourne depend on this manufacturing industry, not only for their economic fortunes, but for their social strength and cohesion.

This bill and the decisions going back to December will have a devastating impact on those communities. I am not confident that is well appreciated or understood by those opposite, which is why it is so critical to keep the Automotive Transformation Scheme in place and properly funded. There are thousands of workers in my electorate—not at Holden; the decision has been made at Holden—who rely for the chance of a job post 2017 upon the ability of their companies to transform. That is the purpose of this scheme—to be able to transform and diversify; to take the opportunities that are out there in the rest of the world and supply the manufacturing industries and primary manufacturing companies that are now elsewhere.

In government our investments ensured that Australia, and South Australia particularly, maintained its automotive industry in the face of the GFC and the high Australian dollar. The schemes we put in place and the approach we had in government was based on the idea of co-investment. They were based on the idea that, if the taxpayer brought in money, the
multinational companies to which the member for Hughes referred would also have to put in money and give assurances about long-term certainty. It was not a handout; it was an investment. Not only was there co-investment in the direct manufacturing sense, to underpin jobs, but we also know the automotive sector was the largest spender on research and development in Australia's manufacturing industry for many years.

For a government that before the election claimed to be able to create a million jobs, they are going about it in an interesting way. The Prime Minister said before the election: 'I want to see car making survive in this country, not just survive but flourish.' Unfortunately, as I recall it, he then went away and left things in the hands of the Treasurer. And what was the Treasurer's treatment of Holden, a company that had in good faith decided to enter into a process started by the Minister for Industry and involving the Productivity Commission? The Treasurer stood up in this place and in the media and goaded Holden—a company which, whether under the ownership of General Motors or as a family company, had for 150 years underpinned the economic fortunes of tens of thousands of Australians.

We oppose this bill because this is the last hope for so many companies and so many thousands of workers to accept what has happened with Holden and Toyota but have the chance to see their company and their industry transform, diversify and create economic opportunity for thousands of families into the future.

Mr GILES (Scullin) (10:51): I rise to join my Labor colleagues in voicing my strong opposition to the legislation before us, the Automotive Transformation Scheme Amendment Bill 2014. Before I go to the provisions of this bill, a bit of context is important.

As the member for Scullin I am very proud that we have strong tradition of manufacturing in Melbourne's northern suburbs. As of the most recent data there were 1,100 people employed in motor vehicle manufacturing and components manufacturing residing in the Scullin electorate. I speak for those people in this place, as have my colleagues from Adelaide, like the member for Port Adelaide, or indeed my colleagues from Melbourne—those from the western suburbs, like the member for Gellibrand and the member for Lalor, or from the south-east, like the member for Hotham. I join them in standing up for our communities—proud manufacturing communities—for whom the automotive industry has been the lifeblood and a source of great pride as well as of good jobs that people could count on.

The other bit of context goes to the nature of work in Australia. I am reminded of Paul Keating's famous statement that:

*When you change the government, you change the country.*

That has, sadly, been prophetic since 7 September last year—most particular, in terms of the nature of work, as we are tracking to become a much less equal society. Good jobs—high-skill, high-wage jobs—are becoming harder and harder to find. This government is unconcerned at best; hostile at worst. I think of the way in which government members speak of childcare workers' push for professional recognition and professional wages in this regard. And while there are some campaigns in civil society—and I think of the Jobs You Can Count On campaign organised by the National Union of Workers but reaching far beyond that union's coverage, and building on the great work done by Brian Howe in terms of the secure jobs inquiry—Australia's government continues its ideological crusade to liberate workers, effectively into insecure working arrangements and insecure lives.
This is not confined to manufacturing. As well as shipbuilding at present, we see the terms and conditions in the jobs of public service workers under threat, notably. But, in recent weeks, the focus in this place from Labor members has rightly been on this government's lack of concern for manufacturing in Australia. In particular, the treatment of the automotive industry has, sadly, been a recurring theme. I have spoken in this sitting period in respect of the impact of the Korea-Australia Free Trade Agreement on this sector. This week, I joined many Labor colleagues in opposing the government's changes to the Fair Entitlements Guarantee scheme—a scheme of disproportionate importance to manufacturing workers. It is something we should think of when we think of the impact of these cuts on components manufacturers.

But, of course, these decisions pale in comparison to the huge cut that is the centrepiece of the legislation before us now. It is a companion piece, as I see it, to the Treasurer's shameful comments effectively daring Holden to leave last year—pushing industry out the door, having dared them to leave.

As Labor's candidate for Scullin last year, I was and remain profoundly affected by my visit to the Ford factory in Broadmeadows—a few kilometres to the west of the Scullin electorate—shortly after Ford's sad decision to cease its Australian operations. Together with the then minister, Greg Combet, and the members for Calwell and McEwen, I listened to proud workers explain what this industry meant to them. It was so much more than just their jobs.

A few days later, I met with automotive students at the wonderful outer-northern Trades Training Centre, Peter Lalor Secondary College. These impressive young women and men had a much stronger sense of their futures than what I had at their age—futures that, a year on, have been dramatically confined through no fault of their own.

I thought of these workers and these students when I spoke in this place for the first time. I spoke then of Melbourne north's proud tradition of manufacturing and of my hopes for an exciting future. Hope is still there, but we need a government, and Melburnians need a government, prepared to rise to this great challenge, not walk away.

I also spoke then of the importance of considering the social consequences of the policy choices governments make. In this, I was pleased to be criticised in the opinion pages of The Australian by Gary Johns. This view was said to be naive and romantic, I think. I ask government members: what is the alternative? Do government members really believe they can divorce themselves from the human consequences of their actions? What will they say to the workers at Ford, to the young men and women at the Peter Lalor Secondary College and to those in components manufacturers in suburbs like Thomastown and Epping?

Unemployment in Victoria, as I speak, is unacceptably high. We are in a jobs crisis in Melbourne—it is as simple as that—with the promise of much worse to come as a direct result of this government's ideological war on manufacturing. This legislation before us will contribute to this, make no mistake. The greatest impact of the collapse of our once great automotive industry will be felt in Victoria. We face the loss of 100,000 jobs—a huge impact on gross state product. There is a likelihood that job numbers will not recover until well into the next decade.
It is more than just the raw numbers when it comes to this jobs challenge we face. I join my colleague and friend, the member for Hotham, in raising the question of the quality of jobs in the context of this debate. And this makes the rhetoric of liberation so offensive. For most of us—and I am pretty sure all of us in this place—what we do defines who we are. This is also the case for every autoworker I have spoken with. It is tragic that government members will not listen to their voices in this debate.

Of course, the challenges facing Australia's automotive industry did not begin with the election of this government. But this government has, through its actions and, sometimes, through inaction, killed off this vital industry. At the conclusion of his second reading speech, Minister Macfarlane spoke of providing certainty. Well, the government that he is a member of has done that now. Having committed before the election to make the industry—in the words of the then opposition leader—'flourish', the government has made certain the death of automotive manufacture in this country, and now it is hurrying it along.

The Automotive Transformation Scheme Amendment Bill amends the Automotive Transformation Scheme Act 2009 in order to give effect to the government's $500 million cut to the ATS over the 2014-15 to the 2017-18 year period, announced as part of MYEFO. The bill also has the effect of terminating the scheme as at 1 January 2018, cutting a further $400 million from the scheme—a budget announcement.

This scheme was, of course, a scheme that Labor introduced in 2009 to encourage investment and, importantly, innovation in the industry. The scheme has provided assistance in the form of co-investment to firms with the production of vehicles and engines, and for investment in R&D and plant equipment. It is a scheme that arose from a proper process—through a review of Australia's automotive industry by the former premier of Victoria, Steve Bracks. In 2009, Senator Wong, who then delivered the second reading speech in support of the legislation, said:

Car making is a cornerstone of Australian manufacturing. It makes a critical contribution to Australian employment, skills, innovation and exports. The automotive industry directly employs more than 52,000 people. This scheme will help to secure these vital jobs as the industry faces intense pressure in the short term as a result of the global economic downturn, as well as the long-term challenge of modernisation and renewal.

She noted also that the automotive industry is also one of Australia's top export earners—despite the effects of the global economic downturn—with exports of $5.8 billion in 2008. I note that this scheme was starting to do some important work, and it particularly touched on the Scullin electorate. I think of the impact on Manumatic in Epping in particular in this regard.

Before the last election, Labor announced A New Car Plan for the 2020s—a vision for the future, to keep making cars in Australia and to keep good jobs in the Australian automotive industry. This included a new program of $300 million per annum to support the transformation of the industry to attract new investment, support research and development and design and engineering from January 2016. Labor's commitments would have seen the motor vehicle producers commit to new investments in Australia and a secure jobs future for thousands of auto manufacturing workers—jobs that are now on the line. Of course, as I said a moment ago, the then Leader of the Opposition said before the election, 'I want to see car-making survive in this country, not just survive but flourish.' I think most people would think
that this would equate to a pledge of support for the car-marking industry, but as has so often been the case, this is a government that said one thing before the election and has done quite the opposite in government.

It is an understatement to say that. A bit over a year since the Prime Minister made that commitment things have changed dramatically, with predictable, and tragic consequences. As others on the Labor side of the House have already pointed out, and those opposite refuse to acknowledge, none of the above was promised before the last election. I think that what has happened in terms of manufacturing has been a tragic story: the conceit of the Productivity Commission review at a time when the manufacturers needed a commitment to maintain operations; the decision in MYEFO, which this legislation gives effect to; the refusal to commit to Labor's co-investment plan; and then, worst of all, the campaign to undermine Holden, culminating in the Treasurer's cajoling statement given in this place.

And, of course, on top of all that and adding insult to injury, they cut $5.1 million from vital skills and training programs for auto workers. We all know how important that is for the workers in our electorate at this time.

Yesterday, I heard the member for Corangamite's attempt to pretend that the government had a jobs plan, when she encouraged people to fill out a petition about jobs. It is as simple as this: a petition is no substitute for a jobs plan. Let's imagine the scene: a worker made redundant from the Ford factory in Geelong, facing huge uncertainty about how his or her family is going to pay their bills. But wait! They have the opportunity to sign a petition from the member from Corangamite about jobs! This is what the coalition does when it does not have a jobs plan. It has no idea what these people are going to do when the factories and the components manufacturers close. None. And they are, in effect, through this bill, hurrying these closures along.

I gave the minister some credit in referring to certainty earlier in my contribution. But one important aspect of this legislation is these cuts; this broken promise has changed the basis on which decisions have been made along the supply chain. I note the warning given by Holden managing director Gerry Dorizas, who said in *The Age* on 14 August:

Suppliers have invested based on the ATS to break even. They needed this kind of subsidy and at this particular time they're in dire straits, …

This is the reason why we're actually very focused on the supplier base because if that happens then nobody will be able to produce cars, …

It is compounding the certain loss of jobs in manufacturing by hurrying these along.

I note the bizarre comments by the minister reported in today's *Australian Financial Review*, where he is quoted as saying:

I did put in $4.3 billion into the automotive industry, but I'm not sure for what outcome to be perfectly frank, …

The outcome under Labor—under a government that cared—was jobs. Jobs that were high-paid, highly skilled and, most importantly, secure. They are being replaced with either no jobs, or low-paid, low-skill, insecure jobs. It is the worst possible outcome for these employees, their families and their communities. The minister went on to describe the government's approach as 'very tough love'. Well, I think that I can say that workers in automotive are not feeling any love. And yet, there is an issue with the rationality of this decision, as well as its morality. Due to government's behaviour, welfare payments and lost
tax revenue from an industry shutdown are projected to exceed $20 billion, and it will be more than 10 years before the economy recovers from the underlying hit to GDP.

As I have said earlier, the more than 1,100 people in Scullin currently employed in motor vehicle and motor-vehicle-part manufacturing deserve better. Decision-makers should always have foremost in their minds a deep appreciation of what job loss means to individuals—the ways in which lives are reshaped for the worse. But this government cannot help itself; it consistently refuses to help the Australian people in need. The auto industry faced challenges. Everyone knows this, but the fact remains that there is not a single car anywhere in the world that is not supported in some way by the government where those cars are made. Australia's automotive industry was, of course, the least supported in the world.

These governments, and until recently the Australian government, supported industry because of the significant and pervasive multiplier effects of having a vibrant and robust manufacturing industry. This government has chosen to walk away unilaterally from these workers for no benefit—for purely ideological reasons. Again, who could forget the sad spectacle of the Treasurer daring the auto manufacturers to leave Australia? I will not and I am sure that the workers in Scullin will not either.

On that note, I echo the words of the member for Throsby, who asked in the context of the debate over the Fair Entitlements Guarantee, 'What is it about automotive workers that makes this government hate them so much? When members opposite called for support for the agriculture sector which has been affected by drought, they had Labor's support, as they should have. And yet all we see is hypocrisy and not reciprocity when it comes to the auto sector. This government knows, as the opposition leader said this morning, the price of everything and the value of nothing.

Ms HALL (Shortland—Opposition Whip) (11:06): I congratulate the member for Scullin on a fine contribution to this debate. He touched on key areas, the areas that are really synonymous with Labor's position when it comes to this Automotive Transformation Scheme Amendment Bill 2014.

The Abbott government was elected as a government that was going to create one million new jobs. The thing that we have seen since the government was elected is that unemployment has risen to over six per cent, and we have seen that over 200,000 jobs are set to go in the automotive industry. That is absolutely unacceptable.

This government is a government of ideologues and it is a government that is driven simply by a desire to please its friends in big business. It is a government that has no vision and no plan for jobs into the future. The only plan that the government has for jobs is to see those jobs going offshore.

The particular legislation we have before us today, the Automotive Transformation Scheme Amendment Bill 2014, amends the Automotive Transformation Scheme Act 2009. It gives effect to the Abbott government's $500 million cut to the ATS over 2014-15 and right up until 2017-18, which was announced as part of the 2013-14 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook. It has the effect of terminating the ATS in January 2018 and cutting a further $400 million from the ATS, which was announced in the budget. This really demonstrates the government's lack of vision and lack of commitment to jobs within Australia. This scheme provides assistance in the form of a co-investment for the production of motor vehicles and
engines and for investment in eligible research and development, plant and equipment. Now we have seen this government's lack of vision when it comes to research and development. The fact is that it does not value research and development. The fact is that its answer to new ideas, new investment, is to move away from supporting industries where with a little bit of vision, a little bit of foresight, a little bit of investment, these industries could flourish. It is not only the automotive industry; it seems to be a policy across the board that this government does not support research and development and will not invest in it.

We on this side of the House strongly oppose this legislation. As I mentioned a moment ago, it will cut $500 million in funding from the ATS between now and 2017, and terminate the scheme at the end of 2017. It really spells disaster to 200,000 Australian men and women. These are Australian men and women who rely indirectly on the automotive manufacturing industry for their jobs. This legislation is about jobs. This legislation is about Australians no longer having jobs—many of whom have worked for 20 years and longer in the industry. These people are highly skilled workers, workers who have developed these skills over a long period of time, and many of those skills are not transferable. Once the car industry closes down it will be difficult for them to retrain, it will be difficult for them to find new jobs. Yet this government says it is committed to creating one million new jobs. This is something that I find unbelievable and its action in relation to the ATS is unforgivable.

It is critical that governments do not pre-empt the closure of the industry and risk early closure of firms before 2017 by reducing available funds. If this happens it will exacerbate the situation that exists at the moment, that this government has created. This government really shows how its ideology pushes its policies. As the member for Scullin said, the opposition supported the government when it came to providing support for rural industries. We know that farmers struggle in times of drought and we can see the benefit to our Australian economy by providing them with support. But unfortunately those on the other side of this House cannot see the benefit of Australia having a car industry, cannot see the benefit of Australia having a manufacturing industry. The shipbuilding industry is another example of this government's failure. It is sending contracts for submarines overseas rather than having them built here in Australia. It is about the—

**Mr Chester:** You're just making that up, Jill.

**Ms HALL:** I hear the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence at the table supporting cuts to jobs in the shipping industry as well as cuts—

**Mr Chester:** Name one job that's been cut.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Randall):** The member for Shortland has the call.

**Ms HALL:** to jobs in the automotive industry. This government does not support Australian jobs. It could have brought forward the frigate contracts so that workers at Forgacs in the Hunter would be able to maintain their jobs and we would have a viable shipbuilding industry, but instead—

**Mr Chester:** Six years and you did nothing on subs.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Can we have some order, please?

**Ms HALL:** this government does not have a vision for the manufacturing industry, does not have commitment to the manufacturing industry. And the more that those on the other side of this House complain and make a noise, the more it convinces me that they are
covering up for their ineptitude and their lack of commitment to Australian jobs in the manufacturing industry. I believe that they stand condemned.

The scheme is critical. It is critical that the scheme be maintained so that governments can work with industry in transition. We do not want to be in a situation where there is early closure as this will create so many more problems. The coalition government, the Abbott government, has gone out of its way to trash Australian automotive capabilities, to trash the automotive industry, to make sure Australian men and women lose their jobs and do not have the support that they need to go forward from here.

Mr Chester: How'd you go with Ford? Who was in government when Ford made their announcement, Jill?

Ms HALL: And—no matter how much protesting we get from the other side of the chamber—this shows that those on the other side of the House have no commitment to those workers who are losing their jobs, have no commitment to the manufacturing industry and have got a very narrow vision for the future of Australia. By cutting hundreds of millions in funding for the ATS, it is now at risk of causing the premature closure of motor vehicle manufacturers and hundreds of firms in the automotive supply chain.

And this is not only about jobs in the car industry of course. It is about those jobs in the industry that supply components to the automotive industry. It means that 50,000 direct Australian jobs in the car industry are at risk and 200,000 jobs that rely indirectly on the industry are in line. These figures are indisputable and they are figures that those on the other side of the House are ignoring. These are real people that will be unemployed.

We certainly hope that none of them are under the age of 30, because they will have to wait six months before they receive any financial assistance under this government's cruel and harsh plan of attack on unemployed people. So on one hand, they are getting rid of jobs and on the other hand they are making it hard for people who are unemployed. It really is a very mean-spirited government with a very narrow vision.

We on this side of the House believe that we need to maintain and fight for an Australian manufacturing industry. We believe that it is very important, as a developed nation with a strong economy, that we do have jobs in areas other than mining and agriculture. That is why we will fight very hard to see that manufacturing jobs remain.

We also believe it is important that we have vital high-tech industries. This legislation really risks the premature closure of these industries. Compare this situation to Labor's record. Labor's approach was based on co-investment and it provided long-term certainty. It was not about handouts; it was about creating long-term viability for the industry. The industry only received support when it invested, and that is the way it should be. It is about research, development and investment and ensuring that we have a long-term viable industry. Before the last election, Labor announced a new car plan for the 2020s to keep making cars in Australia.

I might add that the Prime Minister made some announcements too about the car industry prior to the election. He has certainly backed away from those just as he has backed away from many other announcements and promises he made before the last election, promises like no cuts to health and no cuts to education. One of the statements he made before the last election was:
I want to see car making survive in this country, not just survive but flourish.

The legislation certainly will not be allowing the car industry to flourish in Australia. What it is doing is putting a nail in the coffin of the car industry and in the coffins of all those industries that ride on the back of the car industry. It is also ensuring that many Australians are left without jobs. He made that statement on 21 August 2013. What a difference an election makes! He says one thing before an election and another thing afterwards.

Since the election, the government has not only turned its back on Australian car makers, it has also turned its back on the 50,000 Australians who will lose their jobs. You would expect him to have little bit of empathy, a little bit of concern for those people who are about to lose their jobs, but his approach is somewhat different. Some of those people affected will find it difficult, but many of them, according to the Prime Minister, will probably be ‘liberated to pursue new opportunities and to get on with their lives’. If unemployment is liberating, I would really like to see how that kind of liberation works particularly under the harsh regime that this government is placing on unemployed people.

The impact that this will have will go on and on, but one thing it really demonstrates to me is just a little insight this government has into issues such as manufacturing. It has absolutely no job plan and it does not look to the future when it is making decisions and developing legislation like this. A number of studies have been done in relation to this and there are a number of reports that members on the other side of this House could look at—some by the South Australia university, a number by Allen Consulting and the Automotive Industry Data Card, and the Automotive Transformation Scheme legislation back page actually highlights a couple of areas that the government could go to. This government stands condemned for its attack on workers, its attack on the car industry and on its lack of vision for the future of Australia.

Ms RISHWORTH (Kingston) (11:21): I join with the member for Shortland in rising to oppose this bad legislation, the Automotive Transformation Scheme Amendment Bill 2014. This legislation abandons manufacturing and throws up its hands and says, ‘There is no role for manufacturing in this country. The government sees no role for us in coinvestment with the manufacturers not only of motor vehicles but also, of course, component manufacturing as well. It sees no role for us in the supply chain.’ That is what this bill says and that is what this government is doing. This is ill thought out legislation that shows the ideological nature of this government that at all costs they will not support manufacturing in this country. I sometimes feel very confused by this government. They do not seem to have confidence in the men and women who work in the manufacturing sector. They do not seem to have the confidence that these men and women produce high-quality, world-class products. I invite those opposite to actually visit a component manufacturing plant in my electorate, or indeed anywhere around Australia. There are manufacturing plants doing innovative and exciting automotive component manufacturing right around this country.

The Automotive Transformation Scheme Amendment Bill 2014 rips away $500 million not only from car manufacturing but indeed from assistance and co-investment with component manufacturing. We know that this government chased Holden out of Australia. We know that the Treasurer threw up his hands and goaded them to leave this country. It is appalling that a government that pretended to care about South Australians and pretended to care about auto manufacturing workers not only threw up their hands but also goaded Holden to leave this
country. And, of course, the impact of that decision on South Australia is significant. We know that, despite the Minister for Industry trying his best to convince cabinet to act, the minister was rolled time and time again when it came to the Holden decision.

This bill is another nail in the coffin of the car industry and of co-investment. It really suggests that the government does not believe that there is a role for auto component manufacturers in the global supply chain and that it has no interest in supporting them. This will have a huge impact right around the country. Two hundred thousand workers are either directly or indirectly part of the supply chain. They are employed by car component manufacturers or directly employed by car manufacturers. These are real people with huge amounts of skill. I think that is what the government should remember. These workers have world-class skills that are constantly being ignored and dismissed by the government. I was so disappointed to hear what our Prime Minister said about the 50,000 Australians who will lose their jobs as a result of Holden, Ford and Toyota leaving this country. He said:

Some of them will find it difficult, but many of them will probably be liberated to pursue new opportunities and to get on with their lives.

Doesn't that show our Prime Minister's contempt for the workers in automotive manufacturing? It shows contempt not only for the 50,000 who will lose their jobs directly as a result of Holden, Ford and Toyota leaving this country but also for many workers in my electorate who work at companies like Walker Australia, Tenneco, SMR and Bosch. There are thousands of workers in my electorate who go to work every day. They are proud of the product they manufacture and proud of the work they do. With this bill, this government is saying, 'We are going to abandon you and cut $50 million from co-investment.' The government is abandoning not only the workers but also the small businesses that work very hard to provide innovative and exciting products. We always hear from those opposite that they are the champions of small business. With this bill that is certainly not the case. Indeed, the automotive suppliers have urged the Senate to reject this automotive bill. A press release on 24 September states:

Australian automotive component manufacturers remain steadfastly opposed to the federal government’s intention to cut $500 million of funding from the Automotive Transformation Scheme …

They have made it really clear that as a group they are distressed and upset about the fact that this government has shown no interest in automotive suppliers. So much for being the party of business! And it is not only the automotive suppliers who have urged the Senate to reject this bill; the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries said that reducing the Automotive Transformation Scheme will have serious consequences for 45,000 workers directly employed and more than 100,000 workers indirectly employed in the automotive sector around Australia. They are calling on the government to reject the amendment bill introduced in the House of Representatives and their Chief Executive, Tony Weber, has said that it is important that the government realises the impact that any cut to the scheme would have on the Australian automotive supply chain.

Once again, we see the government not only ignoring and showing contempt for the workers in this industry but also showing complete contempt for businesses in this industry. The government have goaded Holden to leave this country, but you would think that they would then look at the supply chain and say, 'Okay, sure we have chased out one of your biggest customers, but we want to work with you to ensure these small businesses survive.' Of
course, that has not been the response by this government. Not only will this have an impact on thousands of people in my electorate but it will also have a significant impact on the South Australian economy. South Australia has had proud manufacturers for many years. Evidence suggests that, with this government abandoning both car manufacturers and the supply chain, the gross regional product of Adelaide will not recover until 2031—nearly two decades away. Isn’t that appalling?

The government are absolutely walking away from South Australia. Of course, we know that they are walking away from not only automotive manufacturing in South Australia but also the future submarine project. They have now made clear that, despite election promise after promise, they have no intention of building 12 submarines in South Australia. They are walking away from that promise, once again showing that they do not have the confidence in South Australian workers to do the job. They do not have the confidence in the skills and expertise that we have in South Australia to do the job. They should stand condemned for that. The now Minister for Defence made a promise to build 12 submarines, but he has walked away from that again and again. The Prime Minister, who made this promise in Adelaide before the election, has walked away from it again and again, once again showing that not only do they have contempt for auto components manufacturers and the car manufacturing sector but they have contempt for all manufacturing and jobs in South Australia. I have spoken on this many times in the House. I urge the Prime Minister to reconsider if the deal has not already been done; or, even if a deal has been done, rip up that deal and give these jobs to South Australia, because we have the expertise and the know-how.

What is really concerning is: where are the South Australian government members on this issue? Where is the member for Hindmarsh on this issue? He has many, many workers in his electorate. Where are the member for Mayo and the member for Sturt? They are silent on this issue. It is a pity that they do not listen to great minds that have gone before. I do not usually agree with Nick Minchin, previously a senator from South Australia, but even he has recognised the importance of coinvestment in the car industry. He was previously industry minister and he said:

> Australia has over many decades invested in establishing a world-class expertise in car manufacturing which should not lightly be discarded. Our capacity to produce world-class automobiles remains a significant strategic asset.

In terms of government expenditure, support for car manufacturing pales into insignificance compared to the long list of more expensive programs presided over by Canberra.

So it is not just Labor; stalwarts of the Liberal Party recognise the importance of investment in the car-manufacturing industry. Really, Senator Minchin busts the myth that many of those on the other side have been spouting—why should car manufacturing get support over other sectors? No-one else gets support in Canberra. That is just not true. As Nick Minchin said, there are many industries that get support from Canberra. It shows that the government is ill-informed and seems to have an ideological agenda against workers in the car industry. Of course, Nick Minchin could never be thought of as a raging leftie, and some might ask when he made those comments. Was he industry minister and thought it was really important then? No. The comments were published in *The Australian* in November 2013.

So I ask those South Australians who have abandoned the car industry—those members on the government benches—to reconsider this. Stand up for your electorates and stand up for
your state. I send the same message to senators in the other place: stand up for your state of South Australia—and not only on cars. You should stand up for your state of South Australia when it comes to the submarine project, because that is years and years worth of work. But, of course, we have had silence. Weak, weak members from South Australia on the government benches will not stand up for South Australia. They cannot seem to get their message through to the Prime Minister.

We know that the Prime Minister continually abandons South Australia, and not only when it comes to cars or submarines; now we hear that he is going to rip the GST revenue away from South Australia. We already know that he has ripped about $655 million from our hospitals, but he seems to have a plan to do much more. Where are the South Australian members in this debate? They have been silent. We know that some are ideologically driven, but the member for Hindmarsh especially should stand up for workers in his electorate, stand up for businesses in his electorate, argue with the Prime Minister and get the government to change this ill-fated decision.

As alluded to by former Senator Minchin, this is not a handout to automotive manufacturing. I have seen firsthand how coinvestment can ensure that businesses thrive. I refer to REDARC in my electorate, an innovative business who, after the closure of Mitsubishi, which affected my electorate significantly, received government assistance in the form of a coinvestment. They invested, the government helped them invest and now they employ many, many people. They do R&D on site, they have sales on site and they are constantly winning awards for the innovative niche manufacturing that they do. This would not have been completely possible without coinvestment from the government. That is what coinvestment can do. It can unleash support for jobs, and the benefit to our economy is manifold. It grows exponentially once government invests, and we saw that time and time again with the work that Labor did in government to build jobs.

That takes me to my final point. If the government are going to abandon the car industry and abandon work on the submarines and the defence industry in Australia, where is their plan for jobs? They get asked this over and over again. The poor Minister for Industry wants to have an industry plan that supports industry to grow and thrive, including automotive manufacturing and other advanced manufacturing. He wants that plan; we know he does. He might not be able to say it in this parliament and he might not be able to say it publicly, but we can see the look on his face. He wants to support industry, but, of course, he cannot get it through his cabinet and he gets rolled every single time. It is time for backbenchers to stand up and support this industry minister. They need to get behind him because it is their electorates that are suffering. It is not the Treasurer's electorate that is suffering; it is not the Prime Minister's electorate that is suffering; it is the backbenchers' electorates that are suffering. They need to get behind this industry minister and show support for manufacturing in this country.

Ms CLAYDON (Newcastle) (11:36): I rise today to join with my Labor colleagues in our strong opposition to the Automotive Transformation Scheme Amendment Bill 2014. This bill seeks to amend the Automotive Transformation Scheme Act 2009 and gives effect to the Abbott Liberal government's $500 million cut to the Automotive Transformation Scheme, or ATS. In addition, this bill also has the effect of terminating the ATS on 1 January 2018, cutting a further $400 million from the ATS, leaving absolutely no support for surviving
component companies. If this bill is passed here in this House it will spell disaster not only for
the 50,000 Australians who are directly employed in the auto industry—and they are people
who are spread across the three automotive manufacturers: Ford, Toyota and Holden—but
also the 150 component manufacturers there. You are looking at a range of at least 200,000
jobs that are on the line if this bill is passed here today.

The ATS is a legislative scheme that has encouraged investment and innovation in the
Australian automotive industry. It provides assistance in the form of co-investment to firms
for the production of motor vehicles and engines and, just as importantly, for investment in
eligible R&D, plant and equipment. Indeed, when it comes to R&D, we know it is the auto
industry that is the largest R&D contributor in the Australian manufacturing sector. It is
contributing almost $700 million annually in important research and development that enables
our manufacturing sector to be increasingly more sophisticated and high tech in the work they
do here in Australia.

We know that the automotive industry is leaving Australia now. The Treasurer himself
made it very clear when he stood up in this House and goaded those industries to leave our
country. He made it very clear last December that they were not welcome here anymore, but it
is critical that governments do not pre-empt the closure of the industry and risk the early
closure of firms before 2017 by reducing available funding. Further, the proposed early
closure of the ATS ignores the reality that many dozens of component manufactur-
ing companies, employing thousands of workers, will still exist post 2017.

The legislation we are debating here today confirms the Abbott Liberal government's
hostility to Australian auto companies and workers. Cutting hundreds of millions of dollars in
funding from the ATS now risks causing, as I said, the premature closure of motor vehicle
producers and the hundreds of firms in the automotive supply chain, sending thousands of
Australian jobs offshore long before the previously proposed date of 2017. This means that
the 50,000 direct Australian jobs in the car industry are at risk and, according to a study
conducted by the National Institute of Economic and Industry Research, a further 200,000
jobs which rely indirectly on this industry are also at risk. That is more than 30,000 jobs in
Queensland, about 24,000 in South Australia, 32,000 in New South Wales, 11,000 in Western
Australia, 800 or so in the Northern Territory and ACT combined and nearly 2,000 in
Tasmania, but it is a staggering 98,483 jobs in
Victoria. Why have we not heard every
backbencher opposite from Victoria screaming about the 98,483 jobs that are set to be lost by
this government and this legislation? The numbers are truly astounding and are a horrible
indictment on this government. These are not workers being liberated as the Prime Minister
would have us believe; these are men and women whose livelihoods are being ripped clean
away from them.

I stand alongside my Labor colleagues today in our fight to maintain Australian
manufacturing capabilities and jobs while members opposite have given up. They are sitting
back, seemingly unperturbed by the apparent pre-emptive closure of this vital high-tech
industry and the multiple risks associated with the early closure of firms before 2017—early
closures that are inevitable as this government continues to cut available funds. Labor will do
everything in our power to stop these cuts to the Automotive Transformation Scheme, and we
call on the crossbenchers, the minor parties and those courageous backbenchers opposite to
stand up for Australian jobs and manufacturing and to block these cuts up in the Senate.
Unlike the Abbott Liberal government, Labor believes there is a future for manufacturing in Australia, and the automotive industry, like the shipbuilding industry in my electorate, is very much a part of that future. In government, Labor's investments ensured that Australia maintained its auto industry in the face of the global financial crisis, global industry restructuring and a record high Australian dollar. The New Car Plan for a Greener Future, announced in November 2008, provided $5.4 billion of co-investment support from 2010 through to 2020. The centrepiece of the plan was the Automotive Transformation Scheme, which provides $3 billion. Labor's approach was based on co-investment and providing long-term certainty. It is not a handout as some members opposite have suggested; the industry only receives support when it invests.

Before the election, Labor announced a new car plan for the 2020s to keep making cars in Australia and to keep jobs in the Australian automotive industry. This included a new program of $300 million per annum to support the transformation of the industry to attract new investment and support research and development, design and engineering from January 2016. Labor's commitments would have seen the motor vehicle producers commit to new investments in Australia and a future for the thousands of auto manufacturing jobs that are now on the line—those thousands of jobs that will hang around this government's neck if this legislation is passed.

In his contribution to this debate the member for Paterson in my region—the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Industry, I might add—said that members on this side of the House had no understanding of how to create sustainable industry. I take this opportunity to remind the parliamentary secretary that he is overseeing the end of automotive manufacturing industry in Australia and it is his government that tried to kill off our food processing industry. It is also his government that is wielding the axe over the shipbuilding industry and renewable energy sectors, through its actions and broken promises.

The parliamentary secretary and the Minister for Industry have obviously got their portfolio books upside down. Let me help them: your job is to secure and support industry in Australia, not kill it off. These are all industries that would have a future in Australia if Labor was in government. They are industries that may have thought they had a future under this Abbott Liberal government. The Prime Minister said in August last year before being elected, 'I want to see car-making survive in this country—not just survive, but flourish.' The now defence minister also gave assurances last year on local ABC radio 1233 in my city of Newcastle, when he famously said, before the election: I get really fired up when I find us giving away our manufacturing base in the Defence space to foreign manufacturers. It’s just not on.

He also said in May last year:
We will deliver those submarines from right here at ASC in South Australia. The coalition today is committed to building 12 new submarines here in Adelaide.

The defence minister's memory is clearly fading. Yesterday, in Senate question time, when pressed on the issue of submarine manufacture in Australia, the minister said:
… there is no contract, no commitment and no obligation on the government to do anything with respect to submarines in Adelaide.
This is a government that is evidently not true to its word. Its words are worth nothing. It is a government that deceived the Australian people to get elected and it is a government that is now taking a wrecking ball to the Australian manufacturing industry.

I want to take this opportunity to say a bit more about these so-called commitments of the Abbott Liberal government to defence manufacturing, and the effects of this betrayal on my community of Newcastle. Family owned shipbuilder Forgacs, one of Newcastle’s largest employers, could not have been more clear in their warnings that they would have to close their shipyards at Carrington and Tomago next year, 2015, laying off more than 900 highly skilled tradesmen and women, unless the federal government expedited decisions on future naval shipbuilding projects and started a genuine effort to allocate work to Australian manufacturers.

They were not asking for a hand-out. They were not asking for favours. They could happily compete in an open tendering process—providing, of course, there was a level playing field for that tendering process. Forgacs have already had to let more than 100 employees go as work on the current AWD contract tapered off. The lack of interest from this government on that front has been profound. I have met with the Forgacs management team on a regular basis, as has, at my invitation, the Leader of the Opposition, shadow defence minister, the shadow assistant defence minister, and the members for Shortland and Charlton. At the Tomago shipyard we have all met with the men and women who are building Australia’s air warfare destroyers.

Forgacs is an employer that does not want to give up, even when in danger of closing, and they still employ more than 80 apprentices and continue to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on training and improvements every month. Yet this may all be to no avail. Forgacs and other shipbuilders in Australia have been unjustly maligned in commentary by the Minister for Defence and others when it comes to the AWD build. However, as a recent Australian National Audit Office confirmed, there was a decision made to build the AWDs here in Australia and to pay a premium so that this Australian shipbuilding industry could be built up, an adequately skilled workforce assembled, the capital invested and the industry brought to world-class levels in terms of quality and production.

Having now paid that premium—Australian taxpayers have already paid to have all of that capacity—and got the industry into a world-class position, we now see the government totally abandoning that investment at precisely the moment when this investment should come good. But instead of realising that capacity and committing to a rolling build of frigates and submarines here in Australia, this government is instead sending those jobs offshore. That is right—they deliberately locked out Australian shipbuilders from bidding for contracts for the two new supply ships earlier this year, citing an inability for Australian builders to undertake the work. That is a claim that was strongly refuted by shipbuilders, unions, the workforce and by others at a recent Senate inquiry into the decision by the government to exclude Australian manufacturers from that tendering process.

And in recent weeks we have seen evidence that the Abbott Liberal government now plans to send submarine contracts to Japan. That will mean more jobs going off shore. Thousands of highly skilled jobs in the ship-building industry are at risk across the country, including 910 workers in Newcastle, because the Abbott government is sending jobs offshore. When the
Prime Minister said he would create one million new jobs we thought they would be in Australia, not overseas.

I urge the government to abandon the bill before us. It is bad for Australian industry. It is bad for Australian jobs. Unlike the Abbott Liberal government, Labor believes there is a future for manufacturing in Australia, and the automotive industry is a large part of that future.

Ms BURKE (Chisholm) (11:51): I also rise to speak on the Automotive Transformation Scheme Amendment Bill 2014, and I stand amazed that we are talking about a scheme that proposes to make a $500 million cut to the Automotive Transformation Scheme over 2014-15 to 2017-18, when we need it the most. We are going through the most significant transformation we have ever seen in the auto industry, and we are now proposing to cut much-needed funds from a scheme that was there to assist these individuals in transition. It just seems outrageous. It was not enough for this government to just sit on their hands and watch Australia's car industry die; they had to get in there and clobber it to death as it takes its last gasps and its last breaths. I was astounded to see the Treasurer in the days leading up to the agreement with Ford and Holden literally teasing them to leave the country—and then they did. Surprise, surprise! The Treasurer of the day said, 'Like it or leave it,' and they left it. But what have they left? Literally hundreds of thousands of people without jobs.

I watched the manufacturing job losses in my community under the Howard government. Now history is not only repeating under the Abbott Liberals; it is going even further. The bill proposes to completely terminate the ATS from 1 January 2018. The Automotive Transformation Scheme, ATS, is a legislative scheme that encourages investment and innovation in the Australian automotive industry. This scheme provides assistance in the form of co-investment to firms for the production of motor vehicles and engines, for investment in eligible R&D and for plant and equipment. By cutting the ATS the coalition government is cutting livelihoods away from Australian workers—not from overseas manufacturers but from Australian workers. Nationwide, we will see 198,826 jobs lost, with the greatest impact in my home state of Victoria, where an estimated 100,000 jobs will be lost. Already in my state we have the highest rates of unemployment we have seen in decades, and no jobs on the horizon. That is the tragedy of this whole endeavour: we are losing an industry which is vital but there is nothing to replace it. Where are these 100,000 individuals to transition to? By cutting this scheme it means that you do not want them to transition anywhere and, by virtue of the social security legislation that we have also been talking about in this place today, you want to transport them not onto some form of benefit but into poverty.

My electorate of Chisholm will be one of the hardest hit as a result of the abolition of the ATS. Many will find this hard to believe, but my electorate is home to some of the largest car component manufacturers in the country, employing around 5,000 in companies such as Unidrive, whose skilled toolers make the drive shafts, drive trains and other components for Ford, Toyota and Holden. I have had the pleasure of visiting Unidrive on many occasions. This has been a thriving, innovative business that has won accolades here and throughout the world. Indeed, Toyota set up a design skill plant and an innovation centre there, because they were doing such great things at the plant in Clayton. Without these car manufacturers, Unidrive are losing most of their business and, subsequently, most of their jobs. While they do have a significant export business providing parts for Corvette, they are deeply concerned
that without the support of the local supply chain and with the decrease in local demand they will not be able to get the products they need at a competitive price to support their export business. Indeed, their export business may dry up as well. This is a company that has worked hard to diversify. They employ skilled individuals whose jobs are under threat and this government has no intention of offering any form of assistance or protection.

There is also TRICO Products, who make windscreen wipers; Moss products, who make plastic components; Premoso, who provide apparel and trimmings; MtM Auto and what is left of Robert Bosch in Australia—which has been in significant decline for a long period. While only part of Robert Bosch's business is in the automotive industry, this was a thriving, huge business and, again, I visited many times. You used to go into this sea of a carpark, over acres of space at the end of my electorate. Now you would be lucky to see a tiny part of the carpark filled with cars. This is a tragedy. The absolute tragedy of these losses in my electorate is that these businesses will shut, the factories will go, and housing will be put up. Why is that an issue? Because there are no jobs in those houses. I have seen this time and time again in my electorate. I have spoken of it many times in respect of what was Brockhoffs when I was growing up but Arnott's when it shut down—the biscuit factory, another manufacturing hub in my electorate. At Moss there were 500 jobs on site; there were about 1,000 jobs in all when it went downstream. The factory shut and it is now, I think, about 150 homes. So instead of having jobs where people live, where people can transport and where people want to be, the jobs have gone and houses have gone up but no replacement factory has come onstream anywhere—certainly not in my electorate.

I also have the Toyota Technical Centre in Notting Hill in my electorate, which employs about 150 people. It is a centre that does not manufacture anything but does major engineering work to support Toyota's global operations. It is centred in Notting Hill, obviously near Monash University and CSIRO, and works in collaboration with this great design hub, engineering and innovation in my electorate. It is a centre that should not have to close but from 2017 it will be significantly scaled back with rounds of redundancies and only limited operations. This is groundbreaking work that we are also losing high value, high end technology.

The automotive industry has been a key pathway for engineers in this country and there are no jobs, programs or industries waiting for these people. So it is not just people on the manufacturing floor. It is the whole supply chain in this area of employment. This government has no plans to ensure that a new pathway for engineers is developed that will ensure their skills can be utilised in this country. This is not only a major loss for the individuals whose jobs will be affected, but for our entire country. We will lose vital skills and, as we know, once we lose skills it is very hard to get them back.

Nationwide, 200,000 Australian men and women rely indirectly on the auto manufacturing industry for their jobs. These fields range from metal manufacturing to scientific services. The termination of the ATS leaves no support for surviving components companies and research schemes, such as the newly developed manufacturing innovation precinct at Monash University in Clayton in my electorate. Cutting hundreds of millions in funding from the ATS now risks causing the premature closure of motor vehicle producers and the hundreds of firms in the automotive supply chain, sending thousands of Australian jobs offshore—long before 2017. The current government has only looked at the figures it will save in the short term and
ignored the previous achievements and long term gains that can be made from the Australian Automotive Industry.

There are only 13 countries worldwide, including Australia, that can make a car from start to finish, and every one of them has a subsidised industry—every single one. The Australian contribution to the automotive industry is significantly lower than that of any other country. It costs $17.40 per capita to support our car industry in Australia, compared to $90 for every German taxpayer, $264 for every American and $334 for every Swede. How often do we talk about what is going on in Germany and Sweden, the success stories? This is a success story that we do not want to replicate, that indeed we are actually cutting off. It is not fair for our car industry to just be left out in the cold and asked to compete in this heavily subsidised and protected global market. No industry could compete on those terms.

And what of our future science and research? The automotive industry is the largest R&D contributor in the Australian manufacturing sector, contributing almost $700 million annually. That flows beyond the automotive areas. It goes into many other manufacturing sectors. This will also be lost. Reports from both academia and industry show that it would cost the government more to see the industry fail than it ever would to support it. Modelling from the University of Adelaide shows that the loss of the industry will lead to a negative annual shock of $29 billion by 2017, or about two per cent of GDP. This is just ridiculous. Why don't we ever look at the long term? How do we grow our economy and create jobs in the face of such devastating damage? A report by the Allen Consulting Group highlighted that, from the $500 million investment by the government in the automotive industry, the economy enjoys a $21.5 billion increase in size. We get back more than we put in. This equates to a return of $934 per person in this country.

The figure of $21.5 billion excludes the extra benefit of spillovers into other parts of the economy. Some of these spillovers include technology transfers through R&D innovation, lean management techniques and applications, and advanced labour skills and manufacturing techniques. The automotive industry benefits the broader economy through its extensive linkages with other parts of the economy like heavy engineering, tool making, aerospace and marine. Such spillovers benefit the economy in ways that are recognised by industry leaders around the nation. The Allen Consulting Group paper confirmed that the chief executives of companies like Boeing, BHP Billiton, Rio Tinto and Coca-Cola Amatil have each directly related the success of their own businesses to the skills and expertise gleaned from the automotive industry in Australia.

The Prime Minister often uses the phrase 'Team Australia'. How is putting hundreds of thousands of people out of jobs and pushing lucrative automotive research off our shores aligned with the 'Team Australia' sentiment? Not that I really want to be associated with the notion of 'Team Australia', but I just do not know how the Prime Minister thinks that this action will lead to an inclusive society. This is not an inclusive society. It is therefore equally critical that the scheme is maintained so the government can work with the industry in transition, rebuild jobs and maintain capabilities. Otherwise 50,000 direct Australian jobs in the car industry will be at risk and a further 200,000 jobs which rely indirectly on this industry will be on the line.

The government can talk about retraining, new skills and workplace transitions until the cows come home, but every worker facing redundancy knows that retraining is just a furphy.
They know that the jobs they are being retrained for do not exist, industry knows they do not exist and the government knows they do not exist, but the government is not prepared to do anything that will actually help, like creating jobs. In fact, despite the Prime Minister saying he wants to 'deliver support for the workers', the paltry $100 million the Abbott government has committed to this so-called growth fund for the auto industry does not include a single cent to help auto workers retrain and reskill. The government's own website confirms that the element of the growth fund allocated to retraining auto workers is made up entirely of contributions from GM Holden and Toyota. So much for the Prime Minister's promise during the election:

I want to see car-making survive in this country, not just survive but flourish.

A great way of making something flourish—killing it off! This was just another cruel lie to get this government elected.

Labor, on the other hand, provided support to keep the automotive industry in the country in order to attract new investments, new models and new capacity. While in government, Labor committed to a New Car Plan for the 2020s to keep car making in Australia and to maintain jobs in the Australian automotive industry. This included a new program of $300 million per annum to support the transformation of the industry to attract new investment and support research and development, design and engineering from January 2016. Labor understood the pressures the automotive sector was under from increased overseas competition and the high Australian dollar. In response to this, Labor pledged a $1 billion Australian Jobs Plan whilst in government that had been designed to assist industry with these pressures.

The proposed abolition of the ATS is not only heartless but also poorly considered. Welfare payments and lost tax revenue from an industry shutdown are projected to exceed $20 billion, and it will be more than 10 years before the economy recovers from the underlying hit to the GDP. If the current government's agenda is to go into surplus, how is this change to legislation achieving it? It might be a one-cut wonder now, but it will actually cause more pain in the future.

More importantly, the current government is not looking out for the welfare of Australian workers. How can they expect people who have only ever worked in the automotive industry, who have worked in that industry for many years, to retrain and enter a new industry? Again, I go back to the example of when Arnott's shut down. These were lifelong bakers. They were lifelong production workers. They were families. They were husbands and wives, kids, entire generations. There were no other jobs for them to transition to. They talked about reskilling, retraining or moving to Queensland. None of that was on offer. I know several of these people. This was many years ago and they are still without full-time ongoing employment. Apart from being uncompassionate, this just goes to show how out of touch the Liberal government is with Australian workers and the current state of the unemployment landscape. I condemn this legislation.

Mr IAN MACFARLANE (Groom—Minister for Industry) (12:06): I thank members from both sides of the House who have spoken on this bill. The Automotive Transformation Scheme Amendment Bill gives effect to the government's decision to reduce funding for the Automotive Transformation Scheme by $500 million and to terminate it on 1 January 2018, following the close of the automotive manufacturing industry here in Australia. The
government took to the 2013 election a commitment to reduce the ATS by $500 million, so comments from those opposite about the government's behaviour in relation to this industry are completely untrue.

In light of the decisions made by the three motor vehicle producers to cease manufacturing—Ford Australia made that decision in October 2016 whilst the previous government was in power and we saw General Motors Holden and Toyota Australia make their decision subsequently in 2013 to end their production at the end of 2017—ATS assistance from 2018 will no longer be required for the industry. The ATS savings will in total reach $900 million. That will be directed at repairing the budget bottom line and funding other government policies and other government policy priorities. The government will continue to support the automotive manufacturing industry through the ATS. Approximately $700 million is still available under the ATS over the four financial years from 2014-15. However, ATS participants need certainty to make business planning and decisions. The passage of this bill will provide certainty to ATS participants on the level of funding assistance available for the final three years of the ATS.

Those opposite have been reeling off some spurious facts and figures in this debate.

Mr Snowdon interjecting—

Mr IAN MACFARLANE: The per capita figures they have been reeling off are misleading, because on a per capita basis Australia produces many fewer cars than other nations. I will now put some facts on the table, particularly for the benefit of the member for Lingiari. The Productivity Commission estimates of the automotive industry received $30 billion in government support between 1997 and 2012 through both tariffs and budgetary support. From 1997 to 2012 there were 5,186,765 vehicles manufactured in Australia. This equates to $5,784 per vehicle of government support during this period. These are cold hard facts. They cannot be disputed by those who sit opposite.

Mr Snowdon interjecting—

Mr IAN MACFARLANE: Member for Lingiari, I am happy to provide the proof. We are also working with the Australian industry to create sustainable opportunities in industries in which Australians can compete at a global market level. This government's focus is on the new opportunities for the future. The best way to support industries and communities in transition is to lay out a clear framework for new opportunities and new jobs. The government is focused on assisting the industry to transition from automotive manufacturing to other areas of manufacturing post-2017. That is why we established the $155 million Growth Fund to help workers find new and better jobs. That that $155 million is in addition to the $700 million that is available under the ATS going forward. We have established the fund to help workers find new and better jobs, businesses to diversify into new markets and invest in capital equipment, and regions to invest in infrastructure projects.

We believe in a future for Australian manufacturing that is integrated into global supply chains and competes by making the best use of our knowledge and skills. By transitioning Australian business into these industries where we have competitive edge we will make best use of our nation's investment in R&D. Again, to put some facts on the table, manufacturing industry makes the largest contribution to business expenditure on R&D, with $4.5 billion invested in the year 2011-12. Within that total it is the machinery and equipment...
manufacturing sector that makes the largest single contribution, followed by transport equipment manufacturing. This investment will pay dividends when industry and researchers collaborate more frequently, utilising the existing skills base and combining it with creativity and innovative thinking to develop new products and new markets. This will be the focus of our industry policy agenda going forward, which will target Australia's strengths and identify ways to foster national competitiveness and productivity to create sustainable long-term jobs. By focusing on our areas of competitive strength, Australia will be well placed to develop the opportunities and industries that have for us a long-term future. I commend the bill to the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that the bill be read a second time.

The House divided. [21:16]

(The Deputy Speaker—Hon. Ross Vasta)

Ayes ......................78
Noes ......................52
Majority ..................26

AYES

Alexander, JG
Andrews, KL
Billson, BF
Briggs, JE
Broadbent, RE
Chester, D
Ciobo, SM
Coleman, DB
Dutton, PC
Fletcher, PW
Gillespie, DA
Griggs, NL
Hawke, AG
Hendy, PW
Hogan, KJ
Hutchinson, ER
Jensen, DG
Joyce, BT
Kelly, C
Landry, ML
Ley, SP
Marino, NB
Matheson, RG
Morrison, SJ
O'Dowd, KD
Pitt, KJ
Prentice, J
Pyne, CM
Randall, DJ
Roy, WB
Scott, BC
Simpkins, LXL
Southcott, AJ
Sukkar, MS

Andrews, KJ
Baldwin, RC
Bishop, JI
Broad, AJ
Buchholz, S (teller)
Christensen, GR
Cobb, JK
Coulton, M (teller)
Entsch, WG
Gambaro, T
Goodenough, IR
Hartsuyker, L
Henderson, SM
Hockey, JB
Howarth, LR
Irons, SJ
Jones, ET
Keenan, M
Laming, A
Laundy, C
Macfarlane, IE
Markus, LE
McCowan, C
Nikolic, AA
O'Dwyer, KM
Porter, CC
Price, ML
Ramsey, RE
Robert, SR
Ruddock, PM
Scott, FM
Smith, ADH
Sudmalis, AE
Taylor, AJ
Question agreed to.
Bill read a second time.

**Third Reading**

*Mr IAN MACFARLANE* (Groom—Minister for Industry) (12:22): by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.
Bill read a third time.
Customs Amendment (Korea-Australia Free Trade Agreement Implementation) Bill 2014

Customs Tariff Amendment (Korea-Australia Free Trade Agreement Implementation) Bill 2014

Returned from Senate

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

Australian Education Amendment Bill 2014

Second Reading

Debate resumed on the motion:
That this bill be now read a second time.

Ms KATE ELLIS (Adelaide) (12:23): I rise to speak on the Australian Education Amendment Bill 2014 today. As with every opportunity to comment on what this government has been doing in the education space, particularly in the school space, sadly, this is yet another example of the betrayal, the deception and the short-sighted stupidity which this government puts into place when it comes to the important issue of the importance of our schools.

If the government had simply kept the promises that they made to the Australian public at the last election, we would not need to be here today, considering many of the parts of this bill. If the government had simply kept their promise to deliver the full disability loading in 2015, we would not need to consider amendments relating to funding for independent special schools. If the government had any sort of clear vision for schools policy and if they actually cared at all about what happens in Australian classrooms, I would not need to be standing up here today, defending the Gonski reforms, standing up for students with disability and arguing for transparency and accountability in our schools funding—something that you would think that all sides of politics could agree on.

In terms of the specifics of the bill before the House, this bill establishes a mechanism to allow the minister to make payments to schools for a reason prescribed by regulation. The government has announced that this will facilitate the payment of around $6.8 million in support to boarding schools in 2014-15, but at this stage it has not provided any funding beyond that period. This will assist schools with more than 50 Indigenous boarders from remote communities or where more than 50 per cent of boarders are Indigenous and come from remote communities. We, of course, support this measure. We know that this is just one of many steps that the government must take to close the gap in the school education.

It is also Labor's position that the first focus of the government should be to make sure that every school is a great school and that every child should have the resources and support to achieve their best, no matter where they live, what school they attend or what opportunities they are given. This is the central principle behind the Gonski reforms. It absolutely applies to schools in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and it is these schools that we must not overlook; we must not just focus on those Indigenous students who have the opportunity to go and stay in boarding schools at existing independent schools. Supporting boarding schools cannot be used as an argument to leave schools and communities behind. On
this side of the House, we will continue to fight for those schools and to ensure that we have quality and great schools no matter where they will be.

We know that closing the gap in the educational attainment of Indigenous Australians requires a focus not just on boarding schools but on every school single bush school and every single remote classroom. I know that my colleague the member for Lingiari, who joins me in the chamber today, has been a long-term passionate advocate of this cause. It is something that Labor is absolutely committed to. But, for those students and those communities, who want to use them, boarding schools are part of the solution. For a whole lot of practical reasons, particularly in high school, boarding does have an important role to play in helping Indigenous students access subject choices and the opportunities that can only be provided in a larger school. Support for Indigenous students to attend boarding schools is consistent with Labor's policies in government. Therefore, in the parliament today we support this measure.

This bill also changes the funding transition rules for independent special schools so that their funding is not worse off from next year. It is a change that this parliament would not need to consider and that would not need to be brought before us if the government had kept the very clear promise that they made to implement the full Gonski disability loading for 2015 and to allocate additional resources from that time. We know that, as part of the important school reforms that the Gonski review came up with, there were six additional funding loadings: one for small schools, one for remote schools, one for Indigenous students, one for students with low English, one for students from disadvantaged backgrounds and, importantly, one for students with disability. These loadings were fully defined when the Australian Education Act was introduced, with the exception of the loading for students with disability. We knew that the full implementation of the loading for students with disability was scheduled for 2015. This was to allow time for data collection and further collaboration with the states and school systems to ensure that the final disability loading would give students the resources they needed.

We know that this was a big job. Definitions of the disabilities that attract extra support vary significantly across the different states and territories, and so does the average level of support which is delivered in those jurisdictions. There are ranges from $4,000 to $40,000 per student. Labor funded the $100-million-per-year More Support for Students with Disabilities program to make sure that those students who need the most assistance got the assistance that they needed while work continued to finalise the full Gonski disability loading in 2015.

Before the election, this process, just like the Gonski school funding reforms, had bipartisan support. Those opposite stood before the Australian public and offered support. The education minister promised:

If elected to Government the Coalition will continue the data collection work that has commenced, which will be used to deliver more funding for people with disability through the 'disability loading' in 2015.

That promise was clear and that promise was straightforward. However, students with disability, along with their parents and their carers and their teachers and their principals and their fellow classmates, have been utterly betrayed by this government. In one of the most shameful moves that they have made amongst a crowded field in the education space, they walked away from the students who need that support the most—students with disabilities. That is something for which they should be condemned.
We know that, in this year's budget, the government cut the $100-million More Support for Students with Disabilities program and failed to replace it with the promised additional funds. At the same time, stakeholders are reporting that the government has dropped the ball on the finalisation of the Gonski disability loading. There has been almost no consultation and, when consultation has occurred, it has been rushed and it has been secretive. This means that neither the promised additional funding nor the promised full Gonski loading for students with disability will be implemented next year, and students with disability will have $100 million in support cut next year. This government has been absolutely shameless in pretending that black is white and in rewriting history, in sliding away from its very clear commitments on schools.

However, the most heartless of all broken promises in education is undoubtedly the broken promise to fund the full Gonski disability loading from 2015. The government made many promises to get elected, and then they cut support for students with disability in the budget—and we on this side will not let them forget, or the Australian public forget, and we will keep fighting for these students who need us. Labor will not stand in the way of measures within this bill ensuring that funding flows to independent special schools next year, but we will absolutely be taking the government to task on their broken promises for students with disability.

This bill also seeks to delay, by at least a year, the implementation of school improvement plans. This was a very important component of the school funding reforms—that there would be additional dollars, but there would be school improvement plans to outline exactly how those dollars were being used to improve the education that was offered to students in those schools. While the government will say that this is about tackling bureaucracy, this is really about watering down accountability and getting rid of transparency. It is another step in this government's so-called no-strings-attached approach to school funding, because we know that school improvement plans, at their very heart, are about making sure that the money invested in schools by the federal government actually reaches classrooms—that it actually improves students' results. This is a vital part of the school reforms and our school system. These plans are not about ticking boxes. There are no forms. The evidence that sits behind them has been independently developed and endorsed by all states and territories, Liberal and Labor. It is galling hypocrisy that, on the one hand, the education minister will prance in here and say that money does not matter—that it is not money that makes the difference—but, on the other hand, he does not care if schools actually deliver the reforms which have been proven to boost results.

We could take for example the current situation in Victoria. Despite claiming to be delivering the Gonski reforms, the Victorian Premier has shrouded school funding in secrecy. Victorians do not know if funding is reaching classrooms, and principals have simply no idea if they are getting the needs based funding their school was promised. Instead of following through on Gonski reforms and putting an end to this confusion, the government has decided that they want to keep parents, teachers and principals in the dark, and this Prime Minister is doing absolutely all he can to help out his mate the Victorian Premier to fudge the books and avoid having to prove that every dollar is reaching those schools and those students who need it the most.
It is not just me who is worried about accountability. It is not just me who will argue that this so-called no-strings-attached formula means that we do not know if the dollars are reaching the schools and the students who need them the most. I look towards this media release—not from a particular close friend of mine, but from the Hon. Campbell Newman, as well as his education minister, who has stated, as recently as last week:

Queensland is the only state or territory in Australia that is giving every single cent of this funding directly to schools.

The Queensland Liberal government are saying that funding is not reaching the schools for which it is intended, and this government, through this piece of legislation, is trying to cover that fact up so that there is no transparency and no accountability.

I would not rule out the possibility of making some changes that might make the process easier for schools. That could be a good thing. But that should not come at the expense of the accountability of billions of dollars of federal investment, or at the expense of the central principle of the Gonski reforms—that funding should be based on need and should drive real improvement in the classroom.

That brings me to our fundamental concerns about the government's weathervane approach to schools policy. This is a government that simply does not know where it stands on schools policy. Worse than that, this is a government which apparently does not care at all about schools policy. We know that, since the Gonski report was handed down, they have been prepared to shamelessly adopt any position, to adopt several positions, to make any statement, or to say anything that they think will sound good in that particular 24-hour news service. They do not have values, they do not look at evidence and they have absolutely no vision for Australian schools—which is why we have seen the education minister simply making it up as he goes along.

The coalition's schools policy has been an utter comedy of errors since the Gonski report was released, and it would probably be a little bit funny if it were not for the fact that the consequences are just so serious. If I were to simply describe the contradictions and the backflips, I do not think anyone would believe me. I do not think anyone would believe that one minister could have as many different positions as our very own education minister has put forward, but there have been no fewer than nine positions adopted by the government since the Gonski report was handed down. So I will tell the story in their own words—in the words of the Prime Minister and in the words of the education minister. This parliament can see for themselves that we have a government which is clueless when it comes to schools policy but, worse than that, we have a government which is actively destroying school reforms which have been fought for and hard won.

In government Labor commissioned a review into school funding led by David Gonski. It was the biggest review this country has had into school funding in over 40 years. We know that the review panel received more than 7,000 submissions, they visited 39 schools and they consulted 71 key education groups across Australia. This review identified the problems we face in our schools—growing inequality, falling results, increasing numbers of low-performing students and the decreasing numbers of high-performing students. It set all of this against the backdrop of better school results in many of our neighbouring countries.

This report was painstakingly researched. It was backed by evidence and the Gonski panel handed down a report which was fiercely independent and was in absolutely no way partisan.
It was a moment of truth. It was an opportunity for genuine reform in our schools. It outlines the challenges that schools across Australia face but, importantly, it also identified many of the solutions. Those solutions must not be turfed aside simply because this government did not commission the report themselves. Let us have a look at what the member for Sturt, the now Minister for Education and then shadow minister for education said at the time. Just one hour and 45 minutes after it was released he dismissed it out of hand. He immediately denied the reports findings that the Howard government's SES school funding system was broken and, in fact, on 20 February 2012, he launched a passionate defence, stating:

I believe the current SES funding model is the fairest model available.

It was absolutely clear at this point that the member for Sturt had not even taken a cursory look at the report of the biggest review of our school system in 40 years.

Later, in September 2012, it appeared the coalition had finally admitted the old school funding model was broken, that money was not driving improvement and that Liberal state cuts were leading to dangerous downward spirals in future federal funding because of the automatic link between state cuts and less federal money in the future. The member for Sturt then announced a new policy on schools, when he declared in the parliament, in September 2012:

In fact the Coalition is the only political party with a policy to increase funding to all schools by six per cent.

Mr Tudge: Hear, hear!

Ms KATE ELLIS: Wouldn't we like to see that! Unfortunately, your current policy is CPI 2.5 per cent.

Mr Tudge: It is six per cent, eight per cent.

Ms KATE ELLIS: It is not at all. You are making up figures which do not stack up. I certainly hope that is recorded in Hansard so we can see that, yet again, those opposite are making it up. It was not long before he undid his pledge for six per cent increases and reverted to his old position of defending the broken Howard SES funding model. In February 2013, the now Minister for Education said:

... the current funding model does work. It's not a broken model.

Then he flip-flopped again, pretending to be so concerned about the declining school funding model, that he declared the prospect of three per cent indexation to be 'frightening'—a comment that came back to bite him very hard when he announced the biggest ever cut to schools in this year's budget and pegged funding from 2018 at CPI, which their own budget papers predict will be just 2.5 per cent. The same person who argued that the prospect of three per cent indexation was frightening has now introduced into this parliament budget papers which show school indexation at just 2.5 per cent from 2018. Several months later, in what had become a very bad version of policy hokey pokey, he said:

I can give you this guarantee: if the coalition's elected, we will keep the funding model for two years, we will keep the current indexation rate which over the last 10 years has averaged six per cent.

That is where things stayed until the lead-up to the election. We know from those opposite that Gonski was a 'conski' and the coalition had the impossible policy of indexing school funding at six per cent and returning—
Mr Nikolic: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The explicit purpose of this bill relates to Indigenous boarding students from remote areas. The member for Adelaide is two-thirds of the way through and has not even mentioned it.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Ms KATE ELLIS: In response to that, I would say the member opposite might want to listen before he makes a contribution. I have spoken about Indigenous boarding schools. More importantly, he may want to read the bill and not just the speaking notes that the member for Sturt gives him because he will actually see that there are many other measures which this bill addresses, including putting back school improvement plans, which I am addressing.

We know that until the Liberal party decided to face the reality that Australians actually do care about schools and about real education reform, those opposite had to face the reality that parents, teachers and students across the country supported the Gonski reforms, which included the school improvement plans, which this bill is delaying, and wanted a government that would make sure every student in every school had the opportunity to achieve their very best. So just a month out from the election, Mr Abbott back-flipped on his position on schools. He called a press conference and made a clear promise to Australian voters that:

Kevin Rudd and I are on an absolute unity ticket when it comes to school funding.

He was backed up by the member for Sturt, now Minister for Education, who stood in a marginal seat and looked down the barrel of the camera as he declared:

You can vote Liberal or Labor and you'll get exactly the same amount of funding for your school.

Before the election, the now minister was also crystal clear about the coalition's commitment to the Gonski model and to needs-based funding, telling voters:

We have agreed to the government's school funding model.

If that were true, this bill delaying school improvement plans, would not be before the parliament. The now Minister for Education then went on to say:

We are committed to the student resource standard, of course we are. We are committed to this new school funding model.

And finally as Australians entered polling booths on Election Day, they were faced with huge signs which read:

Liberals will match Labor's school funding dollar for dollar.

It really could not get any clearer than that—no asterisks, no small print, no qualifications—that they would match the funding and that they would introduce school funding reforms. But of course we have seen that that did not turn out to be the case at all.

Voters across Australia were absolutely betrayed by every member opposite. Voters across Australia thought that the school reforms, which had been announced and had been implemented, were safe. They thought that they could vote Liberal or Labor and they would get the same school reforms and the same system, which was so desperately needed and overdue. They thought that Labor's Gonski reforms, the biggest reforms in 40 years, would be delivered no matter who won on 7 September. But, unfortunately, that hope was desperately short lived. The government's deliberate deception of voters took just weeks to be revealed, when the education minister declared that he would go back to the drawing board on school
funding. Then, just three days later, he said he would keep the Gonski model but for just one year. He promised to develop a new school funding model by early 2014.

He is clearly a man with a very high opinion of himself; I do not think anyone has ever doubted that about our education minister. He thought he would be able to do a better job in just a few months, in coming up with an entirely new school funding model, than education experts and the independent Gonski panel had been able to do over two years of solid work on this matter. Schools, parents, teachers were all shocked. They had been betrayed and they were immediately up in arms. But the government was having none of that and refused to take responsibility for its own broken promises. First, the education minister blamed journalists for not being able to understand school funding. Then, in what will surely go down as one of the most arrogant and condescending comments ever made by a politician, the Prime Minister turned the torch on Australians themselves. In the comfortable atmosphere—for him—of Andrew Bolt's cosy studio, the Prime Minister said:

We are going to keep the promise that we actually made, not the promise that some people thought that we made or the promise that some people might have liked us to make.

It was at this point that the government's trickery, their deception, was totally laid bare. Let us be very clear: the government told the Australian people that they would get the new school funding model and that 'they were on a unity ticket'. The government, through this piece of legislation and through every indication since the last election, have shown that that was nothing more than a ploy to con the Australian people into voting for them, thinking that they were getting school reform.

The following day, after an emergency meeting, the government were shamed into a humiliating backflip. Begrudgingly, and with not one fibre of their heart in it, the Prime Minister and education minister dragged themselves to a press conference. They said they would keep part of what they had promised. But they did not mean it. And they have been undermining the Gonski reforms ever since.

This history is absolutely crucial to the bill which is before us today. It puts into context the government's proposed changes to school improvement plans and funding for special schools. It makes it crystal clear that these changes are nothing but just another step in the government's deliberate campaign to undermine all those elements of the Gonski reforms that they were shamed into just over a year ago, that they have never had their heart in and that they intended pulling apart, even though they were not prepared to tell the Australian public that before they went to the polls.

Since the government's acrobatics in November and December last year—and I think we well remember how many different positions the education minister had in just a few days—the Prime Minister and the education minister have cut all additional funding for the fifth and sixth years of the Gonski reforms. But worse than that, in its first budget, this government has cut $80 billion from schools and hospitals over the next decade, the biggest ever cut to Australian schools. That is what this government has announced in its own budget papers.

Mr Nikolic interjecting—

Ms KATE ELLIS: It may not be in the speaking points that the member opposite relies on, from the education minister, but he should actually take to reading the budget, as he should take to reading this bill, if he thinks it is not about school improvement plans.
The government have also cut $100 million a year more support for the Students with Disabilities Program and have failed in the promise they made both before the election and after the election for more funding for students with a disability through a new loading in 2015. The government have let state governments off the hook by promising not to enforce their funding obligations under the Gonski agreements. How is that for accountability?

This government has locked school funding to just CPI from 2018, with its very own budget papers assuming that CPI will be just 2.5 per cent. At the same time, the ABS Education Price Index currently runs at 5.1 per cent. That is a huge cut in real terms, which will be felt in every single school across Australia. Then, on top of all that, this government had the gall to blame Australian voters for its broken promises on schools and for the complete trashing of the unity ticket on schools, claiming that the Australian public misunderstood when they thought they were going to get the Gonski school funding reforms, that they were explicitly told by members opposite before the election. It is an awful record that is built on absolute deception, falsehood and betrayal. It is a record that has left the Prime Minister's credibility when it comes to education and schools in tatters. But, more importantly, it has left our schools facing the biggest funding cut that we have ever seen in this nation's history.

If some of the provisions of this bill are an indication as to where the government are heading, it is clear that they have zero plans for redemption, that they are just getting started. The government must absolutely be condemned for their record on school funding and on betraying the Australian public. Their pushing back of school improvement plans is yet another measure to reduce accountability and transparency so that they cannot be held to account for the full damage that they have caused. It is of great concern.

We will not hold up this legislation because we know it is important that funding goes to Indigenous boarding schools as well as independent special schools. But we will absolutely point out each and every time this government betrays not just the voters of Australia but also the future of Australia's school system and, in turn, the future opportunities of every young Australian, the future opportunities for our economic development and our productivity, the future of the education system—which should be one of the most important things that this government recognises that we should work together on, after we have had the biggest review in 40 years, which those opposite arrogantly now claim that they know better than the experts and all of the people who contributed to the review, whether it is the academics, the principals, the teachers or the parents. Those opposite claim that the education minister can come up with a better solution—an education minister who has an appalling record when it comes to schools after just a year in government and looks set to introduce yet more damage and more destruction in such a very important portfolio area.

Mr NIKOLIC (Bass) (12:52): What we have just seen is 30 minutes of party political commentary, reliving the 2013 election. We heard the member for Adelaide invoking the name of David Gonski—who, frankly, has disowned the Labor Party's approach to education in all its forms. The member for Adelaide walks out of the chamber, having told this House about promises that were made, knowing full well that the coalition said that we would be committed to the forward estimates when it came to school funding over four years. Contrary to her assertions, education funding and health funding rise each year over the next four years.
And, again, we hear these quite mendacious claims from Labor members opposite about cuts, when the budget papers tell a totally different story.

We see once again that tendency of the Labor Party to overpromise and under deliver, and it is not just when it comes to education; it is also the NBN. For three elections we saw the member for Lingiari and his colleagues come forth and makes these extravagant promises about the NBN and never deliver. We also heard about superclinics and surpluses. In 2012 the former Treasurer, the member for Lilley, stood up here in this House and talked about 'The four surpluses that I announce tonight'. Goodness me—four surpluses!

Mr Snowdon interjecting—

Mr NIKOLIC: It is absolutely outrageous when the other day we learnt that, instead of a surplus this year, we have got a $49.5 billion deficit. The hypocrisy of those opposite beggars belief. They have a history in government of $191 billion in achieved deficits, $123 billion across the forward estimates—

Mr Tudge: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There was some unparliamentary language coming from the member for Lingiari. Can I ask that he withdraw his comments?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Mitchell): The member for Lingiari—

Mr Snowdon: I apologise profusely.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Just withdraw. That is all we need.

Mr Snowdon: Mr Deputy Speaker, I withdraw, but I would ask that you advise the member to talk to the legislation. Thus far, four minutes in, he has not even mentioned the education bill.

Mr Taylor: What's that thing about glass houses?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Bass was making a point before he got up and spoke, Member for Hume, about people talking on the bill. But the debate has been wide ranging, and I will let that go. Member for Bass, continue.

Mr NIKOLIC: Thank you, Deputy Speaker. I look forward to talking about the Australian Education Amendment Bill 2014 because there have been some important issues raised. As we saw from the member for Adelaide's contribution, the vast majority of her time was devoted to having a crack at the government, instead of addressing the very important issues in this bill.

It does give me great pleasure to make a contribution on this bill. As I have said on more than one occasion, from a purely domestic or national perspective, there are few, if any, issues as important or as potentially inflammatory as education policy. Regrettably, too often, despite the best intentions of any government, this subject tends to become a political football. For obvious reasons, passions and emotions are easily aroused when wrestling with issues that impact the lives and wellbeing of our fellow Australians. As a proud representative of northern Tasmania, I am keenly aware of the usually linear relationship which exists between education, employment, future and fortune. And, I have no doubt, that such a sentiment places me in good company with many, and perhaps even a majority, on both sides of the House.

We heard at the end of the member for Adelaide's contribution that she was in fact supporting the bill—and I welcome that bipartisan spirit. This amendment bill reflects the
very best domestic intentions of the present government. By, and through it, we seek to implement and enact key steps which, if given the opportunity to work, will significantly improve the lives and livelihood of some members of Australia's most disadvantaged and struggling communities. For them, it potentially represents, a life-changing opportunity. Regrettably, Indigenous Australians are a part of our society whose educational standards and attainments have, in the main, lagged and fallen increasingly behind that of wider and mainstream Australia. I acknowledge that this drift has occurred 'on the watch' of successive governments of both persuasions over more than a generation. This government will do whatever it can to arrest this downward spiral to continuing intergenerational poverty. This includes constructive Indigenous educational reform.

Over the long term, any nation which undervalues or fails to invest in education, particularly at the foundation or school level, will eventually incur a severe penalty. This may start as an initially and almost barely perceptible drift from the forefront of national productivity and/or international relevance. Thereafter, the pace of educational decline and concordant social and economic malaise and disharmony will tend to quicken over time, with obvious bleak and all-too-predictable outcomes. Once begun, such a diminution in educational talent or standards on any level—individual, community, state or national—is disproportionately difficult to turn around. The government is exceedingly conscious of such perils, particularly amongst elements of the already disadvantaged.

Most importantly, the government retains a strong commitment to, and preference for, genuine tripartisan negotiation with all members of both the opposition and crossbench towards the passage of this important social amendment. Despite some views to the contrary, ours remains a generous spirit of compromise, negotiation and even consensus, which extends to all quarters of this chamber.

Passage of this bill is, indisputably, in the longer term interest of all Australians—not just those who are Indigenous, or who have children or grandchildren, or those who are themselves affected students who stand to benefit significantly from it. Indeed, the bounty of foundation level education across society, improves the lives of countless Australians in ways too numerous, wondrous and positive for me to enunciate fully here. It is sufficient to simply say that we are all enriched by education in one way or another—either directly by the process itself or perhaps more indirectly by the society it shapes and influences, and sometimes, simply because it offers to us all a glimpse or snapshot of what is possible and achievable in a nation as unique and priceless as Australia.

Let me highlight and focus on a few key aspects of the bill before the House. The first pertains to the general intention of the bill; the second, to the matter of its precise focus; and the third relates to funding, specifically to the government's four-year funding commitment.

The explicit purpose of this bill is to amend the act. Doing so will directly support the payment of additional funding to schools with large numbers of Indigenous boarding students from remote areas to meet an identified resourcing shortfall. Funding can commence as early as this calendar year. The Indigenous boarding initiative was announced through the 2014-15 budget and will provide approximately $6.8 million in additional funding to eligible schools. Regulations will determine school eligibility and amounts of funding under the initiative.

The bill will prevent funding cuts to students with disabilities and other students in some independent special and special assistance schools which would otherwise occur from 1
January 2015. This will be achieved by ensuring consistent transitional funding arrangements for both these schools and all others under the act. In addition, the bill will address a number of errors and omissions that occurred during the original preparation of the act and which, if left unchanged, would undermine the intended operation of the act, including creating funding and regulatory uncertainty for schools. These amendments will ensure, among other things, the correct calculation of Commonwealth funding entitlements for all Australian schools.

Together this combination of steps and measures is a strong example of what I will call complementary reconciliation, whereby Australians of all backgrounds support and complement the overarching spirit of national reconciliation with constructive, practical steps to the betterment of the lives of our Indigenous brothers and sisters. While this concept is universal, among its strongest applications is education. Furthermore, complementary reconciliation embraces two broad ideas: the first is the need to be mindful of the somewhat chequered lessons of Australia's Indigenous affairs so that they are not conveniently airbrushed by history, and the second is to construct or fashion a more positive experience for current and future Indigenous generations. This bill has been carefully crafted and balanced and gives due consideration to both these things.

I now move to the specific focus of the bill itself, which is Indigenous boarding students at particular non-government schools—a very specific demographic as opposed to a broader target audience. The rationale and logic behind this focus includes the following elements and considerations. Firstly, under the needs based funding provided by the Australian Education Act 2013, all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students attract a loading. Secondly, schools with large numbers of these students boarding have indicated that more funding is required to meet the costs of providing boarding and tuition to cater for the additional needs of the students. Thirdly, the government also considered the findings of an independent review that identified significant additional costs faced by non-government schools with large numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boarding students. In response to the review's findings, the government provided an estimated $6.8 million in the 2014-15 budget for the Indigenous boarding initiative of 2014; this funding will support eligible schools while a broader welfare review, including a review of Abstudy, is conducted. Finally, this extra funding will allow eligible schools to deliver improved services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boarding students from remote or very remote areas, and provide effective additional support to boost school attendance and engagement.

Equally as significant and noteworthy is the fact that these intended amendments do not break the government's four-year funding commitment, as was suggested by the member for Adelaide. Rather, they will provide an increase in funds to support Indigenous boarding students while also preventing funding reductions. Such changes would otherwise impact negatively on students with a disability at special or special assistance schools.

In the lead-up to the last federal election, the government promised to maintain the current school funding legislation for the usual four-year funding period. By way of clarification for the member for Adelaide, that means the years 2014 to 2017, not the unaffordable five and six year aspirational promises those opposite made at the time. The government has fulfilled this commitment but needs to make sure the current legislation—the Australian Education Act—operates as intended for the funding quadrennium. The bill's amendments seek to do exactly
that and are thereby wholly constructive and honourable in terms of their intent, substance and operating mechanisms.

To conclude: education constitutes an enduring bridge between aspiration and achievement. This observation is universally true in most nations. Education is also significant factor which separates or divides developed from developing nations, and it clearly delineates individual communities within nations. The latter is certainly the case in Australia. These things are true of education at all stages in life, but are especially so at the foundation levels—primary and secondary school—which are the specific focal point and objective of this bill in particular.

By and through this bill, this parliament will literally forge a life-changing opportunity and extend it to a good many Indigenous Australian children. The positive long-term benefits of doing so are truly incalculable. That this bill cannot go further at this time should in no way obscure or diminish its obvious worth and value. It represents parliamentary policymaking at its very best. I therefore take much pleasure in commending to the House the Australian Education Amendment Bill 2014.

Mr NEUMANN (Blair) (13:05): The Australian Education Amendment Bill in part establishes a mechanism to enable the Minister for Education to make payments to schools for reasons prescribed by regulation. The mechanism is put into effect through the insertion of a new subclause, section 69A(1), into the Australian Education Act 2013.

The Australian Education Act came into effect on 1 January 2014 and regulates Commonwealth funding to Australian schools. The education minister has said the first task of the new section 69A(1) mechanism will be to facilitate payments under the government's Indigenous boarding initiative announced in the 2014-15 budget. This provides $6.8 million in what the minister describes as interim support for non-government schools with more than 50 Indigenous boarders from remote or very remote areas, or where 50 per cent or more of the school's boarding students are Indigenous and from remote or very remote areas. The government has yet to establish eligibility requirements for this initiative or the funding amounts eligible schools may receive. However, it is stated that it will have an intention to do so before the end of the year. We are yet to see the specifics but we look forward to that.

Access to these schools can benefit some Indigenous students from remote areas. In my electorate of Blair, we have two fine independent schools which accept boarders—Ipswich Grammar School and Ipswich Girls' Grammar School have both taken significant steps in recent years to increase the number of Indigenous boarders. I understand there are currently 20 Indigenous boarders at Ipswich girls' grammar and 53 at Ipswich grammar—its sister school.

At Ipswich grammar, enrolments of Indigenous students have increased steadily since 2000. In 2013, about six per cent of the school's population was Indigenous. These young men come from diverse communities, such as western Queensland, rural and western New South Wales and the Torres Strait. Ipswich Grammar School has reported encouraging progress in terms of retention and completion rates for these students.

I have spoken to Indigenous boarders from Ipswich Girls' Grammar and Ipswich Grammar School who have told me that, invariably, their experience is favourable. Many intend to go back to their communities to work and contribute. Some have also told me they intend to stay
in south-east Queensland. However, the funding for non-government boarding schools cannot, and should not, be the only support offered to Indigenous students. Every child deserves the best education we can give them, no matter from where they come. We should not just cherry pick.

This initiative is just another example of the government's singular focus on getting Indigenous kids to school. It is not concerned, really, about what happens when they get there. That is someone else's problem—maybe the state or territory. The government has ripped away $46 million or more from the Remote Jobs and Communities Program to fund a truancy army in remote Australia. The results, according to Senate estimates, are patchy and erratic at best, and are unsuccessful at worst. We agree that every child should go to school. This is fundamentally important. However, we remain concerned about what happens when a child sits at the desk or in the classroom.

Consistently, conservative state and territory governments have ripped away money and resources from schools without a word of criticism from the education minister federally. We know that quality early education is critical to giving kids the best start in life. The previous federal Labor government invested hundreds of millions of dollars to the National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Early Childhood Development to make sure that Indigenous kids would get the best chance in life by establishing 38 children and family centres around the country. These centres provide culturally appropriate early education to children and support services to their parents and to some of the most vulnerable families in remote and regional areas, capital cities and provincial towns in this country. The Abbott government has abandoned these centres, refusing to fund them when the national partnership expired on 30 June this year. Many centres face the real prospect of closure. As Shadow minister for Indigenous affairs, I visited many of these centres.

We understand that kids need a little extra help getting the best educational outcomes if they come from disadvantaged backgrounds. That is why Labor's Gonski school funding model provided a special Indigenous loading to ensure that those schools were properly resourced to provide the best possible education for Indigenous students. Despite claiming to support this school funding initiative prior to the election, we have seen the government abandon it. We welcome the extra support for those few Indigenous kids who will benefit from the boarding school education but we remain deeply concerned about the majority who will not get the support.

Every child deserves the best education we can give, as I say. However, in reality, $6.8 million of funding announced for this initiative is a very dim flicker of light for Indigenous people. This government has ripped over half a billion dollars from Indigenous programs in the 2014-15 budget and refuses to tell Indigenous communities and service providers where these cuts will hit—whether it is a $125 million cut from Indigenous health programs; $15 million from the peak representative body, National Congress of Australia's First Peoples; and $9.5 million from support for Indigenous language, taught so often in these schools when Indigenous children attend.

Recently, of course—when you cannot ignore Indigenous education—there were the cuts to the Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme. This helps universities assess students who go to early childhood education centres, primary schools and high schools, and who, we hope, will come from these boarding initiatives here before this legislation and go to university.
Under the former federal Labor government, there was a 26 per cent increase in Indigenous students going to and graduating from university. But this government has cut the funding. Universities will now be forced to competitively bid under the Indigenous Advancement Strategy, with no guarantee of funding. On top of the $5.8 billion in cuts to higher education, this calls into question the Abbott government's commitment to Indigenous education. To make matters worse, of course, the announcement of the ITAS cut took place on the eve of the competitive grant round being put so that those organisations had about a month in which to submit the application under the IAS.

Indigenous community leaders have expressed their concerns about the Abbott government's cuts, particularly in relation with Indigenous education. What we have seen from this Prime Minister, who claims that he is the Prime Minister for Indigenous affairs, is, in fact, a year of disappointment for Indigenous people around the country. And, of course, we have seen the cuts to front-line services. He has a minister in the Senate who claims that is not happening. But we know there have been cuts to front-line health services, legal services and welfare services. But the government refuses to accept responsibility for the cuts. All we have seen from them is to object, obfuscate and fabricate in relation to the claims.

On 16 September, the Indigenous affairs minister claimed that the $165 million cut to the community-controlled health services and health services around the country was, in fact, a cut. During question time on 22 September, the Prime Minister joined his minister in the land of fantasy in response to my question about the possible closure of children and family centres. The Prime Minister said:

I defy members opposite to justify this charge of broken promises. Overall funding for Indigenous programs goes up.

The evidence can be found in budget papers No. 2—pages 184 and 185—which clearly shows a cut in Indigenous funding programs of $534.4 million. If the Prime Minister and the Minister for Indigenous affairs were genuinely interested in this budget's impact on Indigenous Australians they might read the recent Menzies Centre for Health Policy report. The centre concluded, not surprisingly that Indigenous people would be hard hit by the budget. Adjunct Associate Professor Dr Lesley Russell of the centre said:

Already among the poorest, sickest and most marginalised, Indigenous Australians are hit twice: by cuts to specific programs totalling $603.0 million/5 years and cuts and changes to a wide swathe of general programs in health, education, welfare and legal services.

Together these will exacerbate Indigenous disadvantage and set back the already difficult task of Closing the Gap.

This is from a Prime Minister who claims he is the 'Prime Minister for Indigenous Affairs'.

The establishment of a mechanism under this legislation to begin payments under the Indigenous Boarding Initiative is just one component of this legislation before the chamber. Subclause 62 subclause (2) item 33 of the bill also modifies the transitional funding rules for independent special schools to index their funding by at least three per cent per year. Without this change, according to the government, about 38 independent special schools face quite significant cuts in 2015.

The education minister briefly touched on this issue in his second reading speech, and appears to connect the prospect of these funding cuts to:
errors and oversights that have become apparent since the act became operative on 1 January 2014.

The education minister mentions:

Currently, the safety net in place will disappear and these schools will have their funding immediately reduced to the schooling resource standard from 1 January next year because the current work with the states and territories to develop nationally consistent data has not yet been completed.

The 'safety net' the education minister says will disappear, as if he had nothing to do with it, is in fact Labor's More Support for Students with Disabilities program that the minister refused to continue to fund. The $2.4 million required to prevent a funding cut to these independent special schools is needed until:

... the revised student-with-disability loadings are available.

Here, the education minister refers to the extra funding, or loadings, available to students with a disability under Labor's Gonski school funding reforms. The disability loadings were one of six disadvantage loadings created by these reforms. I mentioned another—the Indigenous loading.

Adding a disadvantage loading to the base student funding amount to meet the actual needs of a student was a fundamental aspect of Labor's school funding reforms. In government Labor set an interim disability loading of 186 per cent of the base payment for students in mainstream schools and 223 per cent of the base payment for students in special schools for 2014. The interim loading will allow the time necessary to establish the true level of need for students with a disability in consultation with the states and territories. This would directly inform the development of a nationally-consistent disability loading from 2015. A fair and equitable learning to students with disability is essential for them to receive a quality education.

For a while, prior to the election, the coalition gave the impression that it wholeheartedly recognised and supported these loadings. In fact, the period of coalition support for the Gonski reform package had a precise start on 2 August 2013. Just a day earlier, the education spokesperson and now minister, described the Gonski reforms in his typical fashion: he called them a 'conski'. As the seconds ticked down to the 2013 election, political reality started to bite. The coalition said that they were on a unity ticket with us as the Labor government. They said that you could vote Labor or coalition and that you would get the same funding outcome.

In fact, if there were any doubt in the minds of voters, this is what they said, quoted in The Australian:

We will honour the agreements that Labor has entered into. We will match the offers that Labor has made. We will make sure that no school is worse off.

It was all a bit unedifying, because they felt completely shamefaced. They had brochures all around the place, they had leaflets about it but they backflips when they got into government. We have seen that.

But that backflip is actually typified by the budget. We heard the member for Bass actually refer to increases in funding by the coalition. It is almost as if the budget overview 2014-15 never penetrated the other side of the chamber. I want to quote from it—and this is not our document, this was prepared by the coalition government in the actual budget. The overview of the budget—and I am quoting from page 7 of the overview:
In this Budget the Government is adopting sensible indexation arrangements for schools from 2018, and hospitals from 2017-18, and removing funding guarantees for public hospitals. These measures will achieve cumulative savings of over $80 billion by 2024-25.

So what they are actually doing, in effect, is cutting $30 billion from our classrooms over the next decade, ripping away the fifth and sixth years of the Gonski funding. They are failing to deliver the Gonski agreements and letting the states off the hook in relation to their contributions—the national partnership arrangements.

So let us not hear sanctimony and unction from those opposite in relation to this, because they are part of a government that has let down Indigenous students and let down non-Indigenous students. They are part of a government that has ripped away $30 billion in school funding. And they claim to believe in equality of opportunity and justice for all—what a joke they are!

Ms PRICE (Durack) (13:21): Once again we hear those on the other side turning something incredibly positive into an incredible negative—once again. While we are at it, when discussing the Children and Family Centres it is a shame that the Labor Party did not think more about how it was going to structure the funding for these particularly important—

Mr Clare: You're being negative! You said you were going to be positive!

Ms PRICE: It is a shame that you did not do it and that you left the mess for us to clear up. For the record, I have actually been to a couple of the Children and Family Centres in the vast area of Durack and I have indeed seen the good work that they are doing. I can assure those on the other side, and those in the Children and Family Centres in Durack that I am working very hard to try to clean up the mess left behind.

And now to the bill before us. I am pleased to rise today to speak on the Australian Education Amendment Bill 2014, which will benefit Aboriginal students within the electorate of Durack. The Australian Education Amendment Bill 2014 will amend the Australian Education Act 2013 to allow payment of additional funding in 2014 to schools with large numbers of Indigenous boarding students from remote areas and prevent funding cuts to students with disabilities and special assistance schools that would otherwise occur from 1 January 2015. This bill will result in approximately 2.4 million more being paid to those particular schools in 2014-15 than would have otherwise been the case. The bill also corrects errors and omissions in the existing legislation and provides funding and regulatory certainty to the schools.

The Indigenous boarding initiative, which is of special interest within my electorate of Durack, was announced through the 2014-15 budget and will provide approximately 6.8 million in further funding to eligible schools. The key objective of the bill is to increase Commonwealth funding for eligible non-government boarding schools with significant numbers of Indigenous boarding students. This initiative recognises the increased cost that schools face in the provision of education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boarding students from remote and very remote areas of Australia. This special measure will benefit students from remote areas who board in order to obtain equal access to education. It is only available to eligible non-government schools. This initiative helps to provide support to Indigenous students, who must overcome so many challenges, including remoteness, in their efforts to participate in and pursue an education. This is only an interim measure, but
nonetheless very welcome. A much broader welfare review, including of Abstudy, is being conducted.

This bill helps to address the extra costs of providing boarding and tuition for some Indigenous students. It is a matter that has been raised by many schools. Essentially the funding will be directed to schools that have more than 50 boarding students from remote and very remote areas of Australia, or where a school's boarding population comprises more than 50 per cent Aboriginal boarders. An important outcome will be an increase in both school attendance and student engagement. There are many, many remote communities in Durack and, as members would be aware, effective participation by an Indigenous students in education has been problematic. One of the key objectives of the Abbott government's Aboriginal policy framework is to ensure Aboriginal children receive an education. This bill contributes in a significant way to help meet that objective.

I remind members that my electorate of Durack, being the largest in Australia, stretches from the tip of WA, being the Kimberley, south-east to Moora and Cunderin and east out past Merredin en route to Kalgoorlie. It is big. For those of you who have visited Durack, you may know that the community of Meekatharra is in the Mid West region, north of Geraldton. Meekatharra is an Aboriginal word—in fact the Yamaji people's word—meaning 'place of little water'. Yes, it can be terribly dry out there. Meekatharra has less than 1,000 people, almost 50 per cent of whom are of Aboriginal descent. Located 764 kilometres north-east of Perth on the Great Northern Highway, Meekatharra services the extensive surrounding pastoral and mining areas.

Karalundi Aboriginal Education Community is a kindergarten to year 12 education boarding school for Aboriginal students and is situated 55 kilometres north of Meekatharra. This is an extremely remote location. Karalundi unashamedly provides a very valuable Christian education in many forms and seeks to bring 'self-sustaining change in the lives of its students, their families and their communities'. The school works on being a 'safe place to grow and learn' and on 'developing leaders to serve others within their communities and on land'. Citizenship and educational excellence are pursued with equal vigour. Karalundi is an Aboriginal boarding school for remote and very remote students and it shall benefit from the passage of the bill as it provides increased funding, and they deserve nothing less.

Karalundi was first established in 1954 and can cater for up to 60 Aboriginal boarding students housed at the educational community. It is indeed a quiet achiever. Students from nearby towns like Wiluna, who also have a large Aboriginal population, form part of the cohort who attend Karalundi. Next week I have the pleasure of hosting the Hon. Alan Tudge, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, who is at the table—yes, I am talking about you—in the town of Wiluna, where I will take the opportunity to arrange for the parliamentary secretary to meet with community leaders in this often forgotten part of Australia. And may I congratulate the parliamentary secretary for agreeing to come to this part of the world.

A second school that will benefit greatly from this bill is based in the Kimberley region of Durack and also in Melbourne and is known as the Yiramalay/Wesley Studio School. Wesley College, Melbourne, and the Fitzroy Valley community established an educational partnership in 2004. They signed a memorandum of understanding that captured their shared promised to lead and to live together, and that that would lead to a broader view and new prospects for all
the children and families involved. The partnership is based on 'shared respect for people, language, culture and country'. Ten years since the signing of the MOU, no less than 40 Aboriginal students are enrolled this year. These students come from Fitzroy and communities right across the remote Kimberley.

In this unique partnership, the 40 students of 2014 attend school and board at Wesley in Melbourne for half the year. For the remainder of the year they attend the Yiramalay campus, named after the Yiramalay spring located on Leopold Downs Station, which is around 80 kilometres north-east of Fitzroy Crossing in the Kimberley. Traditional owners, the Bunuba people, operate both Fairfield and Leopold Downs Stations. Their cattle company runs around 20,000 head of cattle on 1.4 million acres. Wesley College provides the educational programs as well as the teaching staff at both sites—Yiramalay, on Leopold Downs Station, and in Melbourne. But of course it is the Bunuba people who assist with the valuable curriculum aspects of Aboriginal language, culture, history and on country activities. They have been innovative: they have developed and published Bunuba and Walmajarri language curriculum resources; they have established Wesmob, a Wesley student advocacy group; they have participated in the women's resource centre bush meetings and also in the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre Festival.

These are just two examples in Durack that have stood the test of time. Karalundi, beyond Meekatharra, established in 1954 and catering for 60 Aboriginal boarding students, and Yiramalay/Wesley Studio School, based in Melbourne and also the Kimberley, established 10 years ago with 40 students involved in 2014. I am very pleased that schools such as Yiramalay and Karalundi stand to benefit from the Australian Education Amendment Bill 2014, which amend the Australian Education Act 2013 to allow for, amongst other things, payment of additional funding in 2014 to schools with large numbers of Indigenous boarding students from remote areas to meet an identified—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. BC Scott): Order! The debate is interrupted in accordance with standing order 43. The debate may be resumed at a later hour. The honourable member will have leave to continue her remarks when the debate is resumed.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Multiculturalism

Mr WATTS (Gellibrand) (13:30): In Australia we know how to make multiculturalism work. We are a stronger, more prosperous nation because of our social diversity and we are a safer and more secure society because of our national unity. But Australian multiculturalism works because we work at it. When our communities face challenges that threaten to divide us and throw our community into conflict, we confront them and move forward together.

Unfortunately, the recent consideration of national security issues by this parliament has occurred in the context of a national fever dream of fear and paranoia about our Islamic community. In recent times we have seen sections of the media, both mainstream and social media, caught up in a hysteria about our Islamic community. We have also seen comments from members of this place, almost universally from members representing areas with very small Islamic communities, attacking the choice of some women in the Islamic community to wear the burqa, niqab or hijab.
As a member representing an electorate with a very large Islamic community, I want to send a very clear message on this issue. No-one in Australia has anything to fear from the Islamic community. There are almost 500,000 Muslims in Australia. In contrast, there is a bare handful of perverted fanatics in this country who would seek to hijack this religion to commit criminal acts in its name. The member for Dawson can take it from me—one of the 118 members in this House with larger Islamic populations in their electorate than his—that he does not need to be scared of a burqa.

The public statements of politicians and media reports relating to our Islamic community have real-world consequences. As we confront the threat of terrorism, we need to remember that our security relies on our unity. If we allow our community to be divided against ourselves, we will all be lost.

Page Electorate: Roads to Recovery

Mr Hogan (Page) (13:31): Very good news was delivered to local communities this week following our passing of the $2.1 billion Roads to Recovery program. That money will start flowing within the next month. Mr Deputy Speaker Scott, I can inform you and the House that my electorate of Page, which houses five different local government areas, is going to receive more than $26 million for local road construction and street repairs. It is great news for local councils, residents and businesses and it is going to make a real difference in building roads, repairing streets and creating better access across the community.

Within Page, I can tell you what the five local councils will receive. Over the next few years, Ballina Shire is going to get $3½ million, $597,000 of that within the next month or two; Clarence Valley will be getting $8.7 million, with $1.4 million of that handed over quite soon; Kyogle Shire will be getting $4½ million, with $734,000 flowing very soon; Lismore City Council area will be getting $5.2 million of which $882,000 will be flowing this month; and the Richmond Valley Council will be getting $4.2 million, $701,000 of which they will get in the next week or so. As we know, this funding allows councils to prioritise roads funding to invest in the infrastructure in their area. Highways and roads are very important to this side of the parliament and it is with great pleasure that I announce that funding.

Multiculturalism

Mr Husic (Chifley) (13:33): The times that test us all are not the times to test the trust between ourselves, because it is at this point we seek a stronger embrace of the many around the things we hold dear in this nation. At this moment our values and way of life are challenged by those who hope to see fear and distrust weaken faith in ourselves and our values. This challenge does not just test us collectively, it tests us to push beyond the individual discomfort that may on occasion arise from the unfamiliar and in doing so we grow individually and as a community.

It should not slip from recognition that those that came to these shores to make a new home feel a deep debt of gratitude. They seek to repay this debt by building upon what we have found and benefited from, and their children inherit and honour that debt not just for the sake of material prosperity and self-advancement but to become advocates of a grander division in this country, benefiting from the inclusion derived from a shared commitment to freedom, the rule of law and respect for others.
In the brief time I have been humbled to be here, I have sought to appreciate that differences should not define or divide. It has been an honour to work with those of you who feel the same. Together, let us make this place a source of strength for others beyond this place. It was a guardian of our national values, Sir John Monash, who remarked that one of the many attributes of a successful leader is a personality that 'must be of a kind which inspires confidence in others'. His past words are a course for our future activity.

Boothby Electorate: Roads to Recovery

Dr SOUTHcott (Boothby) (13:35): I have spoken often in this place about the importance of upgrading South Road into a non-stop, north-south corridor, allowing the 22 kilometres between Darlington and Wingfield to be available for commuters and heavy vehicles to have quicker transit times through Adelaide.

But just as important are the local roads. This is something that comes up regularly in the surveys that I conduct in my electorate so I am very pleased to see the $2.1 billion Roads to Recovery program going ahead. Local governments will this week receive a letter advising them of their allocations under the Roads to Recovery program. Significantly, in the next financial year, 2015-16, there will be a doubling of the Roads to Recovery payment so we should see across Australia bulldozers and graders and important work happening on those local roads and a significant upgrade which will be welcomed by those communities.

In my own seat of Boothby, the Roads to Recovery allocation for different councils are: the City of Onkaparinga, over $10 million; the City of Marion, over $4 million; the City of Mitcham, $3.2 million; and the City of Holdfast Bay, $1.6 million. More funding is going to be coming. This is a government which is determined to be an infrastructure government and a Prime Minister who is determined to be an infrastructure Prime Minister.

Rankin Electorate: Multiculturalism

Dr CHALMERS (Rankin) (13:36): Not a day goes by that I do not feel particularly blessed to represent one of the most multicultural and diverse electorates in the entire Commonwealth. So it was two Fridays ago when I went to Woodridge state primary school for their school fete. I went into the quadrangle there and saw the sign they had painted on one of their walls, which was a rainbow, and the sign said: 'We are many colours and we are one. That is a tremendous sentiment for the young people in my electorate to learn and to cherish.

We are strengthened and sustained by the diversity that comes from people from 189 homelands in Rankin. That diversity is our strength; it is not a weakness. It is an opportunity to grasp; it is not a downside to be managed away. We are doing our best to build a community that looks after for each other. We recognise that we have different cultures but common aspirations for our young people—to live in harmony and safety, to provide opportunities for those young people and to combat disadvantage and marginalisation wherever it exists. I say to my community, 'Let's keep making that genuine effort to make the place where we live more harmonious and even more inclusive, because the more we understand each other the more we can live in a spirit of cohesion, collaboration and cooperation.'
Rugby League

Ms SCOTT (Lindsay) (13:38): We are leading into Sunday and the rugby league grand final. To start with I would like to congratulate the Penrith Panthers on what has been a stellar season—they reached the top four. This week we also saw the coach of the Penrith Panthers, Ivan Cleary, named the Dally M coach of the year. Ivan has been an incredible coach. His inspiration to the team and the region has been second to none. Also James Segeyaro was named hooker of the year. I would like to congratulate and thank the entire Panthers team—from the Chairman, Don Feltis, to Phil Gould and Warren Wilson—for their commitment and the work that they have done through our entire community.

Tomorrow, with the Premier, I will be at a grand final luncheon hosted by Luke and Holly Priddis. Luke and Holly Priddis's son Cooper was born with autism. The Luke Priddis Foundation does amazing work throughout the community to support families living with autism. The moneys raised tomorrow will go to support children in our community with autism. It is a great way to combine our love of sport and our love of rugby league with something that is really good and really positive and supports so many families right around our region. Once again I congratulate Luke and Holly. I look forward to meeting with the Premier again tomorrow at what is sure to be a really wonderful lunch.

Multiculturalism

Mr CLARE (Blaxland) (13:39): Maha Ado is a friend of mine. For the last 30 years she has been providing help for victims of domestic violence in my community. In 2008 she was awarded an OAM. Late last Thursday she received a phone call at her house from a man who said, 'I know where you live and I am coming round to cut your head off.' In the last few weeks people have been abused, victimised and threatened, and a woman was bashed and pushed off a train. This is not us. This is not who we are. This is not the Australia that I know and love. We are the best country in the world, and we are the best country in the world because we have people from all around the world with different religions and different backgrounds living together in harmony. When I talk to kids at schools in my electorate I say: 'We are like a fruit salad. We all like apples, oranges and watermelon, but they are better when they are all together.' And it is the same with us—it is the same with Australia. We are better when we are all together. That is us—not people preaching poison or morons making death threats.

At times like this we need to act like leaders. We need to work together to bring the community together. The things that we say and the things that we do in this place matter because if we make non-Muslim people feel afraid, isolated and that they do not belong then that just divides us as a community, and that is very dangerous. That is what organisations like ISIS want. Remember who we are. We are like a fruit salad. We are like a family. We need to treat each other like a family.

Cowan Electorate: Rawlinson Primary School

Mr SIMPKINS (Cowan) (13:41): I take this opportunity to congratulate Rawlinson Primary School in Marangaroo for their great success in the 2014 National Literacy and Numeracy Week awards. Rawlinson performed strongly across many classrooms. For instance, a general prize was won by Ms Simmone Thomas's class. For the school they won the LiteracyPlanet subscription prize. A Macquarie Dictionary subscription was won by
Lesley Johnson for Ella Sacco of the lower primary area of the school. Teacher Casey Hookings's class and Jennifer Thomas's class both won Penguin book packs. Alex Bleakley's class won a pack of Walker Books, as did the classes of teachers Kelly Greenaway, Tereza Dimovska and Sue Winterburn. Mr Gary Stoneman's class won an MTA voucher and dominoes.

To put it in perspective, there is normally just one prize pack per year per category for each state and territory. Rawlinson Primary School, under principal John Mistilis, have almost entirely cleaned up in WA in the 2014 National Literacy and Numeracy Week awards, given that they won eight prizes. It is, therefore, a ringing endorsement of the direction that Rawlinson is going in and the effort of the teachers, students and, in fact, the whole school community. I congratulate Rawlinson Primary School for a standout performance in winning more prizes than any other school in Western Australia and for winning their eight prizes—they were only exceeded by one other school across the country. Well done to the excellent Rawlinson Primary School from the Cowan electorate.

**Multiculturalism**

Ms RYAN (Lalor—Opposition Whip) (13:44): Australia is a great country, a stable democracy and a welcoming nation. It is a country of multicultural harmony and inclusion. Like Australia, Lalor is a diverse and growing community. Like Australia, Lalor is a place of opportunity. It is a place where settlers from around the world come to test their fortunes and make their homes. It is a place where a unique mixture of culture, language and tradition are created and accepted. It is a place of breadth. It is a place that encompasses both new and old, and with this comes significant challenges. These challenges are met every day because, despite our differences, the people of Lalor share the same spirit. In Lalor we know that fairness and opportunity are something that we have a responsibility to achieve for one another.

We know that, even in a great social democratic nation, society is not always fair. And that means that we know that we have to take care of each other. That is the spirit of the Indigenous people, that is the spirit of the people who have family roots in the district going back to the 1840s and that is the spirit of the people who we welcome to Lalor from all over the world every year. I have spent my life working with the children of new arrivals in schools in western Melbourne. Their families have made the same journeys that my ancestors made from Ireland and Scotland seeking a better life, ready to overcome the hurdles of a new land and ready to make sacrifices and changes to create a new egalitarian and inclusive society.

**Petrie Electorate: Pasifika Vibes Festival**

Mr HOWARTH (Petrie) (13:44): This Monday, the Pasifika Vibes Festival will burst with colour, song and dance for the fourth year in a row. I was fortunate to join members from my electorate at last year's Pasifika Vibes Festival. It is certainly a great celebration of the Islander culture and traditions, and it gives young Australians with an Islander background the chance to express themselves and be proud of their culture. Everyone is invited to come and experience the food and performances of our local Islander community groups this Monday. My electorate is home to many people from the Pacific Islands. They are wonderful, happy people and they definitely bring a good vibe to the community. I would like to wish the
festival organisers and volunteers all the best, and I encourage everyone to come along and get involved in the activities and dancing.

A mention must go especially to the 150 festival volunteers, to the Our Village Foundation, who have been great supporters of the festival, and to the committee members, including Tracy Watson, Johnnella Aorangi, Gail Robinson, Alain Makiha-Perham, Imeleta Lia-Norris, Jo Broughton, Jo Ryder, Hine Whiuuni, May Nonu, Sari Williams, Setu Finau and Steven Norris, who will do the filming—we must not forget the filming. Good luck to the MCs for the day, James Finau and Hilton Ashin. I look forward to celebrating the day with you on Monday.

Newcastle Electorate: Islington Public School

Ms CLAYDON (Newcastle) (13:45): I rise today to recognise Islington Public School, in my electorate, which plays a vital role in supporting multiculturalism and social harmony in the Newcastle community. Multicultural education is an integral part of Islington Public School's learning experience. Nearly half of the students at the school are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, with more than 20 different nations represented amongst the student body. They are an active participant in Newcastle's interagency support for refugee and migrant communities and coordinate a number of successful multicultural education programs. This includes a multicultural homework centre, which provides support for students from local primary and high schools, and a parent cafe, where parents and teachers gather to discuss the challenges that arise when settling in a new country.

Last month, the shadow minister for foreign affairs and international development and I had the opportunity to visit the school to meet educators, students and families and to witness firsthand their inclusive education programs in action. The values of the school—Goodness, Truth and Beauty—were on display in abundance and I thank Principal Matthew Bradley and his dedicated team of educators for welcoming the shadow minister and I into their wonderful, inclusive community.

Schools play such an important role in creating cultural acceptance and harmony in our society. I welcome the contribution that Islington Public School and others in my electorate make and call on the Abbott government to stand up and be counted for a more tolerant and inclusive society.

Brisbane Electorate: Officework in Canberra Exhibition

Ms GAMBARO (Brisbane) (13:47): Last night, I had the great pleasure of hosting the second Officework in Canberra exhibition in my parliamentary offices here in Canberra. The theme of the current exhibition is Four Days in the Valley, which comes from the title works by Robert Moore, and the exhibition features works by four other artists all represented by the Heiser Gallery in Brisbane—Julie Fragar, Noel McKenna, Ian Smith and Bill Yaxley. The Officework in Canberra exhibition series is a collaboration between my office and the Institute of Modern Art in Brisbane, which is located in the heart of my electorate.

To that end, I want to express my personal thanks to the IMA chair, Marie-Louise Theile, our wonderful new IMA co-directors, Aileen Burns and Johan Lundh, the IMA general manager, Anna Zammit, and, of course, my parliamentary colleague Senator the Hon. George Brandis QC, Attorney-General and Minister for the Arts, who was gracious enough to make time in his busy schedule to open the exhibition last night. To Bruce Heiser, thank you so
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much for making the talents of your artists available for this exhibition. I also want to thank the many members of the diplomatic corps who were in attendance—it was my very great pleasure to host them and to shamelessly show off the talents of Queensland and Brisbane artists. Office work in Canberra's Four Days in the Valley exhibition will be open from now until 5 March 2015. I invite all members of the House and senators to visit my office for a viewing.

Petition: Bruck Textile Technologies

Ms McGOWAN (Indi) (13:48): I present a petition that has been approved by the Standing Committee on Petitions. This petition has been signed by 79 workers, families and residents who live in the Victorian rural city of Wangaratta in my electorate of Indi. The intention of the petition is to draw the House's attention to the failure of the Fair Entitlements Guarantee, FEG, to cover the full entitlements owed to the redundant Bruck Textile Technologies, particularly banked time and fully accrued time. The petition further calls on the House to introduce legislation to stop companies from relying on the FEG to pay owed entitlements that should properly be paid by the companies. I support the sentiments of this petition. It is clear that these workers had additional entitlements owed to them by the company that do not fall within the FEG. This is the main concern that drives the petition.

The petitioners are also concerned that the corporate structure that led to the Bruck workers being left without their entitlements may create the same course of action with other workers in the future. In the words of the workers, they call on this House to 'not let this happen again, protect workers and stop companies from relying on FEG to pay entitlements'.

The petition read as follows—

To the Honourable The Speaker and Members of the House of Representatives

This petition of former Bruck Textile Technologies workers, families and residents in and near the Victorian Rural City of Wangaratta draws to the attention of the House for the need to amend the Fair Entitlements Guarantee (FEG) to retrospectively provide full entitlements for the redundant Bruck Textile Technologies workers, these entitlements being sick leave, banked time and full accrued time. This amendment will protect workers at Australian Textile Mills in Wangaratta who may face the same redundancy process undertaken by management of Australian Textile Mills, formerly Bruck Textiles Technologies. This petition further calls on the House to introduce legislation to stop companies from relying on FEG to pay owed entitlements, that should be properly paid by the companies.

We therefore ask the House to acknowledge the unfair corporate conduct by the management of Bruck Textile Technologies and to make available funds to the former workers who did not receive their full entitlements from 79 citizens.

Petition received.

Banks Electorate: Nan Tien Temple 20th Anniversary

Mr COLEMAN (Banks) (13:50): I was very pleased to represent the Prime Minister at the 20th anniversary celebration of the Nan Tien Temple, near Wollongong, on Sunday. For two decades the Nan Tien Temple has played an integral role in the lives of thousands of Australian Buddhists. It was great to see over 1,000 people attend the event and celebrate the success of the temple and of the Buddha's Light International Association. As well as its religious significance, the temple contributes to regional and state tourism, welcoming more
than 100,000 visitors annually with its unique architecture, cultural events and educational programs.

The temple and the broader Buddhist community contribute very generously to the community right across New South Wales. For example, the BLIA organises singing groups to visit elderly residents in nursing homes and also raised tens of thousands of dollars for the Blue Mountains bushfire appeal late last year. An important initiative of the temple is the new campus being developed at the Nan Tien educational institute. This new campus will open in March next year and I very much look forward to attending.

I would like to congratulate the community and its key members: Deputy Abbot Ven. Hui Feng, Ven. Abbess Man Ko, Professor Grier Lin, the president of Nan Tien Institute, and Mr Francis Wong, president of the BLIA. I look forward to working with the Nan Tien Institute further in the future.

Canberra Electorate: Canberra Islamic Centre

Ms BRODTMANN (Canberra) (13:51): Earlier this year, there was a horrific act of vandalism at the Canberra Islamic Centre in my electorate. Vandals broke into the centre and inflicted as much damage as they possibly could. They smashed windows and artwork. They overturned bookcases. They destroyed books. They pulled up carpets and flooring. The damage was extraordinary.

Following this event I called on the Canberra community to show that Canberrans will not tolerate this kind of behaviour. I called on Canberrans to speak out and to show their support for Canberra's Islamic community, to show that we have zero tolerance for racially motivated violence.

The response was overwhelming. A few days after the attack there was a working bee to clean up the centre, and more Canberrans showed up to help than there were jobs to do. To say thank you, the Canberra Islamic Centre is holding an open day and inviting all Canberrans to come to the centre to enjoy some food and good company and to learn more about the community. The open day is on 25 October, and I encourage all Canberrans, particularly those who helped out when times were tough, to come along.

Now more than ever it is vital that everyone in this great nation pulls together, not apart. Now more than ever it is vital that everyone, especially our leaders, especially the people in this chamber, do all we can to foster harmony, social inclusion, tolerance and, above all, respect in our communities.

Grey Electorate: Infrastructure

Mr RAMSEY (Grey) (13:53): I rise today to support a petition which has been sent to the Australian parliament from my constituent and principal petitioner Natasha Cairns. Natasha is from an area on the Eyre Peninsula which has poor mobile phone reception and internet services, including the townships of Poonindie, Louth Bay and North Shields, about 15 kilometres north of Port Lincoln. The towns surround the Port Lincoln Airport, the second-busiest in the state, with more than 200,000 passengers every year. The airport recently opened a beautiful new $13 million terminal supported to the tune of $4½ million by the federal government. It comes as quite a shock to people when they stand in it for the first time and work out that their phone may or may not work, depending on which leg they stand on.
Natasha circulated a petition throughout Eyre Peninsula at 60 sites, attracting 5,168 signatures, which the Chairman of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Petitions presented to the House on 1 September. Accompanying the petition Natasha attached 70 letters from residents and businesses supporting the need for a base tower upgrade to resolve the issue. I congratulate her and thank her for her efforts.

The government has committed to a $100 million mobile phone black spot program, something sadly missing throughout the six years of the previous government. Possibly one of the telcos may access the program to fill in this black spot. However, recently Optus announced a new tower for the Port Lincoln area. While they have not yet informed the public exactly where it will be located, I passed along the information on the support levels raised in this petition to them so as to encourage consideration of the North Shields area.

Multiculturalism

Ms BUTLER (Griffith) (13:55): In recent times there have been a number of incidents of apparently religiously motivated vilification on the south side in Queensland, from a woman with a child being yelled at and sworn at to a woman having coffee thrown in her face. Another woman was asked to take off her headscarf so someone could set fire to it. The place of worship at Rocklea was vandalised. Previous to that, there was vandalism at the mosque at Mareeba. I am really pleased to say, though, that our community is pulling together to speak out against religious vilification.

Religious vilification is unlawful in Queensland. The Anti-Discrimination Act prohibits religious vilification in Queensland, and I wanted to add my voice to the voices of those in our community who are speaking out in favour of Australia's multiculturalism and against violence, abuse, discrimination and religious vilification.

I am really pleased to say to you that the Muslim community on the south side in Brisbane has been working very hard to make sure they encourage an atmosphere of respect. The Holland Park mosque is more than 100 years old. We have long had a great Muslim community in Queensland, and I congratulate them for their efforts to spread tolerance and peace.

Flavours of Tasmania

Mr HUTCHINSON (Lyons) (13:56): 'Flavours of Tasmania was arguably the very best event that has been held in this place in the last 10 years.' That is what I heard this morning from members, from senators, from visitors and from exhibitors who attended what was really a wonderful function last night in the Great Hall to showcase the quality and diversity of products from my home state of Tasmania. Whisky—the best whisky in the world. Wine, wood products, seafood products, salmon from the clean waters of Tasmania—all celebrated there. Guests included the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister—and we now know she is a chocolate fan—and ambassadors and high commissioners from around Canberra. The best event in the history of Parliament House is what they said.

I would like to acknowledge all of those exhibitors who took the time to travel to Canberra to show off their wares. It was indeed an advertisement for my home state. The House of Anvers, James Boag, Fine Timber Tasmania, Frank's Cider, Huset design, Heartwood Malt Whisky, Huon Aquaculture, JBS Australia, Lark Distillery, Milton Vineyard, Petuna Seafoods, Tamar Ridge, Tasmanian Gourmet Sauce Company, William McHenry & Sons
Distillery—the list goes on and on. I thank them all. Next year it will be bigger and better than ever.

Multiculturalism

Mr LAURIE FERGUSON (Werriwa) (13:57): My residence dictates that I have known in my life a fairly religious Muslim whose grandson was affected by extremism and was killed in Syria. I also live in very close proximity in my suburb to a woman who has decided to be fully covered despite the fact that her mother and sister are not. Issues of harmony are very crucial not only to this country but to me personally. I have seen the way in which fervency grew in the community after September 11—people who previously were very loose in religion becoming more focused on that.

The current debate has two temptations: on the one hand to accept those people who through opportunism and being ill informed push for discrimination against others. On the other side of the debate I urge people: while we must stand for people's religious and human rights, do not drive into the Islamic community a view that this country is affected by Islamophobia. At the same time that we defend people's rights we should be very careful not to overstate the degree to which this country does suffer from discrimination and segregation. If we fully drive home so strongly this motivation, people will feel that they are discriminated against and marginalised, and they will drift into extremism.

We have to find a fine line between rejecting discriminatory measures and at the same time not reinforcing in the Islamic community a view that they are separate, different and isolated.

Beef Australia 2015

Ms LANDRY (Capricornia) (13:59): The countdown is on for the nation's premier cattle industry expo, Beef Australia 2015. The event is being staged in Rockhampton, Australia's beef capital, from 4 to 9 May.

In an election commitment to Capricornia, the Australian government has provided $2.5 million to help fund the expo. Sadly, one of Australia's great cattle industry characters, Graeme Acton, will be missed at next year's event following his tragic death in a campdrafting accident this year. In his honour, I am pleased to inform the House that Beef Australia has launched the Graeme Acton Beef Connections program. This is a mentoring program open to 25- to 35-year-olds working in any aspect of the beef industry, including production, processing, marketing and agribusiness. Participants will be paired with a mentor who has proven agriculture leadership skills—

The SPEAKER: In accordance with standing order 43, the time for members' statements has concluded.

MINISTERIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Mr ABBOTT (Warringah—Prime Minister) (13:59): I inform the House that the Deputy Prime Minister will be absent from question time today on a personal matter. The Treasurer will answer questions on his behalf.
QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Budget

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (14:00): My question is to the Prime Minister. Australians know that the Prime Minister does not keep his election promises, but is this budget backdown today proof that he cannot even deliver on his lies?

The SPEAKER: I am sorry; that question is not in order. I will give the honourable member the opportunity to rephrase just the last part. He will not repeat the preamble to the question, simply the last line.

Mr SHORTEN: Thanks, Madam Speaker. Is this budget backdown today proof that he cannot even deliver his budget?

Mr ABBOTT (Warringah—Prime Minister) (14:01): There has been no budget backdown. What there has been is a recasting of a budget measure to make it easier to get some of these budget measures through the Senate.

Mr ABBOTT: I welcome questions on the budget from the Leader of the Opposition because the budget is this government's attempt to sort out the debt and deficit disaster that members opposite left us.

Mr ABBOTT: Once upon a time, the Leader of the Opposition understood, at least in theory if not in practice, the need for budget responsibility because, as he said to his constituents back in 2012:

… a budget surplus for a strong economy.

That is what he said—'a budget surplus for a strong economy'. The Leader of the Opposition then understood that there had to be a budget surplus if we are to have a strong economy. He was right then; he is wrong now. We must have a budget surplus as quickly as possible if we are to deliver the strong economy and the prosperous Australia that all of us should want.

I should point out to the Leader of the Opposition that the government is in fact calmly and methodically implementing our economic action strategy. The appropriation bills were passed in full, including a $7.6 billion saving from the foreign aid budget.

Mr ABBOTT: The budget repair levy on high-income earners has passed the Senate. We have successfully abolished the failed mining tax package, including associated spending, which will save $10 billion over the forward estimates, and around $50 billion over the next decade. And today, the House of Representatives has passed, I am pleased to say—thank you,
Opposition, for, for once, being a little bit responsible—one of our bills to implement responsible social services measures. This bill alone will deliver $2.7 billion in budget savings. We will take the savings we can get today, and we will go for the rest of the savings tomorrow.

Our budget strategy stands. Australia needs it. We must get back to a surplus as soon as possible. The Leader of the Opposition was right back in 2012 when he said 'a budget surplus for a strong economy'. I just wish he was as responsible today.

Infrastructure

Mr SUKKAR (Deakin) (14:05): My question is addressed to the Prime Minister. Will the Prime Minister update the House on action the government is taking to ease traffic congestion in my home state of Victoria, and in particular, in the Deakin electorate?

Mr ABBOTT (Warringah—Prime Minister) (14:05): I thank the member for Deakin for his question. I appreciate his interest in better infrastructure in Melbourne. It was good to be in Melbourne earlier this morning as the infrastructure Prime Minister and to stand beside one of our infrastructure premiers to affirm the Commonwealth's $3 billion commitment to East West Link.

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Moreton will leave under 94(a).

The member for Moreton then left the chamber.

Mr ABBOTT: Melbourne is a great city. It is a great city, but it is choking on its own traffic. Thanks to coalition governments in Spring Street and in Canberra, East West Link is beginning. The contracts are signed and the construction will begin in December. The construction will begin in December, and thanks to the East West Link stage 1, there will be almost 4,000 new jobs; 23 sets of traffic lights will be eliminated; 15 minutes will be shaved off the journeys—100,000 journeys every day—and Alexandra Parade, Flemington Road and Hoddle Street will once more be boulevards rather than traffic canyons.

But all of this could be put at risk by the Victorian Leader of the Opposition, who says he will tear up the contracts because he would rather pander to the Greens than build a stronger Victoria. He would rather give away $3 billion which has been pledged for East West Link, and for nothing else, than build a stronger Victoria.

I do acknowledge the shadow Treasurer—who is playing on his iPhone at the moment—who said what should have been said by the Victorian opposition leader. He said, 'Labor honours contracts'—quite properly. He just has to get the Victorian Labor leader to adopt the same sensible position. Melbourne is an economic powerhouse. It needs the roads of the 21st century if it is to prosper as it should, and the only way Melbourne will get the roads of the 21st century is through coalition governments in Spring Street and in Canberra.

There was a lot of talk from members opposite for six years about building infrastructure. They talked; we act. The time for talking has passed; the time for building is here.

Budget

Ms MACKLIN (Jagajaga) (14:08): My question is to the Prime Minister. I refer to the government's backdown on measures to cut the indexation of the age pension and make
Australians work until they are 70. Does the government now accept that it needs to go back to the drawing board on its shambolic budget?

Mr ABBOTT (Warringah—Prime Minister) (14:08): I love to get questions from the member for Jagajaga on the budget; because, while she does not like all of the budget, there is some of it that she loves. Let me cite the member for Jagajaga on a budget measure:

... young Australians will have to contribute to their development through either learning or earning. Avoiding responsibilities by doing nothing will no longer be an option.

Doing nothing should not be an option for young Australians.

Mr Burke: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There was not a word of the question that is relevant to the answer the Prime Minister is giving—

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The member will resume his seat. The question had its usual rhetoric about the need to go back to the drawing board and about budget. The Prime Minister is very relevant to the question.

Ms Butler interjecting—

The SPEAKER: And the member for Griffith is warned!

Mr ABBOTT: I was asked about the budget, I am answering about the budget, and a very important budget measure is a measure that has been strongly supported on numerous occasions by none other than the member for Jagajaga. And the House deserves to hear what the member for Jagajaga thinks—

Ms Plibersek: Another lie.

The SPEAKER: The member for Sydney will desist and withdraw.

Mr ABBOTT: I regret the fact that, on some issues, the member for Jagajaga feels unable to give the government her full support, but I welcome the full support that she has given to the government's learning or earning measure.

Budget

Ms HENDERSON (Corangamite) (14:10): My question is to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer outline how the budget will boost growth and improve productivity? How will investment in productivity-enhancing infrastructure help my constituents in Corangamite?

Mr HOCKEY (North Sydney—The Treasurer) (14:11): I thank the honourable member for Corangamite for her question. I note her very strong support for the announcement today by the Prime Minister and the Premier of Victoria of the development of the East West Link. That is a great initiative that the member for Corangamite supports, because the member for Corangamite actually wants to deliver 6,700 jobs. She wants to help to abolish the impact of 23 sets of traffic lights, and she wants to ensure that 100,000 vehicles will save around 20 minutes each way, each day, through the East West Link. So the member for Corangamite
supports the East West Link, the member for Corio opposes the East West Link, and the fundamental point is that we are determined to deliver the infrastructure—

  Mr Champion interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Wakefield will remove himself under 94(a).

The member for Wakefield then left the chamber.

Mr HOCKEY: that is going to build a stronger and more productive economy. As the infrastructure Prime Minister said: we are determined to lay down plans and deliver the infrastructure that helps to build a stronger Australian economy. That is what we are focused on: a stronger Australian economy. Only through a stronger Australian economy, by building the infrastructure of the 21st century, will we create the economic growth and deliver the jobs that are going to go to the people who need that security associated with certainty of jobs and certainty of income.

It is hugely important that the Australian people understand that whilst we have the biggest infrastructure program in Australia's history—the equivalent of building eight new Snowy Mountains schemes in less than a decade—we are delivering and the Labor Party is opposing. How disappointing that must be. On every aspect, the Labor Party is opposing. Once upon a time, they actually supported the East West Link. The now Leader of the Opposition actually put in not one but two submissions supporting the East West Link, but now that the Labor Party are in opposition they are opposing it all. They are opposing infrastructure, they are opposing our asset recycling initiative. I simply refer to the comments today the Chief Executive of Infrastructure Partnerships Australia, who said in relation to their latest infrastructure report: 'These figures show in black and white why Australia's governments must get on with asset sales, using the proceeds to invest in infrastructure projects.'

We have an economic plan. Our economic plan delivers more jobs, better infrastructure and greater economic certainty for everyday Australians.

Economy

Mr BOWEN (McMahon) (14:14): My question is to the Treasurer. Why did the Treasurer say, in question time yesterday, that retail trade grew at 7.4 per cent over the past year when, in fact, it grew at 5.1 per cent? Why did the Treasurer mislead the House? Was the Treasurer being sloppy or dodgy with economic data?

The SPEAKER: The member for McMahon knows the rules about irony and sarcasm. However, the question can stand and the Treasurer has the call.

Mr HOCKEY (North Sydney—The Treasurer) (14:14): I welcome that question from the member for McMahon. I will tell you why. He asked me about whether I was sloppy or dodgy with economic data.

Mr BOWEN interjecting—

Mr HOCKEY: How about this? The government—

Mr Bowen interjecting—

Mr HOCKEY: Listen, son. You cannot white—

Mr Bowen interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for McMahon!
Mr HOCKEY: Liquid paper is not around anymore, but we still have the words:

… the Government has returned the Budget to surplus three years ahead of schedule and ahead of any other major advanced economy, and the debt and deficit campaign is now exposed for the fraud that it always was.

The Labor government that has not delivered a surplus since Bob Hawke was Prime Minister, the Labor Party that did not deliver a surplus in the lifetime of Wyatt Roy, the member for Longman! The Labor Party last delivered a surplus before he was born. And yet the member for McMahon, who does not know the difference between net debt and gross debt and put it in writing, who does not know the currency of China and who claimed a surplus, has the gall to ask about being sloppy, CommSec, as they admitted, got it wrong. That is why I cited CommSec. But in fact CommSec said that the figure about 2002 goes to New South Wales.

Mr Dreyfus interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Isaacs will desist—

Mr Bowen interjecting—

Ms Plibersek interjecting—

The SPEAKER: as will the members for McMahon and Sydney!

Mr HOCKEY: Remember New South Wales—the state that the member for McMahon comes from?

Mr Thistlethwaite interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Kingsford Smith is warned!

Mr HOCKEY: In fact, retail sales figures on a trend basis are better than at any time since 2010. Let me see. Who was in government? Who was the Treasurer between 2010 and now—

Mr Bowen interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for McMahon is warned!

Mr HOCKEY: who saw retail sales figures at a lesser rate than occurred under us? Who was that? The member for McMahon. How about that? The words come back on you, old son.

Mr Bowen: Madam Speaker, I seek leave to table the Hansard of yesterday and the reports of several economic agencies showing retail trade growth at 5.1 per cent, not 7.4.

The SPEAKER: The member will resume his seat. Firstly, you are not permitted to seek to table a document which is already a public document. Hansard was pretty public. As to the second document, is leave granted?

Leave not granted.

National Security

Mr NIKOLIC (Bass) (14:17): My question is to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Will the minister update the House on the government's efforts to starve terrorist organisations of funds and fighters? How will new laws support the work of our security agencies?

Ms JULIE BISHOP (Curtin—Minister for Foreign Affairs) (14:17): I thank the member for Bass for his question and I recognise his fine record of over 30 years service in our Defence Force.

CHAMBER
Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Ms JULIE BISHOP: Yesterday this parliament passed national security legislation containing targeted measures to improve the laws governing Australia's intelligence agencies, and this legislation is another vital measure in protecting Australia from the increasing threat of terrorism. Subject to appropriate limitations and safeguards, this legislation will modernise ASIO's warrant based intelligence collection capabilities and enhance the ability of our overseas intelligence agency to target the activities of Australian foreign fighters in Iraq and Syria.

The government is also determined to starve terrorist organisations of the resources they need, including financial. Anyone who supports terrorist groups is playing a part in the atrocious and violent acts that these groups commit and is putting Australian lives at risk. The consequences of participating in terrorist financing are severe, and penalties of up to life imprisonment can be imposed on those found guilty. We are funding additional analysts and new intelligence systems to significantly enhance our ability to detect the flow of funds to terrorist groups, and this will help prevent Australian foreign fighters from receiving financial support. Our agency AUS TRAC is already taking action and recently suspended the registration of a financier.

Australia is also taking a leading role internationally to shut down sources of terrorist finance. As chair of the United Nations Security Council Al-Qaeda Sanctions Committee, we are working with other countries to combat terrorist financing, including by freezing the assets of listed terrorists and imposing travel bans against designated individuals.

Australia recently co-sponsored a UN Security Council resolution on foreign terrorist fighters which requires all nations to prevent and suppress the financing of terrorists, their travel and their activities. Recently Australia assumed the presidency of the international Financial Action Task Force, and in that role we are promoting effective legal, regulatory and operational measures to combat terrorism financing globally. Australia is playing its part militarily, humanitarian-wise and as part of the international effort to starve terrorist organisations of funds, of fighters and of weapons. Australia will play its part in the international coalition to combat terrorism in all its forms.

Pensions and Benefits

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (14:20): My question is to the Prime Minister. Now that the Prime Minister has made a strategic retreat on his unfair plan to cut pension indexation, will the Prime Minister finally acknowledge that this harsh cut will never pass through the parliament? Will he rule out including it as a saving in his government's Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook?

Mr ABBOTT (Warringah—Prime Minister) (14:21): Again I remind the Leader of the Opposition of his statement to his own constituents—

* Mr Husic interjecting —

The SPEAKER: The member for Chifley will desist—

* Mr Bowen interjecting —

The SPEAKER: as will the member for McMahon. You are warned!
Mr ABBOTT: back in 2012: 'a budget surplus for a strong economy'. What we are attempting to do is to save Australia from the debt and deficit disaster that members opposite created. Time and time again they promised to deliver a surplus, because they know a surplus is necessary, but they absolutely failed to back their words with deeds. We will deliver, and if we find ourselves blocked in one way we will find other ways to succeed.

If there has been any backdown at all in the last 24 hours, it is Labor's backdown in now voting unanimously for $2.7 billion of our welfare savings today. So we have got $2.7 billion of extra savings today. We will go for the rest of our budget savings in coming weeks.

As for indexation of the pension, we want to continue indexing the pension. Under our proposals the pension will go up every six months every year. It will go up by the same indexation rate that Labor thinks it is fair and reasonable for family tax benefit. If it is fair and reasonable for family tax benefit, it is fair and reasonable for other social security benefits. What we will do is make the system sustainable so that we can be a strong and prosperous economy far into the future. That is what we are doing, we are tackling purposefully, methodically the debt and deficit disaster that the Labor Party left us. That is what the people voted for. They voted for us to tackle the debt and deficit disaster and we will not let them down.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER (14:23): Before I call the honourable member for Indi, I wish to advise the chamber that we have in the Speaker's gallery this afternoon Philippines Congressman the Hon. Raul del Mar, Head of the Congressional Inter-Parliamentary and Diplomacy Committee, accompanied by Her Excellency Belen Anota, Philippines Ambassador. We make you most welcome.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Infrastructure: Melbourne to Albury Rail Services

Ms McGOWAN (Indi) (14:24): My question is to the Assistant Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development. As you know, serious problems continue to affect the reliability of train services on the Melbourne to Albury line, impacting on individuals and business productivity. Will the government commit to working with the Australian Rail Track Corporation and the Victorian government to provide a firm time line for when the problems of the track and the reliability of train services will be fixed for the benefit of the people of all of Victoria?

Mr BRIGGS (Mayo—Assistant Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development) (14:24): I thank the member for Indi for her question. She knows that this government, led by the infrastructure Prime Minister, is dedicated to implementing our $50 billion program—much of it targeted at regional areas. Particularly in her electorate—in fact, on Monday—the Assistant Minister for Education announced a $1.8 million package of works in the Indigo Shire, which was a terrific investment in the electorate of Indi to ensure that your people get the benefit—

Mr Albanese: With Sophie Mirabella!
Mr BRIGGS: Actually the former member was there—invited by the council, actually—as the member for South Sydney interjects.

I know that the member is interested in the rail track and she made a series of very strong commitments in the election campaign in respect of it. It is, of course, the responsibility of the Australian Rail Track Corporation. In taking up the lease of the track the ARTC has had to address a significant history of underinvestment by a series of states on the Melbourne to Sydney line. The ARTC instituted a five-year, $134 million ballast rehabilitation program in 2011 to address the problems with the line, and is now two-thirds of the way through this.

Mr Dreyfus interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Isaacs will desist!

Mr BRIGGS: A further $20 million is being spent on the Victorian west tracks works.

Mr Albanese interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Grayndler will ease his frustration in other ways!

Mr BRIGGS: These are complex programs which have achieved excellent progress so far, but there is much work to be done over the next 18 months. Significant progress has been made on the condition of the track between Melbourne and Sydney. This is supported by the excellent performance of the corridor. Freight availability on intermodal services is still considered as meeting customers' expectations and a majority of passenger trains are achieving much higher and consistent levels of on-time running.

In particular, in relation to the Victorian side of the border, which I know the member for Indi is interested in, over the coming months ballast rehabilitation program—

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr BRIGGS: I know the member for Indi is interested. Those opposite may not be in infrastructure investment, but we are on this side. The ballast rehabilitation program is focusing on works around fixed points like bridge ends and level crossings along sections of the east track in north-east Victoria. This work started on 22 September and involves working from Seymour to Benalla forward on the east track and runs to the end of this month in October. These works involve specific ballast condition improvement works, including track undercutting and sledding. Drainage works through the corridor in north-east Victoria are also scheduled for late October.

We on this side are absolutely focused on investing in infrastructure—investments like the East West Link that the Prime Minister has talked about, but also investments in freight rail across our country to improve our economy for more jobs and a better Australia.

National Security

Mr HOWARTH (Petrie) (14:27): My question is to the Minister for Justice. Will the minister please inform the House how the government's additional funding to Australia's national security organisations enhance our ability to combat the terror threat?

Mr KEENAN (Stirling—Minister for Justice) (14:27): I thank the member for Petrie for that question. He is a hardworking member doing a good job for his constituents here in Canberra. He is aware—and I think most members would be aware—that the Abbott government is making a significant investment in tackling terrorism and violent extremism. As the foreign minister has alluded to earlier, yesterday we passed through the parliament a

CHAMBER
new suite of counter-terrorism laws which will significantly assist efforts to disrupt terrorism planning and to bring to justice those Australians who are engaged in or supporting conflicts in Syria or Iraq.

But the government recognises that a legislative reform is only one side of this coin and so in addition to this we are providing our agencies with new and updated tools to counter this evolving threat. We are also going to make sure that they are resourced sufficiently to deal with this challenge. That is why we have committed $630 million over the next four years to enhance the capability and capacity of our law enforcement and intelligence agencies.

Of this, $186 million of this money will be going to ASIO. This funding will be used by them to increase the number of intelligence officers, analysts and technical specialists. The additional staff will increase their capacity to detect and investigate those involved in terrorism-related activities; will provide greater analytical resources to improve ASIO’s understanding of the threat posed by these individuals and groups; will strengthen advice to law enforcement agencies to support the disruption of extremist activities; and will also increase the exchange of intelligence between ASIO and foreign intelligence and security agencies.

ASIO makes a vital contribution to Australia’s counter-terrorism effort and we have seen this in recent weeks with the counter-terrorism raids made in conjunction with law enforcement agencies. This additional funding will better position ASIO to provide an intelligence edge in the fight against terrorism and those who would seek to do us harm. Tomorrow I will meet with all state and territory attorneys-general and police ministers, along with the heads of our security and law enforcement agencies, under the new Law, Crime and Community Safety Council. The establishment of this council was an election commitment of the federal coalition. The council will ensure information sharing between jurisdictions, and I can tell the House that information sharing between state and federal law enforcement is currently unprecedented. I look forward to being able to engage in further discussion with my state and territory colleagues about how we counter the current threat and to lifting the resources of ASIO. With greater and unprecedented information sharing between agencies, we will be better equipped to ensure the safety of all Australians.

**Budget**

Mr FEENEY (Batman) (14:30): My question is to the Prime Minister. Now that the Prime Minister has suffered a humiliating defeat on his cruel cuts to veterans’ pensions, will the Prime Minister acknowledge that his harsh cut will never get through the parliament and rule out including it as a savings measure in the government’s Mid Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook?

Mr ABBOTT (Warringah—Prime Minister) (14:31): There are no cuts, and the member who asked the question should not mislead the parliament like that.

*Opposition members interjecting—*

The SPEAKER: The members for Grayndler and Gorton will desist.

Mr ABBOTT: What is happening is that the indexation measures which this government is proposing for all social security benefits are the same indexation measures that members opposite believe are right and proper for the family tax benefit. If it is an indexation system which they think is proper for one very important social service benefit, it is surely right and
proper for other social service benefits. What this government is seeking to do is exactly what we told people at the election: to restore our budgetary position and bring the budget back under control. Once upon a time even the Leader of the Opposition—

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Gorton! The member for Sydney!

Mr ABBOTT: thought it was important to bring the budget back to surplus. He kept talking to his own constituents about a budget surplus for a strong economy.

Mr Dreyfus interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Isaacs is warned!

Mr ABBOTT: He did not only say that once on the front of his newsletter, under 'A budget surplus for a strong economy'; if you go into the newsletter he goes on to say they are back in surplus 'on time, as promised'. I mean, really! But there was some sense in it. He said: In these uncertain global times there's no clearer sign of a strong economy than a surplus.

He is right there.

Mr Dreyfus: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The Prime Minister is not even attempting to be relevant to the question. This material has nothing to do with the question.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The member will resume his seat.

Mr ABBOTT: I know the members opposite do not like being reminded of what they have said, but the Leader of the Opposition said—

Ms Claydon interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Newcastle is not in her seat and may not interject!

Mr ABBOTT: When he was a minister in the government, he said:

In these uncertain global times there's no clearer sign of a strong economy than a surplus.

And he was right; but then he went on to say, 'We've delivered a surplus on time, as promised.' He was wrong—very, very wrong.

The simple truth is that when it comes to members opposite—when it comes to the Labor Party—they were failures in government and now they are wreckers in opposition.

Mr Mitchell interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for McEwen!

Mr ABBOTT: But we will get on with the job the public elected us to do: getting the budget back under control.

Economy

Ms SCOTT (Lindsay) (14:34): My question is to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer outline the steps the government is taking to build a stronger economy? How will a stronger economy lead to more and better jobs in Australia?

Mr HOCKEY (North Sydney—The Treasurer) (14:34): As a starting point I say to the member for Lindsay and all members in this place: we have to fix the budget mess we inherited from Labor. If we allow the budget to continue on the path that Labor laid down, in 10 years time every single Australian would have $25,000 of government debt against their name. Every child born in 10 years time would have $25,000 of debt at the moment of birth as
a result of what Labor has done. Six years of Labor was like a wrecking ball through the Australian economy.

We are determined to deliver growth and jobs. For the people of western Sydney, where the member for Lindsay resides and works, the fact is we are committing nearly $3 billion for new road infrastructure and we are getting on with the job of building the Badgerys Creek airport after years of procrastination.

In addition to that, we promised we would get rid of the carbon tax. We got rid of that carbon tax. We said we would get rid of the mining tax for all Australians. We got rid of the mining tax. We said we would start the process of rolling out the biggest infrastructure program in Australian history and we are doing that. We said we were going to start to fix the budget and we are getting on with that.

But of course there are obstacles. Today being Thursday, it is book club Thursday.

**The SPEAKER:** We do not have props.

**Mr HOCKEY:** Who is our favourite author?

**The SPEAKER:** The member will resume his seat.

**Mr HOCKEY:** Every time I speak his sales go up by one!

**The SPEAKER:** The Treasurer will not use the book as a prop!

**Mr HOCKEY:** I tell you what: in 400 pages of the Swan book we could not find one mention of surplus—not one mention. Oh, come on, Swanny! Not one mention. Try it now: give us one surplus, Swanny!

**Mr Swan:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. That is a lie.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Lilley knows that is against the standing orders and will withdraw.

**Mr Swan:** I will not withdraw. It is a lie.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Lilley will remove himself from the House under the provisions of standing order 94(a). The Treasurer has the call. He may quote from the book but not use it as a prop.

**The member for Lilley then left the chamber.**

**Mr HOCKEY:** Well, Madam Speaker, I am just going through the index here. I can see 'Dominique Strauss-Kahn', 'superannuation', 'Erinn Swan', 'Kim Swan', 'Libbi Swan', 'Matthew Swan', 'Wayne Swan' but no 'surplus'. I cannot find it. But he promised it. How many times? Three hundred or 400 times he promised it. He even claimed to deliver a surplus, and Labor claimed to deliver a surplus. But the fundamental problem is that Labor were wreckers in government and now they are wreckers in opposition, as well. They are opposing $40 billion of savings that are going to try and fix the Labor mess—the irony being that $5 billion of those savings are the things they actually announced but are now opposing. They are hypocrites when it comes to the budget and they are reckless when it comes to the economy.

**Budget**

**Mr BOWEN** (McMahon) (14:38): My question is to the Prime Minister. Now that the government has accepted that it will not be able to legislate some of its harshest budget cuts,
will the government now remove these completely from its Mid-Year Economic Fiscal Outlook? Or will future budget papers be based on a fabrication?

Mr ABBOTT (Warringah—Prime Minister) (14:38): They talk about fabrications; what about the former Treasurer who stood up in this parliament and said:

The four years of surpluses I announce tonight …

I mean, really and truly, the former government was built on a fabrication. Their whole economic policy was built on a fabrication: the surplus that they knew our country needed and the surplus that they never came within cooee of delivering.

So, Madam Speaker, we are very pleased that a skerrick of responsibility, a moment of economic literacy, has penetrated into the dim minds of members opposite, and they have supported $2.7 billion—they have had a rare moment of economic lucidity—of savings today, and I thank them for that. The budget savings that we have not got today, we will keep trying to get tomorrow and the day after tomorrow and the day after that, because we are pledged to getting the budget back under control. We are pledged to ending Labor's debt and deficit disaster. We are pledged to ending the $123 billion of cumulative deficit, the $667 billion of projected debt, which the policies of members opposite were saddling our country with—$25,000 of debt hanging around the neck of every single man, woman and child; that is what members opposite left this country. We are pledged to fix this problem, and fix it we will.

Carbon Pricing

The SPEAKER: I call the honourable member for Pitt—sorry, for Hinkler. I beg your pardon for calling you by your surname instead of your seat.

Mr PITT (Hinkler) (14:40): That is quite all right, if that is the worst thing that happens today! My question is to the Minister for the Environment. Will the minister update the House on savings to Hinkler households and businesses thanks to the repeal of the carbon tax?

Mr HUNT (Flinders—Minister for the Environment) (14:41): I want to thank the member for Hinkler. He represents 96,000 constituents who are benefiting from the repeal of the carbon tax—at least four of whom are in the gallery today with his wife and children. He represents not just the constituents that benefit but also one of Australia's finest food-processing areas—businesses such as Hervey Bay Scallops and Avocado Fresh. We also have Ocean King Prawn.

Mr Joyce: Bundaberg rum!

Mr HUNT: And, of course, Bundaberg rum, so the Minister for Agriculture tells me. It is very interesting that all of these businesses stood to benefit in their food-processing capabilities by the removal of the carbon tax. We were told on 17 July by none other than the Leader of the Opposition—who was asked whether or not the carbon tax, when it was repealed, would lead to lower prices—that:

Do Australians really believe they're going to see back all the money which Tony Abbott alleged the carbon price cost them?

Well, I am sorry to say to the Leader of the Opposition that the price reductions are flowing through. In the member for Hinkler's own electorate, the latest figures are these for electricity price savings: Simply Energy is delivering a nine per cent reduction to Hinkler residents; Power Direct customers in Hinkler are receiving a 9.2 per cent reduction; Ergon Energy
customers are receiving a 9.4 per cent reduction. And, for small business owners, EnergyAustralia customers are receiving a 9.1 per cent reduction. But I also have—

Mr Thistlethwaite interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Kingsford Smith has been warned!

Mr HUNT: the EnergyAustralia estimates for medium and large businesses, because there are large food-processing businesses in his electorate. If you are, for example, an IGA of a reasonable size, you will save about $11,000 on your electricity costs. If, however, you have large coolrooms, just on your electricity cost—because you are a major food-processing business—it will be somewhere between $21,000 and $43,000. So there are real savings for the businesses in Hinkler which can compete, which can perform and which can employ more people.

But these same businesses also have refrigerant costs, and some of the refrigerant costs which are flowing through are very, very significant indeed. For a convenience store operator, the refrigerant savings are $3,000. For a medium-sized supermarket coolroom, $1,000. He has one of the largest fishing fleets in Australia, and, for a fishing vessel operator, we are looking at a carbon tax saving of $16½ thousand a year. On top of that, if you have a beer cooling system, it is $3½ thousand a year. So what we see are real savings—contrary to what the Leader of the Opposition says. And he wants to take them away.

Budget

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (14:44): My question is to the Prime Minister. I refer to the Prime Minister's earlier answers where he has again committed to cutting the indexation rate of the age pension. Why is the Prime Minister so determined to slug Australian pensioners while remaining so committed to his rolled-gold Paid Parental Leave scheme, which will pay $50,000 to millionaires?

Mr ABBOTT (Warringah—Prime Minister) (14:45): We are doing the right thing by the pensioners of Australia because we have scrapped the carbon tax and kept the carbon tax compensation. The only one who wants to slug the pensioners of Australia is the Leader of the Opposition and those members sitting behind him, because they want to bring the carbon tax back.

That is what they want to do. They want to bring back the carbon tax to slug the pensioners of Australia. By contrast, we have scrapped the carbon tax and we have kept the carbon tax compensation, which means that every pensioner is significantly better off.

I just want to remind the Leader of the Opposition that what this government is trying to do is to build a strong and prosperous economy for a safe and secure Australia, and if we want a strong economy we have to have a budget surplus.

Ms Macklin: More slogans!

Mr ABBOTT: I hear the member for Jagajaga saying 'more slogans'. Well, a budget surplus for a strong economy—that is the Leader of the Opposition's own statement.

Then, if we turn over the page, 'Australia's economic report card'.

Ms PLIBERSEK: Where's your budget?

Mr ABBOTT: I am citing the Leader of the Opposition in 'Australia's economic report card': 'In these uncertain global times there is no clearer sign of a strong economy than a
surplus.’ It was true then, it is true now, it will be true tomorrow, it will be true the day after, it will be true next year and it will be true the year after that. These are economic truths. These are economic principles. These are the principles of good government, which members opposite sort of understood, but they never had the courage and the principal actually to deliver on them. We understand them and we are delivering on them.

I do not say that it is easy, but it is necessary. We do need, as the Leader of the Opposition understands, to get back into surplus if we are to have a strong economy. He knew it; we are doing it.

**Higher Education**

**Mrs PRENTICE** (Ryan) (14:47): My question is to the erudite Minister for Education. Minister, will you please inform the House of the impact of failing to reform our higher education system—

**Mr Feeney:** What's araldite got to do with it?

**Mr Danby:** Absurdus maximus!

**Mrs Griggs:** That's nasty!

**The SPEAKER:** There will be quiet on my right and left. I cannot hear the question.

**Mrs PRENTICE:** Allow me to repeat the question, Madam Speaker. It is to the erudite Minister for Education. Minister, will you please inform the House of the impact that failing to reform our higher education system will have on universities, research and opportunities for students?

**Government members interjecting**—

**Mr Burke:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Members from that side are calling out 'irony'. The question is not quite in order.

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order.

**Mr PYNE** (Sturt—Leader of the House and Minister for Education) (14:48): I thank the member for Ryan for her excellent question and the way she put it to the House. It was hard to hear it over the enthusiastic agreement from my colleagues around me.

The simple truth is that if these reforms are not passed it will have a very deleterious impact on higher education in Australia, and Labor is standing in the way. The simple fact is that, if these reforms are not passed, the demand-driven system will not be expanded to courses like associate diplomas and degrees. It will not be expanded at non-university higher education providers, and that means that 80,000 fewer young Australians—and mature-age Australians—will get the opportunity to go to university by 2018 every year. Eighty thousand Australians will miss out on the chance to get a higher education qualification because the demand-driven system is not expanded to sub-bachelor courses and not expanded to the non-university higher education providers.

The most generous Commonwealth scholarships scheme in Australia's history in higher education will not be implemented. The 20 per cent and 25 per cent loan fees currently slugged on vocational education and training students and students in private institutions will continue, making it harder for them to get the life-changing higher education qualifications that allow them to improve their skills and to get better jobs.
The National Collaborative Research Infrastructure scheme—that was a funding cliff left to us by the former government—will not continue, meaning that terrific research infrastructure will not be rolled out in our universities. The Future Fellowships scheme, which is a scholarship for mid-career researchers and which was another funding cliff left to us by the former government, will not go ahead, meaning that up to 1,500 Australians will lose their jobs in the years ahead in research in Australia because Labor opposes the reform bill. That means that the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy and the Future Fellowships will end.

To put it in perspective, in the electorate of the member for Chisholm, who I know has always been a hard-working member in this place while I have been here—in spite of her being on the wrong side of the House!—211 Australians will lose their jobs at the Australian National Data Service, the Australian Synchrotron and the European Molecular Biology Laboratory. They will not have the funding necessary to continue to work in those particular ventures. That is 211 in one electorate alone. And those 1,500 are spread throughout Australia.

So I call on Labor to become part of the conversation about the reform bill; to stop standing in the way and to stop being irrelevant on the sidelines and to bring about great reform to our universities.

Budget

Ms RISHWORTH (Kingston) (14:51): My question is to the Prime Minister. Why is the Prime Minister so determined to force young Australians to pay $100,000 for a degree? Why is he so determined to give a tax break to those with over $2 million in retirement savings?

Mr ABBOTT (Warringah—Prime Minister) (14:52): Let me respond with the truth to those untruths from the member who just asked that question. The truth is that no Australian university student need pay a dollar upfront. The truth is that all of their fees will be covered by the FEE-HELP scheme, which has been in place in one form or another, for many years, and fully 50 per cent of their university education will be covered by the taxpayer.

Given that university graduates earn on average 75 per cent more over their lifetimes than nongraduates, given that 60 per cent of the population do not go on to get university degrees, I think it is fair and reasonable that those who are having the benefit of a university education should pay a modestly greater percentage. It is fair and reasonable to those who do not get the benefit that those who do get the benefit should pay a small increase in the burden of their benefit.

We are in the business of trying to ensure that Australia's universities are as good as they can be. That is why we want to respect them by giving them their freedom. That is all we want to do: we want to give them their freedom. And that is a freedom that will be good for them, it will be good for their students and it will be good for our country.

Budget

Mr HUTCHINSON (Lyons) (14:53): Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister for Social Services. Will the minister update the House on the progress of the government's social services budget measures?

Mr ANDREWS (Menzies—Minister for Social Services) (14:53): I thank the member for Lyons for his question and for his representation in this place of that great heartland from
Tasmania. On that note, I commend him and the members for Braddon and Bass, who last night brought producers from Tasmania here for the Taste of Tasmania. It was great to see those producers here in Canberra.

I can answer the member for Lyons by saying that the operation to repair the budget continued today. That was because we passed in this House the first tranche of welfare reform legislation, which, in doing so, brought about $2.7 billion in savings to the Commonwealth budget. That is in the context of the legacy of deficit and debt that we inherited from the former Labor government: deficits running out to $123 billion; a trajectory of Commonwealth debt of $667 billion. That means every month in Australia $1 billion is being spent in just paying the interest bill that we inherited from the Labor Party—$1 billion a month just to pay the interest bill—and, of course, if we ever got to the $667 billion, it would not be $1 billion a month, it would be $3 billion a month. For every Australian, every person sitting in this gallery today watching these proceedings, that would mean a $25,000 debt for every man, woman and child in Australia. That is the trajectory of debt that we inherited from the Labor Party, and that is why these measures today, in terms of repairing the surplus and in making sure we have a surplus in the future, is something that is so important, and $2.7 billion is an important down payment to achieving that for Australia.

But that is not the end of these proceedings. We reintroduced, as the member for Lyons knows, into the House this morning the substance of bills that were in the parliament previously so that we could continue to prosecute these changes that are needed for welfare in Australia. The big difference between the people sitting on this side of the House and those opposite is that we believe we should be doing everything we can to encourage Australians to be in work. By contrast, those on the other side are quite content that people remain on welfare for months and years and in some cases, tragically and sadly, for decades. That is the difference between us. We will continue to prosecute that legislation to ensure that Australians have work in the future, that they can contribute to the mainstream economy and the economic wellbeing of this country rather than just leaving them on welfare.

Assistant Treasurer

Mr BOWEN (McMahons) (14:57): Madam Speaker, my question is to the Prime Minister. Given the government’s budget is in shambles and given Sunday will mark 200 days since the Assistant Treasurer was stood down, when will the Prime Minister finally announce a new Assistant Treasurer, because the Treasurer clearly needs all the help he can get?

Mr ABBOTT (Warringah—Prime Minister) (14:57): Senator Mathias Cormann is doing an outstanding job in that particular role. I do look forward, depending upon the outcome of the ICAC investigation in New South Wales, to the return of Senator Sinodinos, but, Madam Speaker, we have a very strong economic team. And after six years of shambles and chaos, after six years of debt and deficit and disaster, thank God we do have a strong economic team.

Health Care

Mr RAMSEY (Grey) (14:58): Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister for Health. Would the minister inform the House how the government is making Medicare sustainable? Importantly, Minister, could you inform us of any other examples of co-payments on health services around Australia?
Mr Dutton (Dickson—Minister for Health and Minister for Sport) (14:58): I thank the member for Grey for his question and his great interest in health matters, particularly in regional areas in South Australia. We have announced in the budget a modest co-payment of $7 because we want to make Medicare sustainable with an ageing population and all the costs of medical technologies. We have been lectured by Labor that this is an unfair measure, that it is unfathomable that you would charge $7 as a co-payment, bearing in mind that four out of five services, where people turn up to a GP at the moment, are given for free.

I have not looked at Labor's words; I have looked at their deeds. We know that when Labor were in government, they introduced a co-payment, not just on the PBS but on the MBS as well. And I have looked at two other jurisdictions where the Labor Party is in government.

I looked at South Australia, because they were lecturing as well about this $7 co-payment, and I came across this document which talks about co-payments for adult public dental care. I thought that surely the Labor Party could not be charging a co-payment for health services in their public hospitals after they have been lecturing the Commonwealth about a $7 co-payment. Surely, their co-payment must be less—$3 or $4, surely, if they are so sanctimonious about $7.

Ms King interjecting—

The Speaker: The member for Ballarat will desist.

Mr Dutton: I went to the fee schedule. If you are in South Australia—and this is not just for all South Australians, but a concession card holder on low income—what does the Labor Party say to that person if they need emergency dental care? The co-payment is $55—not $3 or $4 or $7, but $55. This is a sanctimonious and hypocritical lot over there lecturing us about economic management and surpluses, none of which they ever delivered on, and now it turns out that Labor is charging $55. But if you are a concession card holder in South Australia on a very low income, it does not stop there. If you need dental services, there is no $3 or $4 co-payment for a dental service. If you need a general dental service, it is $155.

Ms King: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, perhaps if you would like to be relevant you would mention the $450 million—

The Speaker: The minister will resume his seat. The member for Ballarat will remove herself from the House under 94(a).

The member for Ballarat then left the chamber.

Mr Dutton: I think I can probably finish on that note.

Government members interjecting—

Australian Broadcasting Corporation and Special Broadcasting Service Funding

Mr Clare (Blaxland) (15:01): My question is to the Prime Minister. The night before the election the Prime Minister said that there would be no cuts to the ABC. This morning the Minister for Communications said, 'Look, we are making cuts to the ABC and SBS, that is true.' Prime Minister, who is right, the Prime Minister or the wannabe Prime Minister?

Mr Abbott (Warringah—Prime Minister) (15:02): It is more than possible for us both to be right, because we are cutting the rate of growth in funding. That is all we are doing. There is a one per cent one-off efficiency dividend being applied to the ABC and the SBS, which means that the rate of growth of ABC funding has been a little bit less this year than...
last year. It is a very, very reasonable change. Surely members opposite are not saying that the
only part of government that should never have an efficiency dividend applied to it is the
ABC. Surely, they are not saying that. I said that there would be no cuts to the ABC, and
ABC funding is more this year than last year. And I want to say how pleased and proud I am
to see the great work that the Minister for Communications is doing not just with the NBN but
also with the national broadcaster as well.

**Apprenticeships**

**Mrs ANDREWS** (McPherson) (15:03): My question is to the Minister for Industry. Will
the minister update the House on the take-up of the government's new trade support loans?
What other measures is the government taking to improve support to apprentices and their
employers?

**Mr IAN MACFARLANE** (Groom—Minister for Industry) (15:04): I thank the member
for McPherson for her question. As a former engineer who worked as an industry training
adviser panel member in Queensland, she is more than aware of the critical need to have a
skilled workforce if you are going to have a productive economy.

I am pleased, in fact, delighted, to announce that since August we have had almost 6,000
young Australians—come on, it’s Thursday!

**Mr Burke:** Madam Speaker, on a point of order, as you heard, the minister just advised
the House that he was making an announcement, in contravention of standing orders.

**Mr Pyne:** Madam Speaker, on the point of order, just to make this clear because the
opposition tried to get away with this again the other day: the standing order applies to the
question. A question cannot ask the minister to announce government policy. It is quite silent
on the issue of what ministers can say in terms of that. It is absolutely right. You are getting a
bit rusty—

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order.

**Mr IAN MACFARLANE:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I know those opposite hate to
see facts announced in this House, but here is a fact for them to file away for Thursday
afternoon. We have seen 6,000 young Australians take up trade support loans including more
than 1,500 in the home state of the member for McPherson, a great achievement. There
should be little surprise, certainly not from this side, in relation to why so many young people
are taking up these trade support loans. The reality is that these loans offer young people who
enter a certain skill area or apprenticeship up to $20,000 interest-free. Adjusted annually for
inflation, it is a $20,000 interest-free loan that does not require repayment until that person is
earning in excess of $50,000 a year.

This government's advances in the area of skills and training does not stop there. The Prime
Minister and I last month announced the Australian Apprenticeship Support Network, a $200
million investment to lift apprenticeship completion rates. If there is one thing that is urgent,
it is lifting the number of apprentices who actually complete their trades. We saw the terrible
situation arise under the previous government where 50 per cent of the people who started
apprenticeships did not finish them.

We need to have a situation where young people in particular have the best opportunities to
get jobs, and to do that they must be skilled to be productive. We are setting up a one-stop
shop for employers, particularly for small businesses, looking to hire apprentices suited to
their businesses. I am sure that the new Australian Apprenticeship Support Network will get the same level of applause and support from the business community as we have seen for trade support loans in relation to apprentices. The current system that we inherited was clogged by red tape from the previous government. We are out to make sure that we can target job-matching advice about different course opportunities and, of course, mentoring. This is all about encouraging young people not only to take up apprenticeships but also to finish them.

**Aged Care**

**Mr NEUMANN** (Blair) (15:08): My question is to the Prime Minister. Prime Minister, Saturday will mark 100 days since the government announced, without any warning, that it was slashing the dementia and severe behaviours supplement, a supplement of $16 per day that helps residential aged-care homes with the unique demands of dementia patients. Is this what the Prime Minister meant when he promised a government of no surprises and no excuses?

**Mr ABBOTT** (Warringah—Prime Minister) (15:08): Dementia is a very serious problem, and it is a very serious management issue for nursing homes. As we know, our nursing homes and aged-care facilities do have an increasing portion of residents who do suffer from dementia. The problem with the program that was put in place by the former government is that it was not very well designed and, unfortunately, costs blew out tenfold. A program that was supposed to cost about $11 million was costing well over $100 million. So, as the shadow minister said, we suspended the program. We did suspend the program. We are working with the sector to redesign the program so that it does the job efficiently and effectively as originally intended. Unfortunately, as rather often happened under the former government, a policy that was full of good intentions was announced but it did not work as intended. That is the problem. Yet again it was something that the former government did but did badly. We are now attempting to ensure that it is delivered effectively and efficiently because that is what the public expect. Even good intentions and worthy causes—and, yes, this is a very worthy cause indeed—have to be pursued efficiently and effectively. That is what people expect from their government. That is what we intend to deliver.

**Broadband**

**Mr WOOD** (La Trobe) (15:10): My question is to the Minister for Communications. I refer the minister to the Vertigan panel's report on broadband regulation and today's reaction to it. What is the government's response?

**Mr TURNBULL** (Wentworth—Minister for Communications) (15:11): I thank the honourable member for his question. The Vertigan panel—chaired by Michael Vertigan himself and with Henry Ergas, Tony Shaw and Alison Deans—has now produced the final volume of its report. The first part, of course, was the cost-benefit analysis that was published some time ago and today the regulatory review of broadband was formally released. It is a very important work. We are looking forward to public discussion and feedback on it from stakeholders and the industry in particular.

There are a number of recommendations that are very important. One is so important that we responded to it immediately. The panel made the point that, of course, the creation of this gigantic telecom monopoly is hardly conducive to competition. They recommended that the
government consider breaking the NBN up into component parts which could in due course compete with each other. There is a lot of merit in that suggestion but it is not a proposal that could be undertaken today. The task of the new management, headed by Bill Morrow, is to sort out Labor's mess and get the project built. That is a formidable task. They need to focus on that: getting the project built as quickly and as cost effectively as possible and ensuring that everybody has access to very fast broadband as soon as possible. The restructuring issues are a matter for a later time after the project is complete.

The honourable member also asked me about reactions. In terms of the House today, there has been no reaction from the shadow minister, the member for Blaxland, but on the doors he was filled with fury—he was ranting, raving and accusing me of breaking promises. He does that almost every day, but he never asks a question of me here. And I ask myself: how can the member for Blaxland be a lion on the doors but just a little mouse in the chamber? What is it? I thought maybe he had had too much sugary cereal for his breakfast—his sugar levels were up and he was full of energy. As the day wears on he gets slower and slower and slower until he gets to question time and then he can hardly stay awake.

Mr Perrett interjecting—

Mr Turnbull: But then I recalled Senator Conroy's recent telecommunications participation in his preselection. Senator Conroy was not in Australia but was in fact overseas—presumably in Conrovia—and was beamed in on an iPad. Now, that is clearly the reason—the member for Blaxland has some malware on his iPad. He gets up in the morning, turns it on and what does he see? Conrovia!

The Speaker: The manager will resume his seat. The Manager of Opposition Business on a point of order.

Mr Burke: Madam Speaker, can you bring the minister back to the question? It is getting a bit weird.

The Speaker: Has the minister finished his answer? The minister has the call.

Mr Turnbull: All I can say is: for the Bulldogs' sake, I hope your team is in better form than you are today!

Mr Abbott: I ask that further questions be placed on the Notice Paper.

QUESTIONS TO THE SPEAKER

Responsibilities of the Chair

Reflections on Members of the Judiciary

The Speaker (15:14): Yesterday I was asked two questions, one relating to the use of Twitter and one relating to reflections on the judiciary, and I said I would look at those two and report to the House today. Yesterday I was asked by the Leader of the House about a tweet posted under the name of the member for McEwen earlier in the day, and the appropriateness of possible reflections on members via social media, particularly from someone occupying the chair.
This is not the first occasion on which the use, or possible misuse, of social media by members in the chamber has been raised with the Speaker, although this is the first occasion it has related to a tweet allegedly being sent from a person in the chair.

It is quite improper for occupiers of the chair whilst in the chair to reflect on the contributions of members, whether orally or by the use of social media. I will be instructing occupiers of the chair to refrain from using social media whilst they are in the chair, as they should be concentrating on the business at hand.

With relation to the question of members of the judiciary, the Manager of Opposition Business asked about the remarks of the Prime Minister in relation to the so-called Bolt case prosecuted under section 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act 1975. The Manager of Opposition Business asked whether the Prime Minister's remarks amounted to a reflection on members of the judiciary under standing order 89(b). *House of Representatives Practice*

notes:
Both standing orders and the practice of the House place certain constraints upon references in debate to members of the judiciary.

The Prime Minister's remarks, however, focused on whether the matter should have been prosecuted, not about any member of the judiciary, which is the relevant standing order.

**DOCUMENTS**

*Presentation*

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House and Minister for Education) (15:16): Documents are tabled in accordance with the list circulated to honourable members earlier today. Full details of the documents will be recorded in the *Votes and Proceedings*.

**MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE**

*Social Cohesion*

The SPEAKER (15:16): I have received a letter from the honourable the Leader of the Opposition proposing that a definite matter of public importance be submitted to the House for discussion, namely:

The dangers of prejudice and the importance of social cohesion in modern Australia.

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

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

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (15:17): Right now, more than ever, our parliament needs to promote social cohesion and confront prejudice, ignorance, sectarianism and fear, because, right now, we have asked our skilled and brave men and women of the Defence Force to confront prejudice and ignorance and sectarianism and fear in the Middle East. So today I shall ask the parliament that we, too, measure up to do our part at home to match the efforts of our defence forces, who, as we speak, are preparing to engage an enemy of humanity committing crimes against humanity.

For ISIL and the like, the enemy is not one nation, one faith or one people. Their enemy is the presence of peace. Their enemy is the presence of justice. Their enemy is the presence of
religious tolerance. Their target is freedom of worship, freedom of association, freedom of speech and freedom itself. We cannot negotiate with this hateful, poisonous ideology, just as we cannot ignore their crimes. So Australian forces are joining an international coalition going to the aid of the vulnerable.

Labor has always put the security of our nation above politics. At a time when we face renewed threats of terrorism in our own streets, our No. 1 priority is and always will be the safety of the people of Australia. We should listen to the experts and be guided by them as to how we best protect this country, our people and our way of life. But, in confronting the threat of fanaticism and extremism on the other side of the world and here at home, we cannot ignore the dangers of prejudice and racism. We must guard against dangerous division. We must recognise that we are stronger and better and safer when we stand together.

On Monday evening in Melbourne, a 26-year-old woman on the Upfield train line was subjected to a stream of racial abuse from another passenger. The young woman was grabbed by the hair and the neck and her head was smashed into the wall of the carriage multiple times. As the train was approaching Batman station, the attacker forced the carriage doors open and pushed the woman out onto the platform. Somehow, miraculously, the young woman walked away on Monday with only grazes and bruises. But how did she board that train on Tuesday? How did she face the world knowing that the way she looks makes her less safe? How does she cope with the fear, the terrifying anxiety and the sense that, everywhere she goes, she is a target for ignorant bullies?

Every manifestation of prejudice does damage. It dents confidence. It undermines our great, inclusive Australian social democracy. It jeopardises our safety; it threatens our security. This exclusion, this denigration, can radicalise the isolated, the vulnerable and the unwell into the hands of extremism. This is the danger that we must confront and act against. As leaders in this parliament, we owe no less to our people; we owe no less to our troops going into harm's way on our behalf. The tiny handful of our citizens who have been drawn to the radical circle of ISIL and their like were not born full of hatred and rage; they were not born for a life of death. But now they are manipulated into the arms of a radical cause that some would die for.

We must ask ourselves in this parliament whether we as a nation, as a people and as a parliament can do more to moderate the angry and engage the disaffected; to temper the prejudice that feeds radicalisation; to display the courage to jealously guard the safety, cohesion and harmony that has long been a cherished part of our society; to shepherd those shunted to the margins and to bring them to the centre. This is an obligation that we as parliamentarians owe all our citizens. It is a duty that we as parliamentarians owe Australia. It is the social contract of our unique and modern Australia—our multicultural nation, enriched, emboldened and enlightened by mass immigration.

People who come to Australia should leave their old conflicts behind. People who come to Australia should obey the one set of laws that governs us all. But, for those who have come across the seas, from every country on earth, they should not have to abandon their religious and cultural practices. Australia's greatness comes from learning that, the greater contact and respect we have with people of different faiths and cultures, the more we learn that our similarities are greater than our differences, the more that we learn that what we have been told to fear is a lie.
We know our differences are not mysterious or fundamental. They are differences in clothing, experience, custom, language and culture. I beseech those—especially those fortunate enough to be parliamentarians in the Australian parliament—who are engaged in strident and offensive language. If we surrender to intolerance, if we submit to prejudice then we betray the very Australian values and liberties that we seek to safeguard and protect. That is why I am disappointed at Senator Bernardi and Senator Smith's attempt to water down legal protections against hate speech. It could not have come at a more ill advised time for our nation. Repealing section 18C creates a foothold for divisive and hateful abuse. It sends an insidious signal that somehow the need to guard against discrimination is reduced. It tips a wing to the purveyors of prejudice. For these reasons Labor joined with hundreds of community groups of all cultures, ethnicities and faiths to fight and defeat these backward-looking, divisive changes, and we will do so again if required.

On behalf of the people of Australia let me give Senator Bernardi, Senator Smith and their supporters the message I believe the Prime Minister should have delivered them: no-one has the right to be a bigot. Bigotry and racism have no place in modern Australia. The security of our nation and our citizens is above politics, and attempting to use national security to justify intolerance—to advocate banning the burqa—is beneath contempt. Let's be clear: when Senator Bernardi describes the burqa as 'a flag of fundamentalism', that is not a security argument. Wrapping a call to ban the burqa in national security is an attempt to make ignorance sound truthful and intolerance respectable, an attempt to give the appearance of solidity to prejudice. Diminishing the real and important security debate to a conversation about an article of clothing diminishes us all, and it makes Australian women who also happen to be Muslim a target for bullying and intimidation.

Today I urged our Prime Minister to follow the example of the Foreign Minister and the member for Bowman and stand up to this ignorance. Martin Luther King once said: There comes a time when silence is betrayal.

For weeks a noisy few have been fanning the flames of this prejudice. Our Prime Minister was silent. Yesterday Labor called upon the Prime Minister to finally show some leadership on both 18C and the ill-informed, hurtful, harmful ban-the-burqa debate. We ask the Prime Minister to lead his party room, not to follow his party room. Instead he said 'the private members bill in question is something that is highly unlikely to proceed'. Sadly, it emerged in the Senate this morning. On the journalists' questioning of the Prime Minister about banning the burqa, he could only dismiss concerns before going on to say: I find it a fairly confronting form of attire. Frankly, I wish it was not worn.

The Prime Minister—our leader—cannot afford the luxury of discomfort about what some women of religious custom wear. Leadership requires different actions. The Prime Minister cannot preach tolerance while allowing a few of his colleagues to practise intolerance. A true leader cannot unite our nation while urging division. The Prime Minister owes our nation better than this.

A true leader has a responsibility to govern for all Australians of all faiths. Leadership requires the encouragement of the majority to respect the minorities in our democracy. A true leader has the responsibility to build unity and cohesion, not division and exclusion. A true leader leads by example, not with empty rhetoric. The leaders of our nation—not just the
Prime Minister, not just me but all of us in this parliament—have a responsibility, I submit, to tackle the fearmongering of the few.

These are indeed times that try nations' souls, but we will never overcome hatred with hatred. We will never overcome intolerance by being intolerant. Australia cannot face the challenges of this moment divided. How on earth do we ask our defence forces to confront intolerance and prejudice, fear and sectarianism if we too do not do the same where we have the opportunity to do so? We are a stronger nation, we are a better nation, we are a safer nation, we are a more noble nation when we stand together, not apart.

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Minister for Immigration and Border Protection) (15:27): I am glad this matter was put forward for public debate in this chamber today. It is a matter of public importance that we debate these issues. I am disappointed that the debate has been started with a call to unity while the Leader of the Opposition spent quite a big part of his time engaging in partisan commentary on this issue. I do not intend to follow that example. I intend to follow the example of Sir Henry Parkes, who said many years ago:

What we are doing by this great Federal movement is not for us, but for them, for the untold millions that will follow us; until this land of Australia shall gather within its bosom all the fruits of the culture of the world; and until the flag of freedom shall be planted here so firmly and guarded with such a fervent patriotism, that all the powers on earth shall never assault it.

That was the father of Federation, and he is a leader to whom I think we can all look as someone who played such a significant role in the formation of our nation.

Sir Henry Parkes's vision, I am pleased to say, is a reality today. It is something that continues to be built on. It is something that, although achieved in so many respects, carries an aspirational virtue to it that drives us all on to continue to meet the worthy words of Sir Henry Parkes at that time.

Australia in my view—and, I am sure, in the view of all members of this House—is the most successful immigration country on earth. It is the great legacy of Parkes and others who followed him—Calwell and Menzies and others—and, indeed, the Father of the House, the former minister for immigration, the member for Berowra, that this vision, this dream has been realised over generations.

And it is not just in the postwar period. We have had over 200 years of successful immigration to this country. We are all immigrants or children of immigrants unless we are Indigenous Australians—all of us. More than 50 per cent of Australians today are either born overseas or the child of someone who was born overseas. More than 50 per cent of Australians today have a direct or personal experience of being born overseas or being the child of someone who was born overseas. Over seven million immigrants have come to Australia since the end of World War II. But it does not stop there, because we all—other than in the case of Indigenous Australians—have this migrant experience, and it is important that we identify the links between our various migrant experiences to build and maintain the social cohesion for which Australia is so famous around the world.

The success is based on the fact that people have come to this country to join us. They have come to this country to join us and to make a contribution. Through that contribution they continue to create the Australia of the future that others who follow us will inherit. We are a nation of joiners. I am not terribly interested in what is in people's wardrobes; I am interested in what is in people's hearts. I am interested in the values they proclaim and stand by. I am
interested in the contribution they make to this country because in this country you are judged on what you get done, what your contribution is and how you participate.

Participation in this country is what defines us as Australians. It is about the values we hold. It is about the way of life we have. It is about the contribution that we make. There is one law for all. There is freedom of religion enshrined in our Constitution. These are the very things that make up the society today and that all Australians cherish so deeply. This is Australia's immigration experience.

But what has driven this cohesion? This cohesion has been driven by the economic and social participation of migrants over centuries—over generations. And we need to continue to encourage that participation because that is what separates Australia as an immigrant nation. From the different stories that we read, we are aware that in Europe, the United Kingdom and Germany there is a debate which is, frankly, not relevant to this country because we have a very different experience in this country of being an immigrant nation. And we have followed a very different immigrant path. Our results are completely different. If you look at the experiences of migrants—and particularly the experiences of the children of migrants—you will see in the research that they have an as great or greater level of workforce participation; they have an as great or greater level of education attainment; and they have an as low or lower level of unemployment. That is the experience in this country, but it is the inverse in many countries overseas.

That has been achieved because in this country we have always run an immigration program that has invited people to come here to make a contribution and to be involved, particularly economically. In this country our immigration program has been a success because it has been predominately an economic program, not a welfare program. And people overwhelmingly come here to make that contribution. That is why we have had so much success—and research studies show it.

The success shows through the participation in the economy, particularly. And it is reinforced because we have a national language. That is not to say there cannot be many other languages. There should be. I would hope in future generations that more Australians speak more and more languages, but there must be one national language, because that gives us the ability to come together—whether in a workplace, a social space, a religious space or any other space—and to have the cohesion upon which we depend.

What we find, particularly in our settlement programs—the former Minister for Immigration, Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship, Mr Burke, who is at the table will know this—is that where you focus on getting migrants into jobs, improving their education and improving their English language skills, they have greater success. That is what we have to focus on in addressing the issues that are the subject of this debate here today.

In Australia we have always focused on the skills side of this paradigm. That has been a key economic objective of this country over many generations. But we have also sought to have people integrate socially into this country. And 'integration' is a word we should never surrender. There have been other words that have been used in this debate in the past and they have been surrendered, but integration is about participation.

When communities participate, as the overwhelming majority of communities do, then we see the success. Multiculturalism, when it works—when it is done properly—is about
bringing people together. When it is done the wrong way it becomes an excuse for people to be remain separate, enclaved and disengaged. That is a recipe for social disaster, and that is something I am sure no person in this House wants to be the future of this country.

We have had periods in our history where the divide has been on issues of ethnicity and race. Australia is such an overwhelming idea that it overwhelms those divisions of ethnicity and race. But from time to time the dividing line of religion has presented itself. I am an optimist because this is not the first time that the dividing line of religion in social cohesion has been present in this country. There was once a time when there was a religious community that was accused of being a danger to Australia, of not being loyal to Australia. They were even accused, by virtue of their religion alone, of being terrorists. It was the Catholic community of the 1800s. And now they are running the joint! Now they are running the joint on both sides. This demonstrates the great success. And this is why I feel so optimistic about the challenge we face today, where we have similar religious divides and misperceptions in the community.

I know that Australia, as an idea—as an ideology even—and as an experience, will overwhelm these divisions, through improved understanding and improved engagement. We cannot be naive to the fears. We cannot be naive to the risks in all elements of this debate, but we also must be optimistic in engaging.

Next year we are going to have a great opportunity with the centenary of Anzac. I have engaged in mateship treks with the member for Blaxland over many years. The one thing that we see every time is that the diggers died for the future of Australia, and we now live in it. We are the inheritors—the beneficiaries—of the sacrifice: each of us in equal measure, no greater, no less. Regardless of our religion, ethnicity or race we are the inheritors of their legacy and we have the responsibility of continuing to strive for a better Australia—one that strives to uphold the values that those diggers lived by. Those values can be embraced by every Australian, regardless of their race, regardless of their religion and regardless of their ethnicity.

Ms PLIBERSEK (Sydney—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (15:37): Australians have been troubled recently. They have been troubled by the news they have been seeing on their TVs at night. Events at home and events around the world have led many to wonder about the type of world we are living in at the moment. In times of trouble, the most important question we can ask ourselves is: are we stronger together? And what can we do to make our nation stronger together? We have seen stories of Australians who, inexplicably to most of us, have gone overseas to fight. Just as inexplicably to me, we have seen stories of Australians graffitiing mosques, pulling the head scarves off girls, threatening school children. One man is alleged to have gone into a Muslim school and threatened children at that school with a knife. And we had Jewish kids in Sydney threatened on a bus. Sikh taxi drivers—because some people are too dumb to tell the difference—have been threatened when they have been driving their taxis. I have to say that these two problems—the problem of radicalisation and the problem of racism—are two sides of the one coin. As Australians we have to reject both of them outright. Neither of these represents the Australia that we are part of.

A few years ago I was at the Royal National Park with my mum and dad and my kids. My dad told a guy not to get too close to the ducklings, because he would disturb them. This man said to my father, ‘You should go back where you came from!’—after 65 years living in
Australia, paying his taxes and raising his kids to be kids to be good citizens. The shock of it was not the stupid racism. The shock of it was being told that he did not belong, after 65 years in this country. We cannot afford to say to any Australian now, 'You do not belong.' Our responsibility is to show our strength by embracing diversity, embracing difference and speaking to all of our communities about what makes Australia stronger.

One of the best things about being a federal member of parliament—one of the things I enjoy the very most—is going to citizenship ceremonies, because at those citizenship ceremonies we meet people who have chosen Australia as their home. They have chosen to become part of our national family. At each of those ceremonies we say our pledge:

I pledge my loyalty to Australia and its people, whose democratic beliefs I share, whose rights and liberties I respect, and whose laws I will uphold and obey.

There is no more elegant or eloquent expression of our Australian values: our values of democracy, of human rights, liberties and the rule of law. I have said it before: I think Australian school kids should learn this pledge, because it is such an elegant and eloquent description of what it is to be Australian.

This year, Vietnamese refugee Hieu Van Le became the new Governor of South Australia. He said that he remembers experiencing racism when he was a young fellow, but then it really melted away—until, he said, Pauline Hanson made that maiden speech in this parliament. This is my plea to members here today: remember our particular, special responsibility as leaders to say clearly in the Australian community that we value difference, we embrace diversity. What makes us different makes us stronger. There were 20 nationalities represented at the Eureka Stockade—that birth of Australian nationalism—where those people fought together and stood up for a fair go for other Australians. I think of that as one of the seminal moments in our history, but it was people from many nations coming together to say about their new home: 'these are the values we live by. This is the way we expect to treat one another. This is what it is to be part of the new Australia.'

Our leadership matters and our words matter. It is our responsibility to say, again and again—in the face of division, in the face of divisiveness—that we are stronger together.

Mr Ruddock (Berowra—Chief Government Whip) (15:42): Let me start by saying: I affirm that there are dangers in prejudice. I stress the importance of social cohesion in modern Australia. I regret very much that these matters have been brought into question by the way in which this matter has been pursued. I want to stress that there were certain principles settled in 1988, when Bob Hawke was Prime Minister of Australia. They were in the form of the National agenda for a multicultural Australia. I affirm very strongly all of the principles enunciated in that document. I regret that from time to time there are some who want to affirm some of the points. I was pleased today, particularly in the deputy leader's comments when she mentioned the affirmation at the time of citizenship, the elements that were described as the limits to multiculturalism: policies based upon the premise that all Australians should have an overriding and unifying commitment to Australia; a commitment to its interests and its future first and foremost; that multicultural policies require all Australians to accept the structures and principles, the Constitution, the rule of law, tolerance and equality, parliamentary democracy, freedom of speech and religion, English as the national language, and equality of the sexes. And they impose obligations as well as affirming rights.
There are certain benefits that come from these policies for all of us: the maintenance of our cultural identity, social justice and economic efficiency. Lest there be any doubt, at the time of the Howard government, there was consideration of these matters again, and it occurred in a report, *Australian multiculturalism for a new century: towards inclusiveness*. That was a report of the Australian Multicultural Advisory Council in 1999. If you read it, as I have from time to time, you will see those principles affirmed very positively again.

There are issues that from time to time need to be discussed and debated. Provided that discussion occurs in a reasonable and sensible way, one should have no problem with it. Some have tried to bring into question the views of the Prime Minister. Let me just say: if you read what he had to say yesterday, it ought to be beyond doubt, because he said:

… we are a free country, we are a free society and it is not the business of government to tell people what they should and shouldn’t wear …

We can all have an opinion, we can all have a preference but in the end it is up to the citizens of Australia to decide what they should wear.

That is ostensibly the reason that we are talking about this issue today.

If you read *The Canberra Times* of today, there are some other comments that I found of interest. They came from a lady who is described as the Muslim Women's Association executive officer, Maha Abdo. She said that the federal parliament should implement New South Wales' rules, which require women in a burqa to temporarily remove it for identification as they do at airports and courts. There are sometimes issues that we need to talk frankly about. If you talk frankly about them in the context that Ms Abdo has, why shouldn't they be raised?

I do not think we should have any divisive approach in these issues. The principles that I have stated have been affirmed by governments: the Hawke government, the Howard government and this government over and over again. Debating it in a way which brings into question people's commitment to those principles is unhelpful. That is the point that I make very strongly. This is not a debate that we should be having, because the principles have been affirmed again and again and again. They do not need to be brought into context for the purposes of creating division. *(Time expired)*

**Mr BURKE** (Watson—Manager of Opposition Business) (15:47): I start by saying that I do not think there could be a greater commitment to us making sure that we all play a leadership role in this than the tone which has been adopted in this MPI. I cannot remember the last time an opposition put forward an MPI at the end of a parliamentary sitting fortnight with the purpose of having this sort of debate. The reason we need to have it is absolutely clear: to send the message loud and clear to the Australian public that the issues we are talking about are issues that almost every one of us in this building agree with, and this is the opportunity to show that. When there have been a very small number of outbreaks within this building of people not behaving the same way, I think it is right and proper that they be called out on that.

I praise, for example, the comments that Mike Baird made in a tweet only about an hour ago. The Premier of New South Wales said:

My clear position on this is governments should not be telling anyone what they should be wearing.
The reason why I think it is so important for us to be making these sorts of speeches today is that none of us should pretend that, when we have the privilege of officially and constitutionally being representatives of the Australian people, on issues of national character like this we have the luxury of saying, 'Look, it's just my personal opinion and please take it as such.' We are representatives by definition and the community needs us as representatives to make clear that we have the view that Australians will not be told they do not belong.

I have seen how it wears people down when, time and again, leaders within my community have seen something horrific overseas and have then been told by the media, 'We know you're a leader, we know you're a good person, we know you're 100 per cent part of the community, but, by the way, we just need to check: are you opposed to the child holding the decapitated head?' I can see why that wears people down. And they have still had the courage to go out time and time again saying, 'The hatred that we have seen in those images are not in my name.' Today is an opportunity for us, as representatives of the Australian people, to say to the woman who was being abused by a thug at a rail station that that abuse is not happening on behalf of Australia and that abuse is not in our name; we need to be able to say to the Sikh taxi driver who is being called a terrorist that the abuse that he is receiving is not in our name; and we need to be able to say to the children who were abused on a bus with anti-Semitic bile that the abuse they received was not in our name—not in the name of this parliament, not in the name of our country and not what Australia represents or is. Community leaders across Australia are part of a campaign making clear: not in my name. You will see it take off over the next few days. In Europe, it was only the Islamic community that was part of that campaign, having to go out and explain, time and time again, that the things that were being ostensibly done in the name of their religion were not in their name.

People are now presenting themselves as though they are the true representatives of Australia and some of those people are presenting themselves with extraordinary prejudice. We need to make sure as a parliament that one message comes out of here: not that we hedge or that we show different levels of sympathy in different ways but that we send a message loud and clear that prejudice is not in our name. The voice of hatred will always be there, but we will make sure that the voice of hatred will never be the loudest voice. We need to make sure of this now, more than at any other time I can remember. Make no mistake, the abuse that is happening to so many people on the streets—particularly to community leaders who are receiving death threats, which are usually threats involving 'I threaten you with beheading'—is being received from yobbos.

These sorts of threats are hurting the exact people who we need to be fostering the sense of community and keeping people together. We have an unusual leadership role right now, and none of us can pretend on this one we are simply here on our own behalf. As a parliament, as a House of Representatives, as different political parties, we need to make sure that the people who are receiving hate that we will never be able to imagine know absolutely that Australia says they are part of this country and we unequivocally stand together. (Time expired)

Mr TEHAN (Wannon) (15:52): I thank the member for Watson for his contribution, as I do the Father of the House for his. I note that the member for Watson praised the Premier of New South Wales for the contribution he made. The contribution he made was incredibly similar to the contribution that the Prime Minister made. I would like to put on the record that contribution:
The point I've made repeatedly in recent months is that we are interested in combating crime. We wouldn't for a moment target particular communities or particular religions, because not only is it wrong but it is un-Australian. We have always extended a warm and generous welcome to people from all countries, all cultures, all faiths. That is never going to change and what impresses me the longer the current security issue lasts is the enthusiasm that just about every single Australian has for our country and for our freedoms, and that includes, whether I might like it or not, whether I might prefer it or not, the freedom to wear whatever you want under normal circumstances.

We are the most multicultural country in the world. We speak over 300 languages and 28 per cent of us were born overseas. The US can only boast 14 per cent. It is a simple fact that without social cohesion Australians simply would not be what they are today. We are a landmark in human history of how cultures and ideas from all over the world can inhabit the same country in peace. If Margaret Thatcher was right in saying Europe was founded on history and that the US was founded on philosophy, then Australia has been founded on its tolerance. As Albert Einstein said:

Laws alone cannot secure freedom of expression; in order that every man present his views without penalty there must be spirit of tolerance in the entire population.

I believe that every Australian aspires for that. We on this side—and I know that it is the same for the other side of the parliament—know that, if we are to defeat this evil that we are now confronting, we have to do it with our Australian values which we as a nation have built up over time. We have never, ever as a country been entirely perfect, but my belief is that we have strived for perfection and we will continue to strive for perfection. We know that our values are what define us and we know that our values are what will defeat what we are confronting. I think that this debate does have merit. We should be here conducting this debate this afternoon, but we should be doing so recognising that, I believe, every member of this parliament does want to show leadership on this issue and is showing leadership on this issue through their public statements, through what I have been saying.

I do not only want to quote the Prime Minister; I also want to quote our chief law-maker, who has also said very clearly:

I have no concerns with Muslims wearing the burqa, and I don’t have a preference either because frankly it’s none of my business. … I know the example has been given of visiting Parliament House. That’s really a matter for the police to determine, not for me, not for politicians. But do I think people shouldn’t be allowed to wear the burqa? No, I do not.

We have seen the Prime Minister state very clearly and categorically what his views are on this. We have seen the Attorney-General, the chief law-maker, state that as well. So this is a debate that we should have, but I believe that every member of this House knows that Australian values are what will win this battle against this hatred, this evil, this intolerance that we are fighting. If we stick together and maintain those values, we will defeat this.

Ms ROWLAND (Greenway) (15:57): In this place we are all leaders and what we say matters. That is why I welcome this opportunity to place on the record the reality of multiculturalism that I live every day in both my local community and my own family, raising a child born of her father's Lebanese heritage and her mother's Fijian heritage. We must never appeal to the worst in people. That is why, as the Leader of the Opposition said, it is disappointing that we have been hearing such divisive comments from some in this building on what people can and cannot wear, and what level of racist hate speech should be acceptable.
Our diverse and vibrant multiculturalism is a demographic reality. The community recognises and supports it. As the Scanlon Foundation's research into attitudes towards multiculturalism Mapping social cohesion national report 2013 demonstrates, 84 per cent of respondents agreed that 'Multiculturalism has been good for Australia', and more than seven out of 10 respondents agreed that 'Multiculturalism benefits the economic development of Australia'. As well as this, an Access Economics fiscal impact model commissioned by the former Department of Immigration and Citizenship examined the impact of migration on the Commonwealth budget. Is 2009-10 figures show that the net economic contribution of around $880 million in the first year of arrival will rise to about $1 billion to $2 billion after 10 years, demonstrating that as migrants settled into their new home their capacity to build our economic prosperity rose.

It is in light of this evidence for these economic and social reasons that we must continue to foster this cohesion and unity and reject any efforts that work to drive us apart. It is this positive growth, economic and social, that we should always seek to foster. That is why I am proud the Labor Party is unwavering in its commitment to multicultural Australia, and so should this parliament be too. It is at the heart of our national identity and intrinsic to our history and character.

Contrast this with the ignorant opportunism we have witnessed of late. Those advocating a ban on certain religious garments only work to strengthen the resolve of extremists and inflame tensions. Our words and actions should be uniting influences to bring our diverse communities together, never to pit them against one another. I would urge all leaders in this place to be a uniting force—to stop seeking to divide the community with inflammatory or ignorant remarks about what people can and cannot wear. To conflate security matters with issues of prejudice should be called out for what it is.

When this issue arose in Victoria in 2011, Nazeem Hussain wrote in the Herald Sun:
To pass this proposed legislation would serve only to send a message to the broader community that until the introduction of these new laws, Muslim women have had the ability to exploit a (nonexistent) loophole in the law. This would be a grossly inaccurate picture to paint of such a tiny group of Muslim women who choose to cover their faces.

To put it bluntly, the only gains to be made by some with these laws would be political. Not law and order or greater social cohesion.

And, as Andrew Probyn succinctly writes in today's The West Australian: 'Let's call it for what it is. The ban-the-burqa movement is largely a rallying cry for anti-Islam campaigners, born out of prejudice and fear.'

On top of this, some in this place are intent on pushing ahead to weaken protections against racist hate speech in the very same week that we were debating important national security legislation. Now more than ever we need this community harmony, and every one of us has a responsibility to promote inclusiveness and respect. As the social cohesion report also found there was, unfortunately, in 2010 a marked increase in reported racial discrimination. This increased reporting was maintained in the next year's survey. Disturbingly, this research also highlighted the lack of awareness of most Australians about the challenges faced by our first peoples. That is why we cannot tamper with these precious laws, and Labor will fight any move to weaken protections against racist hate speech. We urge all to join with us to stop this once and for all.
In closing: we must cherish our multicultural society in word and deed. We must celebrate our diversity and realise we are all stronger united than divided. I am reminded of the words of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who said: 'Differences are not intended to separate, to alienate. We are different precisely in order to realise our need of one another.'

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Craig Kelly): I give the call to the member for Reid.

Mr Ruddock: Hear, hear!

Mr LAUNDY (Reid) (16:02): Thank you, Father of the House. I would like to acknowledge that my electorate of Reid sits among many held by those on the other side. I acknowledge the member for Watson, who is my next-door neighbour—electorally, that is. I imagine the member for Chifley may well follow me. The member for Greenway is a couple of electorates away; the member for Blaxland, who is not here, is another of my next-door neighbours. In that area of Western Sydney, we see a lot of each other and I know that the member for Watson shares my passion for this place. I will see him soon. I know Saturday is one of the two most important days in the Islamic calendar; I have not looked at my calendar yet but I have no doubt I will be spending a fair bit of time with both the member for Watson and the member for Blaxland. That is not an unusual occurrence. I also see a lot of the member for Greenway and the member for Chifley.

Like them, and like all in my electorate, which is an inclusive and tolerant place, I understand that Australia has been and always will be built on the back of migration. This is what makes us so great. Like the member for Sydney—and I have only been in this place for a little over 12 months—there are two things that are, hands down, my favourite part of the job. In case you are wondering, being in Canberra is not one of them! The first of those two things is citizenship ceremonies—and they have been mentioned—because, no matter your story or your reasons, everyone in front of you that day has their own unique story and their own path they have trodden to get there. They have their own language, culture, religion, dress and food—everything about them that makes them unique. Every time, without doubt, I challenge them to pass that on to their children, so that they may pass it on to their grandchildren, because that is what has always made this country great. It is what we should celebrate and foster. The second part of the job I love so much, whether it is in Canberra or in my electorate, is visiting schools. Two of my three children are at school in my electorate. Why do I love it so much? Because we are all just looking after this joint for them. And do you know what? Through the eyes of youth we could learn so much. Sitting five minutes from my home in my electorate—obviously not at the moment, because it is school holidays—on a normal school day are my two daughters surrounded by Hindus, Buddhists, Christians, atheists and Muslims, and not one of the children in those classes identifies anyone by race or religion. Neither do the vast majority of my electorate, the member for Watson's electorate, the member for Greenway's electorate, the member for Chifley's electorate, or the member for Blaxland's electorate—nor of any electorate in Western Sydney, which is where this is cutting.

I do not begrudge talking about this topic; we need to. People are scared—I get that. But when people are scared, leaders need to stand up. They need to lead by example, not by scaring people. There are two ways you can lead and the former, for me, is far superior to the latter.
Terrorists have two goals, and this has not been spoken about a lot. The first is that we fear attack; I get that. But the second is that they hate what we stand for—freedom and democracy—and the best way they can attack us without actually attacking us is to turn us on ourselves, because we then do the work for them. We cannot, as leaders in this parliament, allow that to happen. We cannot allow any child of any religion—I will not focus on one; any religion—to be abused because of their faith, their dress or the colour of their skin. That is what we must stand shoulder-to-shoulder against and eradicate. I am only too happy to stand up, time and time again, in this House and debate this. I am not scared. I am excited that this was a topic of an MPI today, because it gives me a chance to stand up and be firm on behalf of the people of Reid, who do not talk about multiculturalism. We live it and we get it—that it has and will always make our country the great place it is.

Mr DREYFUS (Isaacs—Deputy Manager of Opposition Business) (16:07): The Prime Minister stood up at a press conference in Canberra on 5 August with the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Attorney-General to announce the government's response to the terrorist threat arising out of the conflict in Iraq and Syria. The Prime Minister said:

When it comes to counter-terrorism, everyone needs to be part of team Australia, and I have to say that the government's proposals to change 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act have become a complication in that respect. I don't want to do anything that puts our national unity at risk at this time, and so those proposals are now off the table.

The Prime Minister said that the decision to shelve Senator Brandis's attack on the Racial Discrimination Act was a leadership call that he had made. He went on to talk about what political leadership meant. He said, and this is important:

In the end, leadership is about preserving national unity on the essentials …

Well, I agree with the Prime Minister. But how disappointing it is that the Prime Minister cannot or will not show that kind of leadership. Prime Minister Abbott has failed to show leadership on the Racial Discrimination Act. He said on 5 August that the government's proposed attack on 18C was off the table, but now the Prime Minister has allowed his backbench senators, Bernardi and Smith, to once more menace Australia's multicultural communities with an attack on race-hate protections.

The Leader of the Opposition spoke about the racist attack on a young Muslim woman on a Melbourne train on Monday. The Muslim community has told us that they have seen an alarming spike in racist incidents. The member for Sydney and the member for Watson have recounted other recent attacks on Muslims, on Jews and on Sikhs. At this tense time, when many Australians are particularly fearful of being attacked or vilified or discriminated against because of their race, the Prime Minister allows his backbenchers to tell the community that it is okay to hurl racist insults, and that hate speech must be permitted in our society.

Asked what his position on the Bernardi-Smith bill is in question time yesterday, the best the Prime Minister could manage—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Craig Kelly): Order! The member for Isaacs will resume his seat. The Minister for the Environment has the call.

Mr Hunt: I rise on a point of order. The remarks made were insulting, untrue and incorrect. They allege that the Prime Minister was allowing racism. They need to be withdrawn.
The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I would request the minister—

Mr DREYFUS: I said nothing of the kind, and Hansard will record that I had said nothing of the kind. I will repeat it: the—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr DREYFUS: Prime Minister allows his backbenchers to tell the community that it is okay to hurl racist insults.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I request the member for Isaacs to withdraw.

Mr DREYFUS: That is what I said, and it is not what you said. I would be pleased, Deputy Speaker, if I could be allowed to continue my remarks.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I would request the member for Isaacs to withdraw.

Mr DREYFUS: I withdraw.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I thank the member for Isaacs. The member for Isaacs has the call.

Mr DREYFUS: The Prime Minister offered no condemnation of that bill. Hansard will record that the member for Flinders has misrepresented my remarks. There was no assurance from the Prime Minister that he would direct the members of the coalition parties he leads to stand down. What a failure of leadership from our Prime Minister. What weakness!

The Prime Minister has also failed to show leadership on the debate about the burqa, so irresponsibly opened up by the Liberal backbenchers, including the member for Dawson, George Christensen, and the usual suspect, Senator Bernardi. At a time when Muslim women feel, because of their dress, particularly conspicuous and vulnerable to attack and to discrimination, these two Liberals have done their best to exacerbate that fear. Appallingly, they have used the megaphones that they hold as federal politicians to single out Australian Muslim women as different, even dangerous.

Incredibly, the Prime Minister has shamefully encouraged this kind of bullying of part of the Australian community. It was reported in the press earlier this week that his own office had supported the member for Dawson in his efforts. When the issue was put to the Prime Minister, he said:

… I find it a fairly confronting form of attire. Frankly, I wish it was not worn.

The Prime Minister said, 'We can all have an opinion on the issue.' That is certainly the case, but the Prime Minister is not a private citizen. He occupies the highest public office in Australia.

I met with a number of young Muslim leaders this week from my home state of Victoria, and one of the things they impressed on me was that words matter. The words our political leaders use matter. When the Prime Minister prevaricates about whether hate speech should be legal, he sends a message about what is acceptable in our society. When he offers his personal opinion on clothing— (Time expired)

Mr GOODENOUGH (Moore) (16:12): I am a first-generation migrant to Australia and my journey has been quite remarkable, because I made an effort from the beginning to get actively involved in my local community. From an early age, I joined community groups, sporting clubs and volunteered with many charities. It was through participation that I interacted with members of the wider community and was accepted by my fellow Australians.
As I said in my first speech, multiculturalism and reconciliation are two-way streets. There has to be a degree of flexibility—of give and take, of resilience and goodwill. If I expect others to respect my culture, I must also learn to respect the cultures of others. In order to live in multicultural harmony, there must be a degree of goodwill and compromise on both sides. It does not matter how long one has been in Australia or from which country one has come from. What matters is what we do in Australia—our accomplishments, our achievements and our contribution to Australian society.

When I first stood for the local government elections in 1997, I was unsuccessful. Many people said it was because I came from an ethnic background. But I was undeterred and I had another go. On my second attempt, I was elected to council by a small margin. At the next election, my community elected me with over 70 per cent of the vote. I served on the City of Wanneroo council for nearly 14 years before being elected to this parliament.

In the current political climate, as leaders of our nation, it is important that we are careful not to generalise or stereotype any particular ethnic group or religion as being solely associated with terrorism.

Rather, as representatives of our community we have a duty to speak out against fundamentalism, extremism and criminality in all their forms. We must take tough measures to protect the fabric of Australian society, founded on our Westminster democracy, and Australian culture, values, traditions and principles which we hold dear—the very things which make Australia the country which we love, and the very characteristics which draw thousands of immigrants to our shores.

Australia's immigration system has traditionally welcomed people from across the globe into our multicultural community over the years. In return, our society is entitled to expect that when migrants arrive to our country that they will adopt a positive attitude and make a constructive contribution to their new homeland. Above all, society expects that they will be civic-minded, loyal and patriotic to Australia and to their fellow Australians. Experience has shown that the majority of immigrants have indeed settled and become good citizens, which is testament to our immigration system and our multicultural society.

Unfortunately, there are certain enclaves that have failed to integrate into mainstream society and which have adopted hostile, antisocial and radical attitudes towards mainstream Australian society and culture—in the worst instances resorting to violence and intimidation. Currently, there is a great deal of unrest in the community about perceived threats from particular subgroups. These groups cannot expect ordinary Australians to embrace them into our society if they are unwilling to reciprocate.

We must strongly oppose radicalism, militancy and moves to introduce foreign legal systems into Australia. Together we must unite to defeat our enemies that intend to do us harm and bring those who have contravened Australian laws to justice. We have a responsibility to protect our national borders and to be very selective to ensure the merit-based selection of immigrants who are committed to integrate into mainstream society and who will strive to become good Australian citizens.

I am proud to be part of a government that will take a hard line against radicalism, extremism and militancy, whilst at the same time upholding the rule of law and protecting traditional Australian institutions and culture. We will not allow global terrorists to scare us
into a state of fear that allows prejudice to unravel the social cohesion in our mainstream communities. Neither will we allow zealots and fundamentalists to disrupt the fabric of our Australian society.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Craig Kelly): Order! The discussion is now concluded.

COMMITTEES

Australia Fund Establishment Committee
Trade and Investment Growth Committee

Membership

Mr HUNT (Flinders—Minister for the Environment) (16:17): by leave—I move:
(1) Ms T. M. Butler, Mr Husic and Mr Wilkie be appointed members of the Joint Select Committee on the Australia Fund Establishment; and
(2) Dr Chalmers, Mr Conroy, and Mr Palmer be appointed members of the Joint Select Committee on Trade and Investment Growth.

Question agreed to.

BILLS

National Security Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2014

Assent

Message from the Governor-General reported informing the House of assent to the bill.

Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre Supervisory Cost Recovery Levy Amendment Bill 2014

Returned from Senate

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

Australian Education Amendment Bill 2014

Second Reading

Debate resumed on the motion:
That this bill be now read a second time.

Ms PRICE (Durack) (16:19): As I was saying earlier, ensuring that Aboriginal kids receive education is one of the important planks of the Abbott government’s approach to improving the lives of Aboriginal people. In many cases, that education will be available locally. At other times, the best possible educational opportunity is an independent boarding school.

The $6.8 million will meet an identified resourcing shortfall for boarding schools with a large number of Indigenous students. Regulations will determine school eligibility and amounts of funding under the Indigenous Boarding Initiative announced in the 2014-15 budget.
It has been my absolute pleasure to highlight the good work being undertaken by schools with large Aboriginal boarding populations and I reiterate my support for the Australian Education Amendment Bill 2014.

Mr HUTCHINSON (Lyons) (16:20): I rise to speak on the Australian Education Amendment Bill 2014. I come from a state where the Indigenous component of this bill probably is not so relevant. But what particularly took my attention was the provisions there for students with disabilities. Much of my contribution today will focus on that aspect of the bill.

There are a number of amendments in the bill that effectively are about correcting errors and impacts of the funding for 2015 in respect of the transition arrangements for special schools and special assistance schools. This corrects an anomaly where the adjustments only applied to government schools and did not apply to independent schools. As I said, that will be the focus of my contribution today, and rightly so.

When it comes to the school resource standard—or the SRS—funding component of education it should indeed be absolutely sector blind. It should not favour one type of school over another school or where a parent would choose—for a whole range of reasons—to send their children. In other words, wherever you go to school, every child should have the same loading—in particular, for disabilities.

Indeed, at the beautiful and picturesque town of Deloraine in the northern part of my Lyons electorate there is such an independent school. Giant Steps is an independent autism specific school run by a community-based board. It has had tremendous results in the past nearly 20 years. A group of parents with autistic children did what you could describe as the 'hard yards' more than two decades ago to set up Giant Steps at Deloraine. It is centrally located. For those of you who do know my home state, my electorate goes from the north coast to the south coast, and Deloraine is in the central north of Tasmania. Deloraine was chosen deliberately so that it could be accessible to like-minded parents desperately, in many cases, trying to find an alternative to mainstream schools for their children on the autism spectrum.

I have visited the facility a number of times and it truly is always an inspiring place to go to. It has a very skilled team of four teachers, led by the principal, Tim Chugg; speech pathologist, Amon Alas; and an occupational therapist, Siaren Lacanan. They run education programs for 26 full-time and part-time students at Giant Steps, as well as another 15 children involved in early intervention programs and a further eight adult clients with their own particular tailored programs.

I cannot not mention the teachers because they do wonderful work: Anita Quinn, Jelly Van Den Berg and Vanessa Harvey. It is a very small school. It is, in very many senses, the heartbeat of Deloraine in so many ways. It expresses so many good things about the town and the people in that town. The is also the administration staff, Pip Schmidt and Karina Johnstone, along with numerous other teachers assistants, many of whom volunteer their time to support the professional educators who are at that facility. Tim and his team take students from as far away as Launceston, Georgetown in the north, Devonport on the north-west coast, and of course from the surrounding Meander Valley. But equally, because of the quality of the service that is provided there and the attention and the focus on the children who attend this facility, there have been many families over many years who have moved from other parts of Australia to come to Deloraine. Even if not for Giant Steps, there would be many
other reasons why one might choose to come and live in Deloraine. It is a beautiful part of Tasmania.

Our funding support also comes from many community organisations, including the team at Rotary Deloraine, led by President Michael Horne, Rob van der Elst, Roy Axelsen, Bev Ritchie and Isabelle Vescovo. In recent years the Rotary Club of Deloraine, along with the Variety club of Tasmania, have provided substantial amounts of funding to replace and upgrade school buses for the students to come to school and to return home.

Giant Steps is a special independent school, and the reforms proposed in the government's Australian Education Amendment Bill will indeed support it. The transition arrangements for special schools, and for special assistance schools in particular, will provide regulatory certainty and make sure impacted schools are not financially disadvantaged. For any facility such as this, it is the uncertainties around funding that often provide the biggest challenges for the administrative staff and the principal. But these sorts of facilities and these sorts of very special schools do also enhance the education system overall. Indeed, there are many other schools that would struggle with the particular challenges that some of these students have. The financial cost to the community alone would be enormous for state schools, including sourcing the necessary funding to look after the, in some cases, very high needs of these children at other locations around the state. Of course the human cost for parents and young people with autism would also be tremendous.

Giant Steps educates its students in such a way, teaching them life skills as well as subjects on the curriculum to such an extent that many of them are able to go back into mainstream schools either part time or full time. These can be students who sometimes have had disciplinary issues within the schools that they previously attended and facilities such as Giant Steps provide a really important role to get these kids back on track and help them re-integrate into the broader education system.

Indeed, the government's education reforms will have a great and positive impact on the regional primary schools and district high schools in my largely rural electorate. Students in the electorate Lyons have more than 54 state primary and district high schools and independent and special schools that will all benefit from the increased funding to the Tasmanian education system more broadly under this government. In fact, this government has restored the $1.2 billion that the previous government had taken out of the forward estimates more broadly for school funding. Total federal funding to all Tasmanian schools over the next four years will increase by $110.9 million—a 37.2 per cent increase from 2013-14 to 2017-18. Federal funding to government schools in my state will grow by $56.9 million by 2017-18—a 46 per cent increase from 2013-14 to 2017-18—while the non-government sector will grow by only 30.8 per cent in the same period.

Funding for education is important. It is one of the vital components to ensuring that young people get a start. The special assistance schools and the support that students with disabilities, and the loadings that apply to those students, are a very important part of the funding package that the federal government commits—albeit that it is a relatively small part of the overall funding envelope. Only 15 per cent—

Debate interrupted.
The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. BC Scott) (16:30): Order! It being 4.30 pm, I propose the question:

That the House do now adjourn.

Bushfires

Ms HALL (Shortland—Opposition Whip) (16:30): I rise today to deliver a speech written by Matthew Drennan, a communications student on placement in my office, about the upcoming bushfire season. This is an issue that I am very close to as it coming up to a year since the bushfire emergency greatly affected my electorate.

Lake Munmorah and the historic town of Catherine Hill Bay were devastated by the bushfires that started on 17 October last year. Tragically, a Lake Munmorah resident lost his life while protecting his home. Just under 3,000 hectares of land were affected with three homes and 15 sheds and businesses destroyed by the fire. Included in this was Wallarah House, an historic house in Catherine Hill Bay that was built in 1887. This bushfire could have been more devastating and damaging if it was not for the excellent firefighters during those tough days. Many people were evacuated from their homes including residents in Lake Munmorah, Chain Valley Bay, Catherine Hill Bay and elsewhere.

I wish to also remind everyone that in the arrival of the bushfire season it is extremely important to be prepared. Planning out bushfire survival plans allow residents to know what to do, where to go and what to take in the event of a bushfire. Having those decisions already organised and planned out means that residents will be able to act quickly and safely. Making changes around the home will also be helpful especially when it comes to gutters and surrounding trees and gardens.

Knowing your type of area and its history with bushfires is also important for bushfire safety. In New South Wales there are six different ratings of bushfire danger, which can show just how disastrous a bushfire could be at that time. During the Low, Moderate, High, and Very High ratings is the best time to plan and review your bushfire survival plan and monitor the conditions. During the Severe rating, it is best to leave your home in the early part of the day unless you are prepared to defend your home in the conditions. In the Extreme rating it is also best to leave early unless your home is designed or modified to withstand a bushfire and you are also mentally prepared to defend as well. In the Catastrophic rating, the highest rating of bushfire danger, residents should leave their home early and enact their bushfire survival plan.

In the event of a bushfire there are three alert levels that should be monitored. The Advice alert level indicates that a fire has started but there is no immediate danger. The Watch and Act alert means that the fire is increasing in danger and residents should start to use their plans. Finally, the Emergency Warning alert means that residents are now in danger and actions should be taken immediately.

In the lead-up to a serious bushfire it is important to take the advice of the emergency services and stay aware of changing or dangerous conditions. Last year in the Shortland electorate, local residents worked well with firefighters and other services.

It is almost a year since those devastating bushfires affected areas and communities in my electorate such as Lake Munmorah and Catherine Hill Bay. With that in mind, it is important
to remember that being prepared and knowing of the dangers in the bushfire season will help reduce the dangers and risks.

Matthew has made a fine contribution in my office. I am sure that he is going to be an outstanding employee and employer and I am sure that the contribution that he will make in the area of communication is enormous. Shortland electorate was devastated last year by bushfires which caused enormous hardship and extreme pain to many people in the area. We had people in evacuation centres, and we want to be prepared for the onslaught of this year's bushfire season. So Matthew has made a fine contribution to this debate and to getting people prepared for the bushfire season and I thank him for that.

In conclusion, I would just like to add a couple of words to the debate that we have previously had in the MPI and urge each and every member to go back to their electorate and to show leadership, encourage social inclusion and to put out a message saying no to racism and no to discrimination, and yes to the community coming together and standing up for everything that is good and right. Australia is a great country and as a great country we want to see it remain that way into the future.

Broadband

Mr TAYLOR (Hume) (16:35): The coalition is delivering on its commitment to get the National Broadband Network rollout back on track and, importantly, into rural and regional areas. In my electorate of Hume, five wireless towers were recently activated, offering internet speeds faster than city based ADSL connections. Towers located in Cowra, Cowra West, Koorawatha, Noonbinna and Young West mean that an additional 1,239 premises in Hume can join the superfast era with the NBN.

The fixed wireless network uses 4G technology to deliver speeds of up to 25 megabits per second. Access to the network is a leap forward in speed and service. For example, a family can jump online at once and it has huge potential particularly for small businesses, and I of course include farmers in that category. This government's plan to deliver better broadband will mean that those in rural and regional areas are far better off.

A strategic review conducted by the NBN revealed that the true cost and timetable of completing Labor's NBN was enormous, and they provided some alternative options. The review found that if Labor's NBN had proceeded, it would have cost $72.6 billion—that is $29 billion more than the public were told—and it would take until 2024. This government's changes to the NBN rollout will save $32 billion, will see upgrades delivered four years sooner and will avoid internet retail bills increasing by up to 80 per cent, or $43 a month, for a typical household, which we would have seen under the Labor model.

In addition, Labor drastically underestimated demand in rural Australia—the area where internet connections are at their worst—meaning that 200,000 premises would not have been able to order an NBN service once the networks had been built. As a result the coalition is investing up to $1.2 billion more in rural Australia to ensure that the satellite and fixed wireless networks are able to cope with demand. In addition to the fixed wireless network activated recently in Cowra and Young, I am aware of other areas in my electorate that will soon have access to the NBN. I know that faster broadband is coming to the villages and rural communities around Goulburn and to Murringo. In Murringo, work on the construction and commissioning of the tower is well progressed. In Goulburn, the NBN has been working with
the council and the community to determine the location of towers, with the rollout scheduled
to commence in 2015. As with other areas in my electorate, I appreciate the support of
councils and communities in making sure that this happens as quickly as possible.

This government has always said that it will prioritise areas of greatest need, and rural and
regional areas have a great need for faster internet services. Progress with the NBN rollout
outside of Hume has also been positive. Since the election, the government has more than
doubled the reach of the fibre network and has more than quadrupled connections. The
number of Australians accessing the fixed wireless network has increased ninefold. There
were 2,336 connected in September 2013—at the time of the last election—and now, a year
later, 21,925 are connected. That is almost 10 times more.

Over the coming year the NBN will again more than double the reach of its network. It has
the goal of passing more than one million premises by July 2015. This is delivery; this is
doing what we said we would do. This government is completely committed to rolling out the
NBN and will do it as quickly as possible at less cost to taxpayers and more affordably for
consumers. This is a great news story for my electorate, it is a great news story for my
colleagues in rural and regional Australia and it is a great news story for Australians
generally.

Aged Care

Mr NEUMANN (Blair) (16:39): This Saturday marks 100 days since the Assistant
Minister for Social Services announced he was axing the dementia and severe behaviours
supplement—a $16.15 a day supplement paid to aged-care providers to address the additional
care needs of those residents exhibiting severe behaviours due to conditions such as dementia.
One hundred days later the government still has no idea what it wants to do. What we have
learnt this week from documents that Australian Ageing Agenda obtained under freedom of
information is that this government has spent its entire first year neglecting aged care. The
department's minutes and correspondence report highlighted the gross negligence and inaction
of the Minister for Social Services and his assistant minister, even in the face of advice from
the department.

The Abbott government was informed on 4 February 2014 that there was an
oversubscription to the dementia and severe behaviours supplement. A review was meant to
be undertaken and peak bodies were meant to have been contacted. To date I am not aware of
any peak body that received correspondence informing it that there was a problem or that a
review was underway. Somehow the Treasurer released a budget in May 2014 that did not
even address this issue. The assistant minister was informed that there were implementation
issues with the supplement. Training was neglected. Compliance and validation concerns
were not addressed. Suddenly, there was an apparent tenfold oversubscription—or so we are
told.

To date the government has released no official costings or any report on the issues
surrounding the supplement. The assistant minister did pledge to address the issue and
implement both interim and ongoing measures. One hundred days later all we have seen is a
forum, which is not due to report until 'sometime in October', according to the assistant
minister. The Abbott government has no interest in aged care, let alone dementia and the
issues surrounding those older people in residential aged care who exhibit severe and
sometimes violent behaviours as a result of their condition.
It may have been 100 days since the government announced they were axing the supplement, but it has been about nine months since the minister learnt there was an issue and 13 months since the government took responsibility for the implementation of this supplement, which began just one month before they took over. Nowhere in the department's own papers does it say that this supplement was badly designed or bad policy. No, it was not a design problem; it was an implementation problem. You cannot have a new instrument introduced and let it roll out with no oversight, no monitoring and no accountability.

The Abbott government has been in office for more than one year and yet it has shirked its responsibility to people in aged care suffering from the impacts of dementia. After the budget and after aged-care providers had made their budgets, hired their staff and finalised their forward plans, this government hit them with the axing of the dementia and severe behaviours supplement. The assistant minister rails against the cost of addressing the issue but happily supports the Prime Minister giving wealthy women $50,000 to have a baby. The Paid Parental Leave scheme will cost $20 billion across the forward estimates. On the one hand $110 million for those people with the most severe dementia and behaviour problems is not funded by this government and on the other hand the government is paying $20 billion across the forward estimates for millionaires to have babies.

The treatment of older Australians and the wonderful agencies that provide care for them when they are at their most vulnerable by this government has been shocking and disgraceful. The report card that the Prime Minister, his minister and the Assistant Minister for Social Services will receive from the Australian people will reflect—in my opinion—their inattention, their inaction and their incompetence. I call on this government to have a look at this issue, to deal with the peak bodies, to deal with the clinicians, to deal with the experts in this field—the same experts who advised us in devising the supplement in the first place—and to do their jobs. I urge the minister to restore this supplement, not to neglect aged care and to have more than one adviser in the assistant minister's office who deals with aged care. I urge the Prime Minister to appoint in this parliament and in this government a minister for ageing with cabinet status, as recommended in the Blueprint for an ageing Australia by Everald Compton and Brian Howe.

I urge this government to restore the dementia and severe behaviours supplement appropriately or come up with a proper alternative. Listen to the voice of the aged-care sector. Stop slugging them with cuts, as the budget did. Listen to the voice of the providers, who are at the coalface. Restore the dementia and severe behaviours supplement. It should be a government of no surprises and no excuses, because that is what government members went around the countryside saying it would be—a government of no surprises and no excuses. In the area of ageing and aged care, what has this government delivered? Surprise cuts after surprise cuts after surprise cuts. It is a government that has no interest in the sector and no interest in those people suffering the most severe ailments that can possibly be imagined. Vulnerable people deserve better in this country. (Time expired)

Western Australia: Taxation

Mr WILSON (O'Connor) (16:45): I rise today to speak about what is probably the most important, yet contentious, issue affecting Western Australia: the GST distribution. While the broader perception is that this is simply a Western Australian issue, the reality is that the current system embeds inefficiency and contains some perverse incentives that, in some
instances, actually penalise states for maximising revenue. Having said that, it is a significant
disadvantage for a state that contributes 16 per cent of Australia's gross domestic product and
49 per cent of the nation's mercantile exports. The GST distribution is of great importance to
me; I spoke about it in my maiden speech, have continued to discuss it with my WA Liberal
colleagues and have openly spoken about it in the media. This week, Western Australian
Treasurer Dr Mike Nahan visited Canberra to meet with his federal counterparts and discuss
how we can address this issue.

But, before I comment on that, I will give a bit of background on how the GST is
distributed. GST revenues are distributed amongst the states according to recommendations
from the Commonwealth Grants Commission using the principle of horizontal fiscal
equalisation. The aim of HFE is to enable each state to provide the same standard of services,
providing it makes the same efforts to raise revenues from its own sources. HFE takes into
account the different costs faced by state governments in providing services and states'
differing capacities to raise their own revenue. The Grants Commission updates its calculation
of state grant shares annually, using the latest available data. In addition to annual updates, the
commission undertakes a major review of the methodology used to implement fiscal
equalisation every five or six years.

This year, WA will receive just 37c for every dollar of GST revenue raised in the state and
the state Treasury has previously warned its share could drop to as little as 11c. With iron ore
prices sliding to around US$80 per tonne, Western Australia will receive around $1.7 billion
less in royalties than was forecast just four months ago. This decline is compounded by the
Grants Commission using a three-year rolling average to calculate revenue, meaning that it
will take three years for the current revenue collapse to wash through the system.

Last night at a specially organised briefing, the WA Treasurer addressed 26 members and
senators, including members from the Liberal Party, the Palmer United Party, the Liberal
Democrats and Family First, representing every state except the Tasmanians, who had a long-
held prior commitment. While supporting the concept of horizontal fiscal equalisation, Dr
Nahan stressed that the current distribution level received by WA is unprecedented, that
measures by the state government to raise additional revenue could see us lose over 100 per
cent of that additional revenue and that there will be major economic benefits for the nation
from reform of the current distribution formula.

As announced previously, the WA Liberal members and senators will form a bloc to
advocate for reform. We will be outspoken in our support for a greater GST share for WA and
we will go about it through the proper channels. We will put together a joint submission to the
upcoming white paper on reform of the federation and the white paper on the reform of
Australia's taxation system due in 2015. As I told the Kalgoorlie Miner on 4 September, after
my colleague Christian Porter outlined our plan to make a joint submission in the party room:
We are going to stick this course, we're going to make sure the whole world knows what the situation is,
how badly WA is being affected by the diminishing returns from the GST.

I am fully aware that, without the support of the Prime Minister, the Treasurer and the
majority of coalition members across all states, our proposals, no matter how good they are,
will go no further, but we are determined to resolve this issue for the benefit of WA. Do not
get me wrong, I know that each state's members and senators are equally parochial for their
states as the WA members are. But we do not need to have a divisive debate; we want to try
and educate others that the current system is penalising WA in an unprecedented way. It is hampering national economic development by providing distorted incentives to the other states.

I would like to thank Dr Nahan for travelling to Canberra to provide the Western Australian perspective to our eastern states counterparts. Hopefully for the people of WA, this will be an important step forward on the long road to GST reform.

**Gene Patenting**

Ms PARKE (Fremantle) (16:49): The Full Federal Court of Australia in its very recent judgement in the matter of Yvonne D'Arcy and Myriad Genetics has catapulted gene patents once more onto the political agenda since it is now clear, despite the lodgement of an appeal to the High Court, that this issue can only be definitively resolved through legislation to amend the Patents Act. This decision is the reverse of the virtually identical case against Myriad in the US, where the US Supreme Court found in a unanimous nine-zero decision last year that human genes, whether isolated or not, are products of nature and as such are not patentable subject matter.

The US Supreme Court's unanimous judgements in both the Myriad case and a prior case of Mayo and Prometheus supported the decision by the US government to overturn three decades of US patent policy. This decision means that genetic materials isolated from the human body should never have been patented, in the same way that coal extracted from the earth and cotton fibres extracted from cotton seeds could never be. The Full Federal Court ignored this concern, arguing instead:

This case is not about the wisdom of the patent system. … … …

It is not about whether, for policy or moral or social reasons, patents for gene sequences should be excluded from patentability.

That abrogation of responsibility was, respectfully, a mistake the US Supreme Court did not make.

Patents over human DNA, a material that no-one invented, would, as the US justices warn, 'impede the flow of information that might permit, indeed, spur, invention'. Americans are now free to use DNA to develop new products, while Australians are not. Which is the more desirable policy outcome? Both the US and Australian patent systems share a common ancestry going back hundreds of years with the objective of encouraging and rewarding inventions, not discoveries. Knowing which genetic mutations are linked to breast cancer is a discovery; and isolating those genetic mutations is not an invention.

It often comes as an unwelcome surprise to Australians to learn that at present anyone can patent human genes, with the result that no-one else, including scientists, medical researchers or doctors carrying out tests, can access those genes without obtaining an expensive licence from the patent holder. People often ask how it is even possible for a corporation to have received a patent over a gene when no-one invented our genes, not even the defective cancer-causing ones; when genes are clearly a product of nature.

The companies holding gene patents argue that by removing a gene from the body that is, by isolating it, by putting it in a test tube—they have invented it. IP Australia, which has been granting these patents for the last two decades, agrees with this, and on 5 September the
Australian Federal Court too agreed with this proposition, finding that Myriad's isolation of the human genes linked to breast and ovarian cancer is an invention under Australian patent law.

It is true that in 2004 the Australian Law Reform Commission considered these issues without calling for legislative reform regarding gene patents, but it did so largely in the view that the international position on the law was that isolated genes could be patented. That conclusion has turned out to be wrong in view of the US Supreme Court's decision.

It is salient to mention that, when the Senate Constitutional and Legal Affairs Committee considered the Patent Amendment (Human Genes and Biological Materials) Bill 2010 and recommended that it not proceed, the majority report was particularly concerned that the scope of the proposed change covered all biological material rather than just genetic material. Since then the US Supreme Court has definitely ruled that that distinction makes no difference. Any biological material extracted from nature, whether it be bacteria or a human genetic mutation linked to breast cancer, cannot be patented if it is 'not markedly different to anything found in nature'. Merely isolating or purifying biological materials is not enough to make them eligible for a patent monopoly under US patent law.

During the hearing of the case, US Supreme Court Justice Sotomayor noted that she could bake a chocolate chip cookie from natural ingredients—salt, flour, eggs and butter—and that, if she combusted those ingredients in a totally new way, she could get a patent on that. But she could not imagine getting a patent on the basic items of salt, flour and eggs simply because she'd created a new use or a new product from those ingredients.

Similarly, there is no objection to patents being granted over inventions such as medicines, vaccines, therapies and new methods for diagnosis that use genetic materials in them. The objection is to the patenting of the underlying genetic materials themselves because (a) no-one invented these materials—they are products of nature—and (b) the patents prevent others accessing fundamental genetic information needed to diagnose disease and develop new health treatments.

Neither the ALRC nor the parliamentary committee had the advantage of the recent US Supreme Court decision. Unfortunately, because of the full Federal Court decision, that difficult task remains before us. As I have done consistently, I will continue to argue for the Australian parliament and government to resolve this issue in favour of our common ownership and access to what at the end of the day should be the private property of no-one and everyone. This requires a simple amendment to the Patents Act.

**Abacus Learning Centre**

Mr HUNT (Flinders—Minister for the Environment) (16:55): I will thankfully take this opportunity to talk about the work of the Abacus Learning Centre in Hastings, Victoria. Abacus is a wonderful organisation. It takes care of those young children who have autism and autism spectrum related challenges. My engagement has come from dealing with many parents in the electorate, in particular Michael and Lauren Moore, who are right at the heart of this organisation, taking care of their beautiful young son—actually not so young now; he is now a teenager—and so many other parents.

I want to talk a little bit about Abacus and then a little bit about the steps forward from here. Abacus Learning Centre was Australia's first facility offering centre based ABA therapy
programs. It is in Hastings. It is literally a few hundred metres from my office. It provides excellence in early intervention programs and school services specifically to help children with autism spectrum disorder. In practice, when you go to Abacus you see the most committed possible group of teachers, therapists and specialists working with young children on building learning capacity and building memory. It is a mixture of physical and mental activities. They might be teaching those children to repeat activities. It could be using different colours. It could be jumping hoops. It could be jumping on and off steps or then working on repetition of words with reward.

The testimony to the impact of Abacus was given to me at what has been possibly the most powerful electorate function I have attended in my time in parliament. On that evening three testimonials were given by different mothers, each one of whom told the story of the journey of their child—their young son or daughter—who was suffering with severe learning disabilities. In many cases the parents said: ‘We are struggling to cope. We are deeply distressed. There is simply nothing that we can personally do.’ Abacus provided a way forward for them, and on each occasion each of these three parents told the story about the change in the capacity of their children to learn, to thrive and to be part of the community.

The world is full of amazing stories of people with autism who have thrived, but equally there are those who struggle, and Abacus helps make that difference. Each of the parents said that not only did they feel their child was given the opportunity to progress, to develop and to be part of the world but that as a family or individual parent—because some of them were sole parents—their world was different. There was a sense of despair, but now there was a sense of hope and light.

Going forward, Abacus has its challenges. It has to move buildings. It was very generously lent by the base hospital in Mornington a building for three years. It is well past five and probably approaching seven years that it has been in that building. The time has come where it will have to vacate the premises because the building will be resumed for hospital purposes. Now we need to find them a new home. I am working with the Shire of Mornington Peninsula. I would like to work with the state, which has been very constructive. But this is a fundamental thing. Moreover, I think we need to ensure that Abacus is fully integrated and accredited as part of the state schooling system. I will do all that I can. I will be speaking with the federal and state ministers and putting in writing to them that not only do we need a new home; we need to fund on a full, sustainable basis because, for the moment, it is the parents and the fundraisers who have been providing the funds. I was fortunate to be able to assist in some small way with the funds we raised from my last 500-kilometre walk around my electorate, but that pales in comparison with what the parents have had to raise.

So, going forward, I want to say thank you to the parents, to commend the teachers led by Lauren Moore and so many others and to say that we will not stop. This is the pledge I have given to Reverend John Leaver, who has been one of its patrons but who is suffering at the moment until Abacus has a new home and a sustainable future.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. BC Scott): Order! It being 5 pm, the debate is interrupted.

House adjourned at 17:00
NOTICES

The following notices were given:

Mr Neumann: To move:

That this House:

(1) notes that the Government’s first budget ripped $534.4 million from Indigenous Affairs, including $121.8 million from Indigenous health;

(2) recognises that frontline services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have been cut as a result of the Prime Minister’s unfair budget, including:

(a) National Family Violence Prevention Legal Services, providing legal assistance to vulnerable women and children escaping family violence;

(b) Prisoner ThroughCare programs to combat recidivism and reduce incarceration rates;

(c) preventative health programs such as Tackling Smoking and Healthy Lifestyles; and

(d) the Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme, assisting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students complete tertiary education; and

(e) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services, which have had their funding cut by more than $13 million;

(3) notes that the Government’s new competitive Indigenous Advancement Strategy will bring the next round of funding cuts for Indigenous programs;

(4) acknowledges the serious impact of funding cuts on Indigenous organisations, including loss of staff and ongoing uncertainty for services and the people who rely on them; and

(5) calls on the Government to reverse these cruel and unfair budget cuts.
CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Hunter Electorate: Roads

Mr FITZGIBBON (Hunter) (09:30): Constituents in my electorate of Hunter are constantly expressing their delight at the outcome of the former Labor government's decision to fund and build the $1.7 billion dollar Hunter Expressway. It has made an enormous difference to travelling times and safety for so many local communities because it has effectively provided those communities with a bypass of their local town.

But, alas, it is causing problems elsewhere. As the traffic movements are pushed, the chokepoints are pushed further up the valley. I think it is fair to say that the intersection where the New England Highway meets the Golden Highway is now one of the most dangerous traffic black spots in the Hunter electorate, and I call upon the New South Wales government to take it more seriously. It has done some work there, and it has just announced more work will be done, but it is becoming clear to me, given the busyness of the intersection and some of the visual challenges there, that nothing short of some form of graded separation will suffice to bring it to the safety standard we rightly expect in the 21st century. We must ensure no lives are lost at that intersection in the future.

This highlighted even further the need to bypass the townships of Singleton, Muswellbrook and Scone. Under the former Labor government, we made very significant progress on Muswellbrook and Scone. We allocated $45 million to the Scone project. The last allocation of funding for Muswellbrook was some $10 million, which was supposed to bring the project to, as they say, shovel-ready status. However, my advice is that, having asked for the $10 million, the RMS of New South Wales is now saying that $10 million is not enough to bring it to shovel-ready status. I do not understand how the New South Wales government can now change its mind and request more money from the Commonwealth.

I say to the RMS: get on with finishing the design works and bring the Muswellbrook bypass design to completion so we can get on with the job. On the Singleton bypass, about a year ago now the New South Wales government did its scoping study to determine whether the project was viable. We have not seen that study. I do not know why we have not seen that study. I do not know whether the government is waiting until we are closer to the March election, but I want that study released. I want the community of Singleton to understand what that study is and says and to have a better idea of what prospects we have of securing a Singleton bypass in the not too distant future. It is a bypass which is sorely needed in that part of the world.

Casey Electorate: Casey Apprentice/Trainee of the Year Awards

Mr TONY SMITH (Casey) (09:33): Back in 2009, I initiated the Casey Apprentice/Trainee of the Year Awards to recognise and reward excellence and achievement in local trades in the Casey electorate. On Tuesday, 16 September, I was pleased to host the fifth annual award presentation. This is all possible because of the dedicated committee of local business owners, including Phil Munday of Phil Munday's Panel Works, who is the chair
of the judging panel; Sue O'Brien from Chateau Yering; Nick Fraraccio of Stevens Glass; and Clive Larkman from Larkman Nurseries.

Following a nomination process, 12 finalists were determined by the judging panel. As in previous years, they had a very difficult decision to make because of the quality of the applications. But I was pleased to be able to announce on the night that the winner of the 2014 Casey Apprentice/Trainee of the Year Awards was 17-year-old Mikayla Paulet, a first-year hairdressing apprentice at Natural Chique Hair & Make-up in Mount Evelyn. She is doing a fantastic job. She was supported by the owner of the business, Kristy McKenzie, and by many of her family, friends and work colleagues.

The runner-up award was shared by two people. The judging panel could not split the quality. One of the runners-up was 17-year-old Cameron Bisschop, a second-year apprentice at an automotive mechanics business in Silvan. The other was 26-year-old Natacha De Barba, a third-year apprentice chef at TarraWarra Estate in the heart of the Yarra Valley. The panel also awarded 19-year-old Joshua Mayall, a third-year apprentice electrician with CPM Electricals in Yarra Glen, with an encouragement award. Joshua was also a finalist in last year's awards.

I pass on my congratulations to all of the finalists, to the award winners and to the panel, who again gave generously of their time to choose some young locals who are excelling in their chosen field and deserve the recognition and the encouragement that these awards provide on an annual basis.

**Muslim Leadership Program**

Ms VAMVAKINOU (Calwell) (09:35): Today I want to talk about the Muslim Leadership Program, which is an annual program coordinated by the Centre for Dialogue at La Trobe University and the Islamic Council of Victoria. The Centre for Dialogue is a major initiative of La Trobe University. It was founded by Emeritus Professor Joseph Camilleri and inaugurated in August 2006. The Muslim Leadership Program is now in its ninth year and it offers young people an opportunity to come to Canberra and to network with Australia’s leading shapers of public policy and opinion in Melbourne, Canberra and Sydney, as well as engaging with future thought leaders from Muslim communities in Australia, South-East Asia and the Middle East.

I am very proud to have hosted this program. For most of the eight years it has been running, I have had the opportunity to host it. This year in particular I was honoured to welcome to Parliament House the members of the Muslim Leadership Program for 2014. They are, Mr Deputy Speaker—and you will attest to this because you were present during some of those discussions—10 exceptionally talented and bright young Australians of Muslim faith who come from very diverse backgrounds, ethnicities and professions.

I would like to take this opportunity to name the participants for this year. Ms Reyhana Ahmednur is a student at the University of Melbourne, with an interest in social enhancement and education in ethnic communities, with specific interest in the Oromo people. Mr Mohammad Ali Baqiri is a 23-year-old second-year law student at Victoria University. Mohammad is a refugee himself and a refugee advocate. He has a passion for human rights and learning as much as he can about Australia's refugee policy. Ms Aisha Dani is a start-up manager with an interest in business education and social enterprise. Ms Subriah Esharc is a
final-year law student and hopes to one day pursue a career in brand management. Mr Abdul Hammoud is studying criminology, works as a salesperson and is also a performance artist who is interested in education policies that affect minorities and marginalized communities. Mr Mohammad Ali Hijazi is a university prison chaplain and is also studying psychology. Ms Amena Ziard is a university student at Monash and editor of the campus newspaper, *Lot's Wife*. Ms Fatime Hoblos is an aerospace engineer. Mr Wael Mohamed is a youth worker and community activist. And Mr Reuben Street is an award-winning filmmaker whose film *Once Upon a Mountain* received an award for best social benefit documentary in the Eugene International Film Festival 2013. I want to congratulate these young people for being here. We had a great discussion. All members who participated in those discussions learnt a lot from them and they had an opportunity to voice their concerns to us as political leaders.

**Robertson Electorate: Copland, Mr Jim**

*Mrs WICKS* (Robertson) (09:38): Today I rise to pay tribute to a great man in my local community on the Central Coast—a man whose life never made newspaper headlines. He never built a business empire, he did not invent a world-changing device, and he did not deliver an oration that soared into the pages of history. He was a man who died last month, quietly—as quietly as some may say he lived. Born on 9 February 1955, Jim Copland was a reserved person with a dry sense of humour, a love of computers, music and sport, especially soccer and cricket. He was a gifted guitarist and an accomplished musician and he spent a lot of time playing for other people, particularly in nursing homes. I knew Jim for over 20 years as a resident of Narara, the husband of an incredible lady, Fran Copland, the father of Gareth and Dan Copland, father-in-law to Bec Copland and grandad to my own children’s friends Hannah, Elijah and Sophie.

I knew even less about the insidious disease that we now know as Huntington's, which slowly captured and then consumed his body year by year, inch by inch, as it marched silently inside of Jim, gradually destroying neurons and his central nervous system. It is indeed an insidious disease, and to date there is no cure. Last month, when Jim died, it was Huntington's Disease Awareness Month in New South Wales. Unfortunately the disease is genetic, and anyone with the defective gene that causes Huntington's will not only develop the disease but also have a fifty-fifty chance of passing it on to their children. The angst this causes family members and their loved ones is enormous, and I have watched as Fran, Gareth and Dan and his family grappled with the impact of the disease not only on Jim but also on themselves and their own future.

It is indeed an honour to have known this man and to know his family because, despite the impact of this disease on his memory, his physical movements, his moods and even his bodily functions, Jim and his family never once allowed him to be defined by his illness, but he was very much defined by his Christian faith. He made a lifelong commitment aged just 15 at a Billy Graham crusade with a timeless hymn, *How Great Thou Art*, soaring in the background. While I did not know him when he was 15 or indeed even that well during his life, one thing I did know of Jim through those who did know and love him best was that in good times and bad, in pain and in sickness and in darkness, Jim truly lived out that hymn. He lived out the Psalms. He lived out Job. He lived out his life in such a way that all those who came in contact with him, even at a distance like I did, got a glimpse of what it means to truly live out the truth of Job 19: 'I know that my redeemer lives.'
He taught us all, and he gave us all one of the greatest gifts that we could be given: the dignity of the human person despite the circumstances. Jim showed his wife, his kids, his grandkids, his friends, his community and even me how we can live well through the most difficult circumstances imaginable. He bequeathed that to us all. As I said at the start, he was a great man who has left a great legacy for us all to continue. He will be greatly missed. May he rest in peace.

Kingston Electorate: Lawn Bowls

Ms RISHWORTH (Kingston) (09:42): On Sunday, I had the opportunity to attend the Port Noarlunga Bowling Club open day ceremony for 2014-15, which celebrated the commencement of another lawn bowls season for this fantastic club. Indeed, it is at this time every year that the lawn bowls season commences. I was very pleased to be shown around by President Bryan to see the good work that the club is doing and the work that the volunteers in the club do as well. I was very pleased, and I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate life member Dennis Lynch, who was inducted as the club patron.

As I said, this weekend marked the commencement of another lawn-bowling season for the Port Noarlunga bowls club and also for lawn bowling across the state. I have a number of other great clubs in my electorate including Aldinga Bay, Happy Valley, Reynella, Christies Beach and Morphett Vale. Indeed, in the region there is also the McLaren Flat Bowling Club and the McLaren Vale and Willunga bowling clubs.

For many local residents, lawn bowls is a growing and popular sport. It provides many people in our community with the opportunity to stay active and engaged in physical activity through competitive and team sport, to meet new people and engage in social activity or simply to have a great time. It is growing in popularity and is a growing attraction for Australians of all ages and all backgrounds who can get out, be active and have a great social time—although I would say that it can get quite competitive as well! I was very pleased that I did not have to participate in the opening of the season, because I think I would certainly have been shown up by many that were in the club.

This is also an opportunity for me to recognise all the volunteers that ensure that our lawn bowls clubs get to be as great as they are. I know that so many volunteers in our lawn bowls associations and clubs work so hard to ensure that these clubs continue to thrive and prosper. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all those volunteers and to wish everyone a very successful and competitive lawn bowls season both on and off the green. Port Noarlunga have shown that their club is very positive in welcoming the community, as I know that all other clubs in the electorate are. They extend their clubrooms and events to ensure that the community really is part of their bowling club. So, as I say, congratulations to all those, and I wish them all the very best for the season.

Lismore Regional Gallery

Mr HOGAN (Page) (09:45): There is a big birthday this month. You may have heard of it—word is going around in the community. In October it will be the Lismore Regional Gallery's 60th birthday. There is going to be a party in a few weeks time to celebrate this milestone. I acknowledge Brett Adlington, the Director of the Lismore Regional Gallery, and also Pru Regan, who is part of the Friends of the Gallery.
Lismore Regional Gallery is the fifth-oldest regional gallery in New South Wales. It was opened on 24 October in 1954 by the Director of the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Hal Missingham. The gallery reflects the tremendous foresight and support of the local community, starting with establishing the first annual art prize in 1953, and the second annual prize marked the gallery's opening in 1954.

Lismore Regional Gallery is an important cultural asset for Lismore, its surrounding towns and villages and indeed the whole district. It initiates national and international art exhibitions for the benefit of the local community. Recent examples are its self-initiated Afghanistan exhibition, with the artist travelling to Lismore. Its well-regarded Not Quite Square exhibition on local architecture went on to exhibit at the Tin Sheds Gallery at the University of Sydney. As well, it has sponsored the Archibald travelling exhibition which is due to exhibit next year in February. As well, it sees its role as supporting local artists and the strong creative industries which the Northern Rivers is fortunate enough to have and to be able to foster.

Unfortunately, Lismore Regional Gallery is often not able to show some exhibitions it generates because it has outgrown its space. For example, its artist in residence last year, the internationally acclaimed photographer Laurence Aberhart, had to hold his show in Sydney at the Museum of Contemporary Art because the Lismore Regional Gallery had space issues.

Lismore Regional Gallery also has a collection worth around $2 million, but not all can be on display.

It has, amazingly enough, 30,000 visitors a year—a great figure in a city with not much more of a population than that. The creative industries, which the gallery supports through its programming, are a strong employment sector in the Northern Rivers. It also benefits from being a good supporter of the art courses at Southern Cross University and Lismore TAFE, putting it in a unique position for a regional gallery.

Lismore is a creative area. Creative Lismore, a recently formed alliance of 14 arts organisations in the district, has the vision for Lismore to become Australia's regional prominent centre for arts and creativity. The community and arts industry support has remained undimmed over these 60 years, and it is an asset and a benefit for the area and the community. I congratulate the present and past directors, staff and supporters who have contributed to the Lismore Regional Gallery.

Petition: Medicare

Ms O'NEIL (Hotham) (09:48): On behalf of the people of Hotham, I present these petitions to the parliament, subject to their approval by the Standing Committee on Petitions. I present these petitions as the voice of almost 6,000 people in my community. These petitions are an expression of anger, of disappointment and of fear at the government's proposed changes to our system of universal health care. They say to the Abbott government loud and clear: 'Hands off our Medicare.'

Deputy Speaker, you would be aware that Medicare was introduced by Labor in 1973 to provide equitable and efficient means of health insurance for all Australians. It is one of Labor's and one of this country's proudest policy achievements. It was a policy that brought equity to Australian health care, a policy that replaced an ailing, inefficient medical system that privileged those who could afford to pay. Over the next decade, Medicare continued to be
attacked by conservatives, but Labor has continued to fight for it, and is it in that tradition that I stand in front of you in the House today and say: hands off our Medicare.

Medicare shares incredibly wide support—you can see that from the petitions in front of me—not just across Hotham but right across Australia. As well as being popular, the policy has been extraordinarily successful not just at protecting Australians who fall ill but at keeping down our healthcare costs. Australia spends less on health care than the OECD average and much less than its counterparts in the US. And, in return for this efficient system, we are amongst a handful of countries that have the best health outcomes of any countries in the world.

Despite this success, widely recognised by people right around Australia, Medicare is again under attack. Today the government will continue its battle to put a sick tax, a $7 charge, on every Australian who wants to go to the doctor or get a pathology test, and to increase charges for our pharmaceuticals. This is going to be bad for community health because people may not go to the doctor when they need to. It is pretty basic. But, importantly, this policy is so profoundly regressive. The poorest and the sickest, the elderly and those with chronic disease, will pay the most.

The people of Hotham, my electorate, those people that I have the great privilege to represent, have raised their voices. They are angry. They are disappointed that the government has betrayed them despite making a promise—whatever that is worth today—at the election that there would be no cuts to health and no changes to health policy. But, even more than that, there are people in my community who are frightened. Constituents have said that this will mean making real choices about whether to buy food or get the health care that they need. Others have said they will stop going to the doctor and stop getting tests when they are asked. And then there are the families. What about the families who may have to pay $50 or $60 when a family gets sick together?

My constituents have spoken today in these petitions I present to you. I commit to them, with Labor, that we will continue to fight to protect Medicare.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. BC Scott): Order! I advise the member for Hotham that the document will be forwarded to the petitions committee for its consideration and will be accepted subject to confirmation by the committee that it conforms with the standing orders.

Coal Seam Gas

Mr O'DOWD (Flynn) (09:51): A new age is dawning in Gladstone with the first shipments of coal seam gases, called CSG, to the Asian markets sometime in December. It is a date that we are all looking forward to. It is the culmination of a lot of work put in in the Deputy Speaker's area, in Chinchilla and Roma and that area. I am pleased to report that 500 kilometres of pipelines into Gladstone—there are three main pipelines coming into the Gladstone Harbour—are all completed. Of course, there will be a network of pipelines out in the west and into the north of Gladstone, especially with Shell Arrow doing exploration work—and it would appear that they have a lot of gas in the Moranbah northern area of the Bowen Basin. QCLNG will be the first cab off the rank when it comes to the first shipment, but this will be quickly followed by the other two gas companies, APLNG and GLNG. They will be going in the first quarter of 2015.
It has been a wonderful project, really, with a lot of jobs on offer not only in Gladstone but out in the western towns of Chinchilla, Roma et cetera. These have been very highly paid jobs. There were issues. We had a few issues with farmers’ rights and also the Gladstone Harbour, but I am pleased to say here today that all those issues have been resolved and 99 per cent of the people—whether it be farmers, property owners where the pipelines came through or the small business which benefit from it—are all very happy. The Australian economy will be very happy once the shipments go out by Christmas time, and we will start seeing some return for the money.

What I mean by ‘return for the money’ is that there are $65 billion worth of gas plants on Curtis Island. There are three plants; they all went over $20 billion. It has come out of the ground—$65 billion. It is really a fantastic effort by all those concerned. Bechtel were the contractor for the three plants in Gladstone. It was Bechtel’s biggest project in the world, and they are the biggest contractors in the world. Their biggest project was Gladstone, which I am very proud of. Quite often the Bechtel board go to where their biggest project is. We have had the Bechtel board in Gladstone on at least three occasions. It has been a fantastic achievement for all concerned. I must report that the Gladstone harbour has probably never been better. It is really thriving. The dolphins and the fish are all coming back and everything is fine.

International Naturally Autistic People Awards

Mr HAYES (Fowler—Chief Opposition Whip) (09:55): Australia has a population of around 23 million, but do you realise that about four million people in this country are reported as having a disability? This is not something that is prevalent in various parts of our communities; it is pretty well distributed. To put it in perspective, as I understand it, every 30 minutes someone is diagnosed with a significant disability.

As a member representing an electorate that, for various reasons, has a high proportion of families living with disability, and being a grandfather of a grandson who is on the autism spectrum, I certainly understand the challenges and difficulties that families and carers face, and also the amount of work that families need to contribute to looking after an individual with a disability, particularly at a personal level.

As parents we all want the best for our children and as grandparents we want the same. We certainly do not love our children with disabilities any less. As a matter of fact, in Nathaniel’s case it is probably the reverse. We do aspire to ensure that there is proper inclusion in our community. That is why I was very inspired by the International Naturally Autistic People Awards Convention and Festival, which is an absolutely fantastic initiative. This convention focuses on uniting the autistic community around the world, and it provides autistic individuals with the opportunity to showcase their various talents and skills. This convention is hosted by the ANCA Foundation, a Canadian based organisation that has hosted four annual conventions.

Last year nine Australians were nominated among the 88 other nominees from 15 different countries. Three Australians, Dr Wendy Lawson, TJ Straw and Sue Larkey were recipients of the 2013 International Naturally Autistic People Awards, highlighting their particular strengths in sport, in music and in the visual arts.

I was first made aware of this convention through a very good friend of mine, young Ana Nguyen in my electorate. I have known her over the last four years. She is a person who has a
disability. She has autism. Ana has a passion, though. She very much has a passion for
singing and songwriting. She is a very strong and forthright young woman, a woman who
understands her disability and one who is committed to making a difference in the
community. I congratulate Ana, and I congratulate the International Naturally Autistic People
Awards Convention and Festival, which is currently being held in Edinburgh, Scotland. I wish
well to all the participants. Truly these organisations make it better for our community, a
community which loves all individuals, particularly those with disabilities.

**Renewable Energy**

*Ms HENDERSON* (Corangamite) (09:58): I rise to speak on an issue that is very
important to a large number of my constituents in Corangamite—that is, renewable energy.
That is why I am such a strong advocate for a strong, operative renewable energy target. The
RET was introduced by the former Howard government to drive investment and innovation in
renewables so vital for jobs, our local economy and the environment. The Warburton review
of the RET, as required every two years under the legislation, found that the RET had
encouraged significant additional renewable energy generation and had delivered a modest
reduction in carbon emissions. It also found that the RET would result in an additional $22
billion in cross-subsidy to the renewable sector between now and 2030 and that it would
encourage $15 billion of additional investment in new renewable energy generation capacity.
The panel has proposed a number of options to wind back both the Small-scale Renewable
Energy Scheme and the Large-scale Renewable Energy Target. Of course, the panel's work is
a report to government, not a report by government. At this time our government is listening
to the many views on this issue and considering its response.

When the expanded target of 41,000 gigawatts an hour for the LRET was legislated in
2010, it was intended that 20 per cent of Australia's electricity would derive from renewable
sources by 2020. At the current trajectory, that is set to be some 26 per cent. Of course, it is so
important to get the balance right, and I am not yet convinced that the options to change the
RET, as proposed by the panel, would deliver investment certainty. Across Corangamite some
24 per cent of homes have either solar PV systems or solar hot water systems. The RET has
been very important in driving this uptake in solar energy.

While I was sympathetic to the true 20 per cent position, after reviewing more of the
evidence it is clear that a revised target of some 27,000 gigawatts an hour would still cause
major investment uncertainty. Some companies could go under; others could be in breach of
debt covenants. I do not think we can let this happen. On the other hand, there are good
arguments to bring down the target and exclude, at least, the aluminium sector. On the current
trajectory—because of the way this scheme was mishandled under Labor, which allowed the
market to be flooded with excess renewable energy certificates—investment in renewables
has stalled and it is doubtful that the legislated target will be reached, leaving, of course,
power companies to pay the penalty price and the scheme in disarray. Whatever the decision
made by the government, a continued bipartisan position on the RET, I believe, is
fundamental.

I wish to reiterate that our government has a long-term commitment to renewable energy
and carbon emissions reduction, and I will continue to be a passionate defender of renewable
energy and the environment.
The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Ewen Jones): Order! In accordance with standing order 193 the time for constituency statements has concluded.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Iraq and Syria

Mr HAYES (Fowler—Chief Opposition Whip) (10:01): Australians are entitled to express concern about involvement in another international conflict. The memory of our previous venture into Iraq a mere decade ago still lingers, as does how that involvement has contributed to the human tragedy which is currently unfolding in the Middle East. The misguided and poorly planned coalition of the willing, which was opposed by the United Nations and most European states, led to the invasion of Iraq in 2003. That was largely responsible for creating the power vacuum impacting all levels of Iraq's administration and bureaucracy, which has in turn contributed to the rise of terrorist groups such as ISIL. For the record, we should not—and should never—refer to them as the 'Islamic State' because, I think, that is offensive to anyone of faith, particularly those of the Muslim faith.

We know that since 2003 more than 1.4 million Christians, Assyrians, Chaldean Catholics, Mandaeans, Yazidis and other minorities have fled their homeland or faced what could only be referred to as a genocide. Thousands of families are being driven from their homes, with innocent people being killed and women and girls being raped and forced into sexual servitude. The simple fact is that the international community has no choice. The international community must take action to support vulnerable communities and minorities, and therefore we should be committed to being in Iraq.

It is for that very reason that Labor fully supports Australia's contribution to the international humanitarian mission. That is why Labor also supports the military assistance and efforts to degrade ISIL and prevent further genocide. Particularly when the Iraqi government is requesting help from the international community to protect its people from further atrocities, it means it is time for Australia to act. Given the fact that we were part of the coalition of the willing, Australia holds a higher moral responsibility to lend assistance in this instance.

I have the honour of representing the most multicultural community in the whole of Australia. The colour, the vibrancy and the diversity of my community is something that I have great pride in. My electorate also has a very high proportion of Muslim Australians, many of whom in recent weeks are certainly feeling stigmatised by the crimes and atrocities committed by ISIL.

Over the past few weeks I have been visiting many members of the Islamic community in my electorate. I know Australian Muslims to be, in the main, good, honest and hardworking people. I also know how repulsed they are by the crimes and atrocities being committed by ISIL, particularly when it is being said that those crimes are being committed in the name of religion.

One thing that is common at the various mosques and Islamic schools that I visit is that they are angry that their religion is being hijacked by extremists. We know that there are a number of Australians fighting alongside terrorist groups in Iraq and Syria. We understand that a lot of these people have left Australia against the wishes of their families and communities. Therefore, it is only right that Australia takes every effort to stop young people,
for whatever reason, seeking to leave this country to fight with terrorist groups. The new national security laws give our law enforcement and intelligence services the ability, or a greater ability, to do that. Where there is credible evidence of these people intending to join terrorist groups, we should be intervening. We should not simply be preventing people exiting this country; we should make sure that we are doing enough to provide services to families and communities to ensure that ISIL’s cause is not embedded in their psyche that they need to join a terrorist organisation in order to make a difference.

One thing that we do have and celebrate in this country is our democracy. People are entitled to have views, but people are not entitled to take extreme views to the extent of working in concert with a terrorist organisation, an organisation that detests not only our free and democratic way of life but everything that we stand for. That is really what our new national security laws are intended to do: they are there to protect the freedom and our way of life.

ISIL’s hatred is intolerable, and hence our renewed commitment in Iraq. But can I just say hatred in our own community, impacting on fellow Australians—in this case Muslim Australians—regardless of their religion or beliefs, is also intolerable. It is intolerable to our way of life. It is simply un-Australian.

Muslim Australians who peacefully follow their religion, with a faith of peace, should not be associated in any way, in any of our communities, with the twisted ideology of ISIL. I say this not just as a member of parliament who represents a large Islamic community but also as someone who, like most here, shares a deep love of family. I am a father of three and, with the arrival of Arabella yesterday, a grandfather of seven, so family is really important to me. I understand how family structures develop and how we constantly stand by and support our families, particularly in times of need.

Just as a bit of background, my daughter’s sister-in-law, Celeste, married this really lively young local bloke, Kenny Darwich, and over a period of time they have had two delightful children, Ayah and Zane. Being very close and at the same age as my grandchildren, Ayah and Zane have grown up calling me ‘pop’, and for all intents and purposes I see them as my grandchildren. Kenny and Celeste have raised their kids in a loving household, very active in sport and community affairs. They, like many people of faith, have favoured private religious based education for their children. Their children attend Amity College in Liverpool, which is an Islamic school. You see, Kenny and his family are Muslims. While my family have grown up in the Catholic religion and my children have attended Catholic schools, as I did, and I do attend mass on Sundays, under my roof there is no distinction between our two families. Sure, we make allowances for Ramadan, when we have our Sunday meals during that, and for Eid—as does Kenny. When we visited his place one time on Ash Wednesday, he made sure he did not serve us meat. We are conscious of each other’s religious beliefs. Kenny’s children, Aya and Zane, should be able to grow up like any other Australian kids. The fact that Kenny and his family follow their religion and practise their faith should not be the reason that anyone in our community would seek to associate them or others like them with the abhorrent crimes of ISIL.

I wish to finish almost where I started. Australia cannot stand by while ISIL and its supporters perpetrate crimes of hatred and genocide against the innocent people of Iraq. Australia has a higher moral responsibility, given our initial involvement in Iraq in 2003, and
I remind the House once more that the consequences of that engagement have largely set the path for the creation and development of an organisation such as ISIL. We do have a responsibility to degrade this organisation. We have that responsibility on behalf of humanity.

Dr SOUTHCOTT (Boothby) (10:11): I rise to support the Prime Minister's motion and to support the measured approach that the Prime Minister has taken on this issue. There are three key messages from the Australian government. Firstly, the first priority of any Australian government is to keep people safe. Secondly, this approach is directed against terrorism and not against religion. Thirdly, Australians should feel comfortable going about their daily business. There is a heightened alert level, but people still should be able to go about their daily business.

On the first priority, that of keeping the Australian people safe, Australians should feel confident that in ASIO and the Australian Federal Police we have excellent institutions which are well led and which we should be very proud of. Successive Australian governments have developed an expertise against terrorism dating back to the 1978 bombings outside the Sydney Hilton Hotel. We have gained experience through the events of September 11 and through the bombings in Bali of October 2002 that saw the beginnings of a very strong cooperative relationship between the Australian Federal Police and the Indonesian police. We saw an attack on the Australian Embassy in Jakarta in 2004. There were the London bombings in 2005 and the Bali bombings in October 2005. Australians should feel confident that the steps that have been taken, going all the way back to 1978 but more recently following the September 11 bombings, mean that we are well served by ASIO and the Australian Federal Police. There have been a number of terrorist cells that have been disrupted. We have seen raids conducted in Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne. We saw the horrific attack on two policemen in Melbourne.

On the second message, and that is that this is directed against terrorism and not religion, I want to say how welcome is the strong leadership from Muslim leaders who have been prepared to really stand up and be counted and to denounce ISIL. It is very important that the Muslim community do feel the warm embrace of the Australian nation, because they are key allies in addressing terrorism and extremism. This is not a problem that is isolated to Australia. We have heard that more than 80 countries have had citizens from their country travel to the Middle East to take part in terrorist activities. That is why the Australian government are taking a number of steps to address this. The concern now is that, with such easy international travel, it is possible for foreign fighters who learn to kill overseas to return to Australia to continue their murderous trade. We saw this with people who travelled to Afghanistan more than a decade ago. The Prime Minister's clear message to all Australians who fight with terrorist groups is that you will be arrested, prosecuted and jailed for a very long time.

There are a number of responses that this parliament has to take in addressing the financing of terrorism and in addressing metadata and making sure that our intelligence agencies are one step ahead and have an idea of what the terrorists are up to. In dealing with the commitment to the Middle East, we now have an air task group at our major base in the Middle East. Four hundred Air Force personnel are now there. Today we heard that some of the Australian assets there have commenced flights over Iraq.
One of the things which I think has been a very good development is that a very broad international coalition has formed to disrupt and degrade ISIL. There is wide involvement from the Gulf states and Arab nations. Saudi Arabia, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Qatar are all involved. There are a number of NATO countries involved as well as the United States and the United Kingdom. As well as participating in humanitarian aid drops and assistance to the Kurdish regional government, the Australian Defence Force assets are ready to commence action against ISIL in Iraq.

A strong process has been mapped out for the steps that would be taken before going to that. Firstly, there would be a request from the Iraqi national government. The defence minister was in Iraq recently to make sure that the legal basis for any action in Iraq is very strong. Secondly, there would be a meeting of the National Security Committee of Cabinet, which would have briefings from the ADF, ASIO and the Australian Federal Police. The full cabinet would then make a decision and the opposition would also be briefed on this. I pay tribute to the role the opposition has played here.

Some people have talked about action in Syria. That is getting one step ahead. As I outlined, the process that has been outlined for action in Iraq is strong. That concludes my remarks. Our thoughts should be with all the ADF personnel who are now on pre-deployment in the Middle East. I was lucky enough to meet a number of them at Amberley and Williamtown in the last couple of weeks. They are a very professional group. They are, by and large, young Australian men and women. They will, no doubt, do us proud should they be required to take on this important task.

Ms VAMVAKINOU (Calwell) (10:19): I rise today to speak in support of the Prime Minister's statement on national security. I would like to associate myself with the statements that were made particularly by the member for Boothby who made reference to the Australian men and women who are currently deployed to the region. I am conscious of the fact that I am making this particular statement today virtually the day after that deployment began, and I do want to wish all Australian ADF personnel a safe passage and a safe time in their duty. Our thoughts are with them.

When Australia's initial involvement in the war in Iraq in 2003 commenced, I was a very vocal advocate against Australia being a member of the coalition of the willing. It was not just me; I can say that a large number of the Australian community were also against our involvement in that war at that time. Their opposition was visible in our streets and we all remember the hundreds of thousands of people who marched in the streets of Brisbane, Sydney, Adelaide and Melbourne all those years ago—pleading with the government not to commit Australia and Australian troops to Iraq. That was then and, of course, 10 years later it is very unfortunate that we are having discussions again about Australian involvement in Iraq. What is tragic is that some 10 years later a situation that we initially participated in fixing actually has not been fixed; it has been broken. Its consequences, unfortunately, are not just for the people of Iraq and the Middle East generally; they are of concern to the global community and therefore our concern here in Australia, which is why I support the current humanitarian intervention—Australia's involvement at that level at this time in Iraq. I do of course support the Prime Minister's statement and I do so in the terms that have been outlined by the Leader of the Opposition—in particular the points that this is an action that has been asked for by the government of Iraq and our involvement there is supported by the
government of Iraq, that we remain within the confines of Iraq and that we are not involved in any combat on the ground exchanges.

I remember full well—I have spoken about my community many times in this place—that the decade that I often refer to as the 'September 11 decade' was a very difficult time for many of the people in my electorate. I do have one of the largest constituencies of Australians of Muslim faith and I remember well the adverse impact that the war in Iraq at that period, and in fact September 11 generally, had on those communities—in particular the impact and the ramifications of that on the women in my electorate. On many occasions in this place I have spoken about women who wear hijabs being attacked. The Muslim community came under extreme pressure and was time and time again put on notice that they had to reaffirm their loyalty to Australia, and quite frankly I think they endured quite a lot of pressure. What is important, however, is that our community rallied not only in my electorate but right across the country. We rallied as Australians to support each other. In Melbourne in particular we ran very, very intense interfaith networks. Our religious leaders took their place in leading our communities and in trying to manage and avoid unnecessary harm being inflicted upon one part of our community.

Such is the nature of our social cohesion and its strength that I believe we got through that decade successfully. It is unfortunate that we are back there again. However, as I said initially, we have a responsibility to again come together to prevent any adverse effects on members of our community. In my own case in the federal seat of Calwell, I have virtually every community from the Middle East living in Calwell. As I said, I have a very large constituency of Australians of Muslim faith but I also have a very large emerging constituency of Iraqi Chaldean Christians, who have come here under the refugee humanitarian program. They are living examples of what war does to people—its dislocation, its violence. Its whole culture is destructive.

They have come to Australia; they are thankful that they have been given the opportunity to live in Australia. However, they remain very much concerned about what is happening to their family, to their friends and to their communities in Iraq and in the broader Middle East. For them this situation is alive. It is something they cannot switch off from, it is a large part of the way in which they are trying to create a new life in Australia, and it affects the way in which they go through the settlement process. I have communities that are reeling, hurt and afraid because they have direct links to the Middle East. I have communities, on the other hand, that have been in the broader Australia community for a long time and are trying to understand what is going on internationally and how it is impacting on us. Having said that, I feel that our involvement at this point in time in Iraq is necessary and it is intended for a greater good. We are not over there to cause unnecessary grief; we are there to help, and I think that is very important. Australia, being a country in a global community, has the capacity to offer that assistance.

It is probably important to finish by simply urging all of us here in this place to be mindful of the way that we speak in relation to what is going on at the moment, because words can be just as damaging and just as divisive as physical actions. I defend the right for all of us to express our views, but we who are members of parliament and leaders in our community need to be mindful that wisdom is probably a better way of approaching the expression of those views. When we speak about our views on women wearing burqas or on other things that we
do not like, we need to be mindful that we have a right to say those things but that the timing may not be very good at this point in time.

Our role as members of parliament is to bring our communities together and to recognise that there are some very difficult things happening in the world. They are impacting on Australia. We need to be able to be wise in the way that we lead and manage community debate on this issue. My plea is to my colleagues—those who have sought to express views that, by the way, have been expressed many times before. They should be mindful of what the consequences of those words that they express could be. We live in a multicultural society. It is a society of people of diverse backgrounds. I am an example of that. If our society and our multiculturalism had been the failure that some people often like to talk about, then I can assure you that I would not be standing here speaking in this chamber today. We have a lot to be proud of in this country. We have been a success story. We have the capacity to show the way to others who wish to manage their diversity—not just their cultural diversity but also their faith diversity.

I support our current action as it has been framed. I urge my colleagues to be mindful of the things that they say and the language that they use. My advice to those who have probably had no engagement whatsoever with Australians of Muslim faith is to come to Melbourne, Sydney or other parts of the country where there are large communities, and not-so-large communities, of Australians of Muslim faith and actually speak to them; enter into dialogue with people. It is at that level where you can have sensible and wise discussion about issues that we may or may not disagree about.

Dr Gillespie (Lyne) (10:29): 'The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.' So said Edmund Burke, the well-known Irish philosopher, thinker and politician from the 18th century. He also added: 'When bad men combine, good men must associate'.

I rise to support the words and sentiments of our Prime Minister in his statement to the parliament in the preceding weeks. What the world has been witnessing with the ISIS movement in Syria and Iraq is indeed pure evil. One cannot justify it in any way, shape, or form. We cannot sit idly by and watch it on our computer screens and TV screens. It must be confronted or it will grow like a cancer throughout the world. As the Prime Minister said, it will reach out to us and our neighbours. Following the latest news in the last 48 hours, it looks like it may reach out even further into Turkey, rather than stopping at the border, or go south and east into Lebanon, because the ISIL movement got a foothold in Syria during the civil war that had erupted, and they feed on unstable situations. Not only could it reach out there locally; it could reach out to us and our neighbours. As we have seen, sympathisers of this warped philosophy—there are sympathisers in our suburbs—can surface and they are emboldened by the success of ISIS. Similarly, sympathisers in the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia can also be emboldened by ISIS's success.

We, as a civilised nation, are a small country in the scheme of things in the world. We are not a major world power, but we are a very respected citizen of the world. Our actions—our early, clear commitment to humanitarian aid and involvement and our commitment to the struggle—were very much noticed and very much respected. It is like in other battles, whether it is on the sporting field or in physical mortal combat: when volunteers are asked for, the person that raises the first hand has the biggest responsibility. People take note. People did
notice our early involvement. I am pleased to see now, at the latest count, there are 62 nations around the world that have joined the coalition of nations that are committed to degrading and destroying the physical military arm of this murderous philosophy. It is good to see that the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Jordan, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Egypt and other Arab League nations, and the nations of Europe and Africa—62 in all—are committed.

I would also like to take this opportunity to publicly compliment our local Australian Islamic leaders, who have been quite forthright in their condemnation of terrorism and this warped philosophy of death. We should take note and formally support our servicemen and servicewomen, who are now on call over in the UAE at Al Minhad and who may be called into more than what they are involved in now. Our security services—ASIO and ASIS, the Australian Federal Police and our local police—have been performing a wonderful function for our nation in our cities and suburbs and they are all to be commended and admired.

I would also like to comment about some of the opinions voiced in the commentariat around the nation. There are a portion of the commentariat that allege, imply or out-and-out state that the coalition government's recent actions and statements, thus far, have been a media and political beat-up for pure short-term political advantage. Never have I heard such absolute rubbish, which should be condemned for the silliness that it is. People must remember that the Jakarta bombings, the Bali bombings and September 11 all happened before our engagement in recent battles in Afghanistan and Iraq. As another famous philosopher, John Stuart Mill, said: 'Let not any one pacify his conscience by the delusion that he can do no harm if he takes no part, and forms no opinion. Bad men need nothing more to compass their ends, than that good men should look on and do nothing.'

I am very proud that Australia has put their hand up in the room in the world of nations and is committed to confronting evil where it is and committed to help to the level and proportion of our abilities.

Mrs GRIGGS (Solomon) (10:35): Obviously these are very difficult times and very sad times, and nobody in this building is enjoying taking the tough measures that have been introduced over recent days. But, as a government and as our nation's representatives, we can make no apology for putting the safety of Australians first.

In many ways, the latest wave of terrorism has its origins in the horrific attacks on America in September 2001. The four tragic events that made up the sum total of what we now know as 9/11 sparked a chain of events that has left a stain of blood across the globe. The message that has come out of 9/11 and its tragic aftermath is that the world has zero tolerance for terrorism, has zero tolerance for the type of brutality that took thousands of lives that day and has zero tolerance for the hate and malevolence that drive some people to commit acts of barbarism against their fellow citizens.

It is in the interest of ordinary Australians that the government has taken steps to enhance our national security. The anti-terror raids in Brisbane and Sydney and the events in Victoria over the past week remind us all that some in the community are driven by zealousy, fuelled by venom and motivated by hate. The stabbing of two law enforcement officers last week has reinforced that, while the tragic events in the Middle East are thousands of kilometres from us, their impacts reverberate right here in Australia.
Let us not forget that the people who are involved in these activities—in the brutal killings in Syria and Iraq or the plots to take innocent lives here—are at heart violent men with criminal backgrounds and no real future in regular society. I refer, for instance, to the man who appears to be the ringleader of Australians fighting with ISIL, known these days as Mohammad Baryalei, who was born in Afghanistan and who was a babe in arms when his parents fled the country after the 1979 Soviet invasion. According to an excellent report on the ABC program 7.30 this week, Baryalei grew up in north-western Sydney, was booted out of home by his father and had a troubled history of drug abuse, mental illness and family violence. This is the same man who police believe issued the instruction to Mr Azari, the Sydney man arrested a fortnight ago for plotting to kidnap and kill an ordinary Australian citizen and film the execution.

Another former Australian who has also found a niche for himself in the Middle East after years of non-achievement in Australia is Khaled Sharrouf, who was filmed holding severed heads of Iraqi soldiers. Again, according to another report on 7.30, Sharrouf, who had really been jailed for terrorism offences in Australia, had been diagnosed with chronic schizophrenia, most likely the result of years of drug abuse including the use of LSD, ecstasy and amphetamines.

I offer up these two case studies not in any way to diminish the actions of these and other men like them but to make the point that, whether they be in Australia or elsewhere, they are criminals with no regard for the impact of their actions to others and little ability to exist within the confines of generally accepted behaviour. Instead, these weak and appalling people have taken the easy way out and along the way have fallen in with a mob that is as demented as it is bloodthirsty. But they will find that their brutal lives will end up either in an equally brutal death or, preferably, in an extremely long stretch in an Australian prison. As I said last week when I spoke in support of the Prime Minister's motion, these people are criminals—it is as simple as that. These people represent nobody. They stand for nothing. They have a blood lust that is impossible to comprehend until it is placed against a backdrop of drug use, a history of violence and a general failure to achieve both in their younger years and then as adults in broader society.

The tougher measures that we debated in the House yesterday are designed to keep Australians safe from the malice these people wish to cultivate and spread. This is the first of three tranches of national security legislation that the government is producing to ensure that all Australians are safe. The deployment of 800 police officers and security agents in Sydney and Brisbane last week to execute search warrants as part of an antiterrorism investigation sends out a very clear message of intent. This message was reaffirmed this week when more than 100 police officers carried out raids in Melbourne. The provision of more than half a billion dollars to fund the Australian Federal Police, Customs and Border Protection, the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, the Australian Secret Intelligence Service, and the Office of National Assessments buttresses our legislative measures. I want to say again: the foreign fighters involved with ISIL or supporting this death cult here at home are brutal, bloodthirsty criminals, and this government will take every single step it can to prevent them from threatening the safety and security of ordinary Australians who are just going about their daily lives.
Ms GAMBARO (Brisbane) (10:43): I rise today in support of the Prime Minister's national security statement, and I would like to thank the Prime Minister for his update on Australia's security situation. I note with regret that never before have Australians been in such a position of heightened awareness concerning our security. I also note that the Prime Minister and cabinet have worked hard to keep Australians well-informed as the government navigates the tricky waters of formulating an effective response to the threats before us. I note that this has been a journey of bipartisan support, which only serves to strengthen the effectiveness of our response. Most of all, I emphatically want to remind us all to consider these words by the Prime Minister in the opening of his national security statement last week:

Because protecting our people is the first duty of government …

With all of the security discourse Australians are becoming accustomed to, we must never lose sight of the importance behind these words. The imperative to keep Australians safe is the driving force behind the tranche of new legislation being introduced and debated before parliament, and the driving force behind our need to reconsider the whys and the hows of what makes Australia a secure nation.

It is not unique to Australia that we would seek as a priority a safe and secure nation. Indeed, it remains the high politics, the priority, of functional governments all over the world to provide a safe haven for their citizens. This is evident in the international nature of our response to the common threat of terrorism, as like-minded nations come together and we all try to counter it. In particular, I commend the government's commitment to the international coalition deployed against ISIL.

It is really clear to me that the battle is fought on many levels—domestically, internationally and in the minds of those who are so easily influenced for evil intent. Of course, terrorism is not a new concept, but certainly the threat to both Australians and our allies has grown markedly in recent times. I believe that this has been the case not only as result of recent events in Iraq and Syria but also since the tragic events of September 11, over 13 years ago. Recent events have brought it home to us in all too stark and blunt terms that the fight against terrorism is not something that happens on the other side of the world. It is happening right here and now. It is not a remote activity. It is not a nine-to-five undertaking. It requires our constant vigilance to keep our nation safe.

I note that in his statement the Prime Minister reminded us that September 11 predated the United States' involvement in Iraq, just as the first Bali bombing in 2002 predated Australia's. We have not invited attack on our soil or foreign soil by any action of our own. Rather, in the Prime Minister's own words, we were attacked for 'who we are and how we live'. I know that many who are Australians by birth or who have come here by choice have no desire to relinquish and have no intention of relinquishing the wonderful privileges and the wonderful freedoms that are intrinsic to our identity, to all of us, and that make us Australians.

Sadly, the events of the last few months have signalled just how pervasive and repugnant the battle for minds and control by violent extremists who are behind these terrorism related attacks can be. At least 60 Australians have joined ISIL and other terrorist groups to fight in Iraq and Syria. They are presenting not only security threats overseas but also very real ones here in Australia. At least 100 known Australians are supporting them. Over 20 of these foreign fighters have returned to Australia. They bring with them that terrible hate. We know...
that nothing can justify the mass slaughter of innocent people that we have seen as a result of terrorist activities in Iraq and Syria, which are overwhelmingly targeting Muslims.

The government has made clear over recent weeks that there is nothing even remotely Islamic about beheadings, crucifixions, mass executions, ethnic cleansing, rape and sexual slavery. ISIL is not Islam. ISIL is a barbaric sham. It is a sham masquerading behind Islam, committing barbaric atrocities in the name of Islam, seeking to put the people of the world against one another in a fake holy war. I commend the Prime Minister for giving no recognition or authority to so-called Islamic State in his national security statement. The title implies an explicit link between Islam and terrorists that we, as official representatives of the Australian public, emphatically refute.

We have already had the information we need to know that hatred from radical terrorist groups directed towards Australia represents a very real threat, not just to our values but also to Australian lives in Australia. We have heard a call to kill 'kaffirs' on our soil and have witnessed the regrettable death of a young radicalised man in Victoria following the unprovoked attack on our police. We also know that police have made arrests. They have foiled definitive plans for violent terrorist action. We have seen the recent raids in Brisbane and in Sydney.

When we refer to a safe haven, it is important that we recognise that it is a responsibility of effective governments to respond not only to events, often—unfortunately—when it is too late, but to threats before they materialise. I therefore support the raft of legislation being brought to the parliament to strengthen the intelligence gathering of our agencies, allowing them to respond to evolving security needs and to crack down on foreign fighters and those who finance them.

I echo the sentiments of the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition when they thanked our police and security agencies for their wonderful work in disrupting any ISIL plot to conduct demonstration executions in Australia. I welcome the Australian government's commitment to an additional $630 million to support the work of the Australian Federal Police, Customs, Border Protection, ASIO, ASIS and the Office of National Assessments. This will include new measures such as the introduction of biometric screening in international airports over the next 12 months and an increase in Border Force personnel and measures which will strengthen our essential security infrastructure from the ground up.

Acknowledging the technological connectivity in today's world, and the use of this medium by terrorists, I commend the Prime Minister's announcement that legislation will be introduced to require telecommunication providers to keep metadata and to make it available to police and security agencies as needed. I am also pleased to say that the majority of Australians continue to be law-abiding, responsible and peaceful citizens. They are unlikely to be impacted by these legislated amendments. The main change for everyday Australians, outside the increased visibility of security in warranted circumstances, is that they can enjoy living in a safer, more secure and more vigilant nation.

In conclusion, the Prime Minister's national security statement and those that have followed it make it absolutely clear that the Abbott government has a strong sense of its responsibility to protect all Australians to the best of our ability and as a priority. Let us be absolutely clear: the Abbott government will leave no stone unturned in strengthening our capacity to do so. Nevertheless, any security measures are not, and will not, be directed against any religion or
sector of the Australian community. They are solely directed against the one and only threat that they seek to counter, and that is terrorism. Australia should, with the secure foundations that this government is putting in place, remain a country where people can live normally, with a sense of trust, hope and optimism.

Mrs Markus (Macquarie) (10:52): I rise today to acknowledge the need and grave necessity to address the national security of this nation. As members of the House are well aware, events have been set in motion and amended national security legislation has been formed to respond to the increased threat of terrorism to Australia from without and, as recent events have sadly proven, from within our own borders.

Australia is a nation blessed beyond measure. We are known internationally as an easy-going, freethinking and diversity-embracing, people. The freedoms we enjoy in this land have been fought for and established over the centuries and decades. We have faced challenges from natural disasters. The trauma of war, conflict and terrorism that daily confronts others in the world have largely not confronted us on our shores. In Australia, we can travel and go about our work and leisure largely without fear of violence or discrimination. It is not so in other parts of the world.

The terrorist movement ISIS has shocked the world with its impunity. It has rejoiced in unwarranted and indiscriminate violence, slandering international conventions, values and rights. ISIS are a group who deal in absolutes, seeking either conformity or the destruction of all before them. The objective of such atrocities is to create fear in the hope that we will acquiesce to their misguided values and selfish wishes. Their violation of accepted norms in pursuit of radical militaristic aims, for the domination of one extremist group above all others, is absolutely and unequivocally unacceptable. We will not conform. We will not be silent.

Since the horrendous atrocities of the major wars and conflicts of the 20th century, Australia and other Western democratic nations have increasingly committed to stand as bastions aiming wherever possible for justice, to advocate for human rights and to ensure wherever possible that the oppressed are provided with opportunities for freedom. Our freedoms are hard won. They were defended with bravery and contested at great cost of lives when ideologues, dictators and titanic martial powers sought to take them from much of the world. Australia has always been a nation where people that have been oppressed in other parts of the globe have been able to seek freedom and comfort. Values of honour, hard work and compassion for the weak are indeed written into our national character.

As Australians we aim, wherever possible—falling short, at times—to value and protect the inherent value and dignity of individuals. We value freedom of religion and are committed to the rule of law. We embrace a spirit of egalitarianism that embraces mutual respect, tolerance, fair play, compassion for those in need and pursuit of the public good. The Australian government can and should have in place every reasonable and forward-thinking measure to defend the nation in proportion to the dangers posed to us. A peaceful home, secure against intimidation, fear, terror and the moral degradation these cause, is something that must be continually fought for, both in our nation and abroad.

At this point of time in our history, national security is our priority. In the face of ISIS's abhorrent actions and their potential for aggression on our home soil, measures must account for the dangers posed by foreign fighters returning from the Middle East and other unstable regions. I share the sentiments of many of my colleagues that have spoken in this place that
this is not about any particular religion. It is about criminal behaviour. This is about taking a stand and setting some standards and protections in place against behaviour that is completely unacceptable in any space or nation.

As a nation of laws and of shared values, the Australian nation responds to criminal behaviour by ensuring that normal life continues. The rule of law in our nation places certain constraints on all Australians, irrespective of their background and irrespective of their faith, so that the most basic freedom can be enjoyed. The assurance of safety in everyday life is something that we must pursue. It is that freedom we seek to preserve by targeting criminal behaviour at home and abroad. The measures and provisions the government considers and carries out for the national security are not aimed at any one group or any section of our community. The measures and provisions the government carries out in the interests of Australians' everyday security are not for the benefit of a select few, but for the Australian community at large.

It is a sad reality that there may be those at home, connected with the criminal activities of terrorists abroad, who threaten to upheave the stability and safety we enjoy as Australians. There are Australian citizens that have already been—and are currently—overseas, fighting with extremists in Iraq and Syria, highlighting very real threats to our security. To combat these threats at home and ensure Australians may not commit terrorist acts overseas, our nation's counterterrorism agencies need to be supplied with resources and legislative powers proportionate to the threat posed.

Last week, our police and security agencies disrupted an ISIL plot to conduct demonstrative executions on Australian soil. The public witnessed the sad and alarming incident that saw a known 18-year-old terror suspect shot dead by police in Endeavour Hills last week. This young individual was an Australian like many others, with beloved family, friends and a community, who are surely dismayed and grieved by his actions. This young man fell prey to the influence of ISIS and their determination to employ hate and indiscriminate violence as tools to promote their own agenda and perverted ideal of justice. The horrible incident has highlighted the reality that there are those in our community capable of extreme acts of violence. I want to acknowledge the injured officers, who did not hesitate to act as our first line of defence. Our thoughts and prayers are with them and their families.

Combating the threat of foreign fighters has become a vital national security issue, and the government is committed to doing all that it reasonably can to defend our freedoms while ensuring our safety. As a peaceful nation, we avoid involvement in international conflicts, but, when those conflicts come to our home and citizens are targeted or found to be engaged in criminal activity, a measured, prudent and united response is essential. Our country is called home by many who have fled oppression or hardship of some kind from other parts of the world; it is a priority to ensure the evils that threatened them then do not pursue them here. The government has committed in excess of $600 million in additional funding over the next four years, after a reduction in counter-terrorism expenditure since 2009. This funding will help to equip, resource and support our agencies concerned with security and counter-terrorism.

Australia has joined with the international outrage at the ISIS death cult and is contributing to the international response, delivering aid and further considered responses to this outbreak. I would like to commend the personnel of Richmond RAAF base, from the electorate of
Macquarie, who are involved in providing humanitarian aid to communities affected. As aid is supplied without, constant vigil is required within.

The Prime Minister declared in his ministerial statement to the House:
… for some time … the delicate balance between freedom and security may have to shift.

The Prime Minister has also assured us that the government is vigilant, at home and abroad, in making the safety of our community the highest priority. These decisions are made after considerable consultation with all levels of government to ensure that our response is practical and proportionate to the threat posed by terrorist forces.

There are also steps that all Australians can take that can help to foster a stronger, unified community. It is important that as a nation we plan for, pray for and support the safety and preparedness of the officers working in our security agencies. We can bear the minor sacrifices of some freedoms we enjoy in order to ensure the safety of all. We can refuse to allow intimidation to undermine or change our way of life. We can and will choose to live normally.

Radicalisation is a manifestation of extremism—the violent outburst of an offence held onto and offered misguided advice. The government is committed to the right course of action to preserve the freedoms and security of all Australians.

Mr GOODENOUGH (Moore) (11:02): I speak in support of the Prime Minister's statement on national security in response to current events which have seen a general breakdown in law and order, failed governance, terrorism and atrocities committed. I fully support the government's commitment to be part of an international coalition providing military support both to provide humanitarian protection and to assist the legitimate government of Iraq to regain control over its sovereign territory by combating Islamic State insurgents and terrorists.

Although these events are located several thousand kilometres away in the Middle East, half a world away, they have a profound effect on the national security of the Australian homeland. Recently, we have seen a raising of the national terror threat level and the disruption of potential terror plots by our national security and intelligence agencies and the Australian Federal Police. Last week, the wounding of two police officers during the course of their duties represented a direct attack on home soil.

It is of great concern that a number of Australian citizens have acted contrary to the laws of Australia by travelling to foreign nations to participate in armed conflict for foreign causes. This amounts to treasonous conduct. It is true to say that the enemies of the state are not limited to one particular ethnic, minority or religious group. A number of constituents have contacted me recently to express their concerns about the brutal atrocities which have been perpetrated in the Middle East, fears for their own safety and outrage that certain subsets of the community are being grossly disloyal to Australia. These are very valid concerns, and I believe a tough stance should be taken on these issues.

Australia's immigration system has traditionally welcomed people from across the globe into our multicultural society over the years. In return, our society is entitled to expect that when migrants arrive in our country they will adopt a positive attitude, strive to integrate into mainstream society, obey the laws and make a constructive contribution to their new homeland. Above all, society expects that they will be civic minded, loyal and patriotic to
Australia and their fellow Australians. Experience has shown that the majority of immigrants have indeed settled and become good citizens, which is testament to our immigration system and our multicultural society. Unfortunately, there are certain enclaves that have failed to integrate into mainstream society and have adopted hostile, antisocial and radical attitudes towards mainstream Australian society and culture—in the worst of instances, resorting to violence and intimidation.

Currently there is a great deal of unrest in the community about perceived threats from particular subgroups. The government is taking measured and responsible steps to increase surveillance and security measures to protect our citizens by mitigating threats. Members of the community need to be vigilant, review their own personal safety and take appropriate, lawful measures to protect themselves.

As national leaders, it is important that we are careful not to generalise or stereotype any particular ethnic group or religion as being solely associated with these illegal, criminal and terrorist acts. Rather, as representatives of our community, we have a duty to speak out against fundamentalism, extremism and criminality in all their forms. We must take tough measures to protect the fabric of Australian society, founded on our Westminster system of democracy: the culture, values, traditions and principles which we hold dear, the very things which make Australia a country that we love and the very characteristics which draw thousands of immigrants to our shores.

We must strongly oppose radicalism, militancy and moves to introduce foreign legal systems into Australia. Together, we must unite to defeat our enemies that intend to do us harm, and bring those who have contravened Australian laws to justice. We have a responsibility to protect our national borders and to be very selective to ensure the merit based selection of immigrants who are committed to integrate into mainstream society and will strive to become good Australian citizens.

Australians can be assured that the Abbott government is committed to maintaining strong border protection, merit based immigration and strengthening our Defence Force capabilities. I am proud to be part of a government that will take a hard line against radicalism, extremism and militancy whilst at the same time upholding the rule of law and protecting traditional Australian institutions and culture. We will not allow global terrorists to scare us into a state of fear that allows prejudice to unravel the social cohesion in our mainstream communities. Neither will we allow zealots and fundamentalists to disrupt the fabric of Australian society.

Two weeks ago, I visited the Amberley Air Force base near Brisbane and saw firsthand some of the personnel and aircraft being prepared for deployment to the Middle East. I wish the members of the Australian Defence Force a safe and successful mission as they face numerous challenges and dangers in the service of our nation. Similarly, on behalf of the Australian community, I express appreciation to the officers of the Australian Federal Police, emergency services personnel and our national security and intelligence operatives as they work diligently to neutralise prospective threats and to maintain our safety and security.

Mr LAMING (Bowman) (11:09): I want to add my voice to this very important expression of bipartisan support for the way that our security and Defence border protection officials are looking after the safety and security of our country. We have full faith in their work. I also acknowledge that obviously at the moment there are some unique international events that certainly do test our will as a freedom-loving democracy to be able to continue the
work that we do overseas in developing economies, but also ensure that those of us here at home remain aware, not distressed or fearful, of these changes. As a strong, vibrant, multicultural, wealthy and successful Australia, we can brook these challenges and we can succeed. Before we go any further, I want to make it very clear that there are a large number of Australians both in uniform and not in uniform who are part of this effort. I know that this full parliament as well as all Australians thank them for their service and the work that they are doing.

But my message today is predominately to Australians who do not have a direct connection to these events. As I have remarked before, my electorate of Bowman was recently considered the least ethnically diverse metropolitan electorate in Australia. So I come to this debate potentially far removed from the immediacy of close connection to some of the recent events. I do not have senior multicultural leaders in my electorate with whom I can speak directly about some of these concerns, but I am very sympathetic to communities that are in this situation. As has been noted already in some unfortunate divagation in this debate into areas that are effectively distractions, I think it is very important to make it clear that we welcome people from every corner of this planet to become Australians. We are the most multicultural country in the world. We have done it successfully and we will continue to do so. That is actually our strength, not our weakness. So I want everyone in my electorate certainly to realise the impressive community and society that we have established and recognise that it will play a very important role in areas of the world where democracy is under threat.

To people who have doubts about that involvement and to individuals who have had some concerns about Australia's involvement dating back to 2000 and even prior in the Gulf War, I remember the words of Tony Blair: 'We do not engage ourselves in areas simply because we feel like doing it or because we can. We are in these parts of the world because as freedom-loving democracies we must be there.' We must be at that front line making sure that extremists and radicals have nowhere to hide, that they cannot embed themselves in major metropolitan areas, towns or cities in any country in the world. I am proud to say that there is not a country in the world where they can at the moment, but by doing nothing we simply risk that status quo changing.

In that fine balance between freedom and security here, we need to know that obviously the world is a very different place in parts of the Middle East. So our intention there is to put our shoulder to the wheel and to do our fair share. If requested by our coalition colleagues, and by that I mean international colleagues, I think it is appropriate that we consider that and make our own decisions through the National Security Committee and through cabinet. That is the right way to do it. We have modulated this response perfectly in the context that of course there are not yet exit plans because we do not even know the full scope of what we are engaging in. That is the 'known unknowns' element of this debate.

What we have profiled is the relatively small number of Australians who became involved, many of them before some of our reforms and our legislative propositions were known to them. I am certain there were many people who headed overseas for a combination of reasons, including family, clan and obligation—some seeking excitement and fascination, and some with way more malevolent intentions. Whoever they are the message is clear—your actions are not welcome in this country. They will not be forgotten and the sooner they leave those actions the better. They will be tracked down and prosecuted under these new laws. To
that group of people, those few score people that are overseas currently engaged in either Iraq or Syria, that message is loud and clear from this government, and the bipartisan support from the opposition is welcomed.

For those that are supporting from Australia, it is now absolutely crystal clear that this must stop immediately, and that message really was one that this new legislation will articulate. Lastly, to people who have general sympathies: we are a nation of freedom of speech. I appreciate there are many people out there with anti-American sentiments and people who have particular sentiments about countries, cultures and religions. We live in a country where you can express those. We have a parliament where every person who takes a seat in this building is welcome to express them as well. Whatever our views are, whether we think it is bad timing or indelicate or little bit gauche, we can say what we think in a free country. What is absolutely clear is that there cannot be incitement to violence. That very, very clear line is now well understood by everyone.

My concern as a Queensland MP is that there has been a tendency—if there is any tendency at all—to cheap, cultural, political, religious shots and picking up email campaigns, and that is absolutely not constructive whatsoever. I am glad that the Prime Minister's statement makes it absolutely clear that we are all Australians, we are all equal and, if we share in those values, we should be able to stand together shoulder-to-shoulder, regardless of what we are wearing.

The recent debate this week was an opportunity for many of us to be able to say to people of all cultural backgrounds and to people who choose to wear garments that reflect some kind of conspicuous religious adherence that it is completely okay with us. Let's be absolutely clear about that. That is fine. Over and above all of those concerns are security issues to which we all adhere as citizens, and, as the Prime Minister's statement reflected, there has been a slight shift away in certain freedoms given the current security situation. Common-sense people understand that. I trust the Presiding Officers to make the right decision. I trust the security officials here in this building, as I do the AFP, Customs and Border Protection and all of the groups that do this work. We have to trust that they are modulating the response appropriately and then go about our normal day and our normal work unfettered and unconcerned.

If we accept this slight reduction in our freedoms, that will mean additional checks. There is no reason why someone should not identify themselves if they are entering a facility like Parliament House. That should be completely possible, regardless of what you are wearing. It is not just one garment that I am talking about here. I am talking about people wearing any form of headdress or anything that might obstruct someone's face.

Of course, if you are accessing publicly funded goods and services, we need to know who you are because there is a certain eligibility requirement and you need to be identified. As I pointed out, in the private sector there are legitimate areas. For example, in a court, in a law firm, in a health practice where you are prescribing medications or where you are picking up a parcel of value—in all of those situations, a private operator and transaction is completely within their rights to attempt to identify the person they are dealing with. It is a two-way arrangement. It does not allow refusal of service but certainly suspension of service until identification is carried out. Without putting too fine a point on it, there will be situations where a person will need to be identified by, for instance, a female officer. I think that is completely legitimate as well, but it may incur delays until a female officer is available. This
is just part of the reasonable security response that we would accept, but it is also a reasonable expectation that someone can identify another person.

We need to move on from that debate. Quite realistically, we should be able to reach out to fellow Australians who have taken the oath of citizenship and say, 'You are completely equal as Australians. We don't really care what you put on as clothing in the morning. You're welcome to wear it through the day because that is your cultural or your religious preference.' Those people are welcome.

My cautionary note—and this is really the main reason that I wanted to speak today—is: if we are going to keep peace-loving, moderate Australians of all cultural backgrounds on side here, we have to make it absolutely clear that they are not our target. As Paul Sheehan said, there is one per cent of one per cent that is an issue in this debate. This is an issue of law and order and criminality. Most of it stems not from any particular book of faith but from young, disengaged, dispossessed, poorly educated people looking for an outlet. That is why we must keep our focus on our commitment to make sure that people have a chance in this great country. When you take opportunity away, that is where this all starts. So let's not mix this up with religion. It is about a lack of opportunity. It is about despondent, intrafamilial, intergenerational unemployment and not giving people a chance and a start. If there is one area we can focus on, it is the area of high youth unemployment that coincides with where some of the events we have seen in the last weeks occurred. They are the people who need to realise that a free, peace-loving, prosperous Australia is one in which they can share.

Mr BUCHHOLZ (Wright—Government Whip) (11:19): It would appear at the outset that the world is moving off its axis from a social perspective; it would appear that the harmony and the equilibrium that provide the balanced nature of the way that we go about our business are now being challenged, as the previous speaker rightly said, by a very select few. It has raised the eyelids of world leaders. It has raised the level of concern within our local communities, our states and our nation, and particularly in this House that we work in.

I want to pay testament to the outstanding work of our law enforcement agencies in providing regular updates and in providing a level of security that goes virtually unnoticed—from our Australian defence forces, to intelligence agencies, to ASIO and to the AFP. I pay testament to them for all of the work that gets done in a clandestine manner so that we can put our heads on our pillows each night and know that we are in the most safe environment that can be provided. I want to acknowledge the seriousness of this issue and the mature way in which both the government and the opposition have walked through this process virtually with locked arms.

I want to read into the Hansard a couple of the opening comments from the Prime Minister's speech, along with some opening comments from the Leader of the Opposition's speech. The Prime Minister stated:

On questions of national security it is always best if government and opposition can stand together, shoulder to shoulder. It lets our enemies know that they will never shake our resolve. It is a sign that hope is stronger than fear and that decency can prevail over brute force.

… the government will do whatever is possible to keep our people safe … our security measures at home and abroad are directed against terrorism, not religion … Australians should always live normally because the terrorists' goal is to scare us out of being ourselves.

Those comments were followed by those of the opposition leader, who said:
The security of our nation runs deeper than our political differences.

These are uncertain times and that uncertainty can breed suspicion. That is always the insidious goal of terrorism: to spread division and nurture intolerance; to create a world where people fear the unknown and resent difference.

When Mr Shorten spoke about breeding suspicion, that was just a line in a speech for me, but the reality of the suspicion was heightened when, a number of days after that those leaders had stood in this House united, I witnessed on an ABC Q&A program some levels of suspicion that cast an unfavourable view over those law enforcement authorities that I praised so heavily earlier in my speech. There was commentary and propaganda openly being promoted that the good work being done by our law enforcement agencies was some type of 'theatre'. There was suspicion after our leaders had stood and said, 'Do not be suspicious.' There was suspicion by certain commentators in our community.

The thing that we should be lucky and thankful for is that we do live in a community where we have free speech. We do live in a community where we can have opposing positions. That is the very community that the threat wishes to take away from us as a society and as a democracy. It is that freedom of speech that riles those that would harm us. It is those commentators that I would wish would find that unity, that—for the sake of terminology—'Team Australia'. Get on board, because indifference and intolerance are exactly what those who threaten our way of life would like to see.

The comments I make were highlighted by the commentator, who asked whether the largest terror raid in Australia's history was a manufactured spectacle or whether it was a legitimate series of raids. I could go into the long-term data of raids, the benefits that they have given, the good work of these departments and how they have foiled many terrorist attacks in Australia, but that is not the intention of my speech. With these few words that we deliver in this chamber, I can send a message to those who wish to commentate: please, commentate to your heart's content, but leave the integrity of our law enforcement agencies alone because they work with their hand on their heart for the benefit of our nation. Of this I am sure. To bring into question their integrity, to say that the raids of that day were done with some secondary political motivation to benefit the government of the day, is absolute hypocrisy, and I damn them for their comments. They were unfounded and should never have been breathed. To question the integrity of our secret service agencies in linking them to some type of political theatre is irresponsible. I will not mention the punters' names, but the severity of my tone, hopefully, will resonate through to their ears.

In preparing for this speech, I asked one of my staffers to go and find out for me what the difference between ISIS and ISIL was in the genesis of this debate.

A government member: It's an L.

Mr BUCHHOLZ: Yes, it's an L! The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant is ISIL, so it is a geographical displacement of the Islamic State. The ISIS brand is the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. In trying to share the knowledge with a greater audience, the ISIL and ISIS commentary pertains to geographical locations.

I want to commend our coalition partners who are engaged in Iraq, who are fighting the fight on the ground. In particular I want to acknowledge Jordan, who are standing up; the
United Arab Emirates; Turkey to a degree; Saudi Arabia for their contributions; Qatar; and Bahrain—because it is the fight on the ground that will need to be had. It is the courage that will need to be shown by those soldiers. We will be there with them to offer training. We will be there to offer humanitarian resources. We will be there to offer whatever resources we are called upon for from those governments to assist in our role as part of the coalition partners.

To this day we have dispatched a number of assets, which are widely reported in the press. We will play our role because this threat does not have borders. It is worth noting some recent commentary from the Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Dubai, who wrote in the *Financial Review* more recently that the international coalition will defeat ISIL. But he warned:

*I consider this ideology to be the greatest danger that the world will face in the next decade. Its seeds are growing in Europe, the United States, Asia and elsewhere.*

We need to work out as a community where 'elsewhere' is.

We have seen isolated pockets of incidents here in Australia. I commend once again—this is where I started from—our law enforcement agencies, which do such an outstanding job. I call on those commentators in our community to choose their words carefully. In times of conflict when our leaders of this nation can stand together, I ask the commentators to show some type of respect, stand together and support 'Team Australia'.

**Mr EWEN JONES** (Herbert) (11:29): Thank you very much, Deputy Speaker. A little over an hour and a half ago, I sat where you sat and listened to the contributions of the member for Fowler, the member for Calwell and the member for Boothby. That is where I would like to start: we are all coming from one space.

Being a member of parliament in this House, we are all subjected to the emails that go around about how bad Islam is and how bad Muslims are. I would like to start with a story. When the previous government had the programs about integrating or, better, exposing the Muslim faith in our communities, I went along to one in Annandale, which is an upper middle-class suburb in Townsville. We had an Imam, a Muslim scholar from Griffith University and the Muslim community in front of us. These people were university lecturers, engineers, accountants, teachers and doctors. There was not a jihadist or anything like that in the audience. An older gentleman got up and, in his language, said, 'I would like to say something', and it was translated for me. He said, 'How can you have democracy when the word 'democracy' does not appear in the Koran?' to which the Imam said, 'That's 100 per cent correct. The word 'democracy' does not appear in the Koran, but neither does the word 'chlorine' and yet you use chlorine in your pool.' The older gentleman sat down and said, 'Okay, I'll take that point.' That is where I want to go with this.

There are radicals in every religion. If you want to search hard enough, you will find things in the Old Testament that you can base your Christian beliefs on that will allow you to do just about anything you want. What I would like to do is speak to the great majority of Muslims in Australia and say, 'I understand exactly where you're coming from.' I do not agree that for every atrocity that happens overseas every Muslim in Australia must jump up and down and physically denounce it. I do not do that when a Christian shoots a girl coming out of an abortion clinic in the United States of America. I do not, as a Christian, stand up and denounce this act and say, 'As a Christian, I denounce this act.' I am not called upon to do that.

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**FEDERATION CHAMBER**
I am married to an Italian. I grew up in a small country town in south-west Queensland in the 1960s and 1970s. I know what we said about Italians and Greeks in those days. My wife turns it back on me and her family turns it back on me. They say, 'You skippies, I can hardly tell the difference between you. You all look the same to us. You all look the same.' So they have turned it on its head. But we made it very, very tough on the Italians and Greeks when they came here. They looked different, they dressed differently, they ate differently, they hung out by themselves, their families did their own thing and they did not integrate, and now I have Greeks and Italians coming to me and saying, 'We’ve got to get these Muslims to integrate, mate. That's what we’ve got to do.' That is where they come from. We did the same with the Vietnamese when they came in the 70s. We were so tough on everyone. Australians are by nature tough on the new kid on the block. That is what we do.

When the Greeks, Italians, Vietnamese, Chinese and everyone else who has come to Australia arrived, we did have entry-level jobs. We had workplace health and safety rules that meant that you could have a job in Australia and not speak English. You could still sweep the shed—no problems at all. You could still drive the forklift. You could operate the press. You could do anything. You did not have to be proficient in English. Try getting a job in a shed today, anywhere, for someone who cannot pass basic literacy. Your workplace health and safety will not let them go through. People say that those people do not work and do not integrate, but they are not able to; they want to.

A mate of mine took over from me as manager of Pickles Auctions. He had some Sudanese guys working in his detailing bay and he said he had never seen work like it. They just loved being at work. These people do want to be part of our community and we should be making it easy for them. We should not be judging an entire nation of people, an entire group of people or a religious faith, on the actions of a few.

As the member for Calwell said, we are sending our ADF personnel to places where it is dangerous. I come from Townsville, which is a defence city. We have the largest Army base in Australia. We have had significant deployments from Somalia onwards. In Iraq and Afghanistan, we had constant rotations going through. We have had condolence motions in this place for soldiers and ADF personnel who have not come home and paid the ultimate sacrifice.

We speak often in this place about post-traumatic stress disorder. In the First World War we called it shell shock; we sent them to the pub to have that cured. If they could not get there, we sent them to the fringes of society. The ADF, as an organisation, gets better every time we go away. Every time we deploy and come back we get better at it. But PTSD is the silent injury that you do not actually see. People join the ADF because they are that type of personality—because they are that strong person. Be you man or woman, you know you want to serve your country; you know what you want to do, and serve overseas is what you want to do when you pull on a uniform. When they come back, to admit that something may be wrong with them is a massive, massive effort, especially if they cannot see the injury. I think that is what we have to be very, very aware of: that we are putting people in harm’s way. If we are putting people in these situations, we have to be very aware that we have to look after them when they come back, because injury is everywhere.

It is about the family as well. It is not just the soldier, airman or sailor that comes home and suffers these things; it is their entire family and it is us as a community. What we must do is
put our hand out to these people and make sure that their families are taken care of. We are a
great defence community in Townsville. We do do this. They are members of our sporting
clubs. They are part of our community. They are on our P&Fs at schools. There are school
board members. They are everything in our community, and we love them for it, but we have
to make sure that we look after these people.

I continually get people saying to me that multiculturalism does not work. As I said, I am
married to an Italian. Multiculturalism does not divide our country; it enriches our country. It
adds layers and texture of personality to our country. I would hate to think of what we were in
the 1960s, where you put the roast on on Saturday afternoon for Sunday lunch. We did not
know what food is until we had new cultures come to this country. Multiculturalism is a
staple of our country. It is something that we have to embrace and that we have embraced. We
are at a bad point at the moment now, and a lot of people are very worried. But I think what
we need to do is understand that the vast, vast majority—99.999 per cent—of people that
come to this country want that better life and want the better life for their kids. I was talking
to my wife about this, and I said, 'Radicalism, in these families!' because sometimes you look
at these families and wonder what happened. But you also look at families where drug
addiction happens; it does not pick and choose where it goes. If you are that type of
personality, you can be attracted to these sorts of things. I am not saying that you are a drug
addict, or anything like that, and I do not want my words misconstrued. What I am saying is
that radicalism is something that happens along the way and that there is normally something
else that is tied to it. I do not want to go down that path and I certainly do not want to turn our
back on what Australia has become, which is, singularly, the greatest multicultural nation on
the face of the earth.

We make it hard on the new kids on the block, and we make it hard on the new bloke at the
game, but once they have proved their bona fides they are in. I think we make sweeping
generalisations in this country about every race and nation and faith on the earth, but the thing
I love about Australians is that we take the individual as they come. If you have someone
move in next door to you, you do not care what colour skin they have; you go and say g'day to
them. I think that is what sets us aside. That is what we have to make sure that we keep our
faith in, but we have to make sure that we maintain the right for people to dress the way they
want. If their faith demands that they dress a certain way then I do not see what the problem is
with it. I really do not.

There are people in my community who are offended by the sight of a signet ring and
people's Catholicism. My great-grandfather, when he came to Australia in 1902, was a very
qualified Welsh public servant. He could not get a job in Australia because he was a Catholic.
He could not get a job in the Australian Public Service because he was a Catholic. He had to
convert to Anglicism. He had to convert to the Anglican Church, or the Church of England in
those days, to get a job in the Public Service. Tiger O'Reilly will tell you that he did not play
anywhere near as many tests for Australia because he was a Catholic and the Don was a
Mason. That is what happens here. These things—divisions along religious lines—have
always been there. This is no different to where we have been, but it is international. We are
in this together. What I want from people in this place, and outside, is a recognition that we
are in this together—that we are one Australia, and Australia is a great country. It is a country
of many faiths, many opinions and many beliefs. That is what makes us great. It is what makes us great. I thank the House.

Mr IRONS (Swan) (11:39): I too rise to join with my colleagues on all sides of the political divide in commending the Prime Minister for his strong resolve in responding to the very real threat ISIL presents to Australia's national security, both here on home soil and abroad. I have just listened to the member for Herbert, and prior to him two of my other colleagues. They have all taken a different angle about this particular issue, but it is all collegiate. It is all responding to the threats of ISIL and, in a very collaborative type of way, acknowledging and recognising the threats to our home soil and abroad.

The Australian government and our collaborative defence forces are not new to responding to conflict on our soil, or globally, to protect our nation's rights, freedoms, civil liberties and values from those who seek to take, destroy, maim or kill our people and destroy our way of life. It is not against Australian law to disagree with these values, and we have just heard the member for Herbert talking about the differences in our communities for the two centuries that Australia has existed. In fact, these values—the ability to disagree with each other—are promoted by Australia's long-held affirmation of every person's right to freedom of speech, if done so peacefully.

But what we are seeing on our television screens, on social media and now on our streets is not disagreement. It is hatred: hatred by people who live in Australia and take advantage of our way of life, our freedoms, our education system and, despicably, our welfare system—which is there to support those who need a helping hand—while they plot to kill us and praise their brothers in Iraq and Syria for their barbarism in the name of the Islamic State.

I join with the Prime Minister and our international allies in separating these extremists from the Islamic religion, whose believers do not deserve to have their religion degraded because of this evil. I heard the former Leader of the Opposition Brendan Nelson recently talk at a function where he said, 'These evil people have stolen the good name of Islam to be used for their own purposes.'

Australia has been seen as a legitimate threat for Islamic extremist groups for over a decade, but the scope of the security environment has fundamentally changed. This is clear when we begin to compare the threat of ISIL to al-Qaeda. In the last ten years of the Afghanistan war, there were 30 known Australians who went to Afghanistan to fight, yet what we have witnessed with ISIL is 60 Australians fighting in Syria and Iraq in just 12 months. Of course, as members in this place know, the threat is not just abroad. Thirty other fighters are known to have returned to Australia, and there are over 100 known supporters of these extremists living amongst us. These are extremists who are responsible for multiple massacres, suicide bombings, executions of prisoners and the taking of innocent women and children from their homes to be used as sexual slaves.

In the case of ISIL, the threat, particularly here in Australia, is from individuals or small terrorist cells that are not necessarily looking to blow up a building or landmark but instead will use any opportunity to spread their poisonous messages. Just last month, Melbourne teenager Abdul Numan Haider tried to kill two Australian policemen, and the reality of this threat also struck home on 18 September when Australia's largest ever counter-terrorism operation took place to prevent a plot to behead Australians in a public place and post these heinous acts on social media. At that time, more than 800 police and security agents were
deployed in Sydney and Brisbane to execute 30 search warrants to investigate and disrupt this terrorist plot. To date, one person has been charged with serious terrorist offences and further charges may still be laid. On Tuesday additional raids occurred in Seabrook, Flemington and Kealba, with one man, 23-year-old Hassan El Sabsabi, being charged with allegedly sending $12,000 to an American citizen fighting in Syria.

The threat of home-grown terrorism is very real, just as the threat of genocide is the reality that citizens of Iraq and Syria are faced with every day. Who can forget the pleas by the woman in the Iraqi parliament to save her nation that had been, she said, wiped out? And this is not the first attempt to wipe it out.

Yesterday, the first of this government's three bills aimed at strengthening Australia's national security and ensuring that our security agencies have the resources and authority they need to investigate suspected terrorist operations and the reasonable means to prevent acts of terrorism on home soil and stop foreign fighters returning to our nation was passed by the House.

The bill proposes some significant changes to the operations of intelligence agencies, expands their powers to ensure officers are able to better respond to threats to Australia's national security, and implements new measures to update offences relating to unauthorised communications under the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Act 1979 and the Intelligence Services Act 2001.

Last week, the government's second tranche of legislation, the Counter-Terrorism Legislation Amendment (Foreign Fighters) Bill 2014—known as the foreign fighters bill—was also introduced to strengthen our intelligence agencies' ability to prevent and disrupt domestic terrorist threats, including creating new offences for advocating terrorism and for entering or remaining in a declared zone. These legislative changes are part of the government's overall commitment to strengthen our borders, bolster our national security laws, and increase our emphasis on preventing Australians from becoming involved with extremist groups through engagement programs.

The government has also committed an additional $630 million over four years to counter-terrorism measures, including biometric screening and an increased number of Border Force personnel at international airports. We have also contributed to the international coalition's efforts to stem ISIL's poisonous occupation of Iraq and Syria by taking part in humanitarian airdrops, airlifting military supplies and providing defence force equipment and personnel in Iraq. This included 600 personnel, eight Super Hornets and two heavy support planes to a standby position.

Today the Prime Minister expanded this role with Australian Defence Force aircraft taking part in their first aerial mission over Iraq in support of allied operations. I highlight that this mission was purely in an assistance capacity, with no decision yet being made to further extend this role to combat.

This government has taken a considered approach and acted with precision in responding to the deplorable acts of terrorism that we have seen abroad and on home soil. There has, however, been much debate surrounding Australia's future military involvement in Iraq and Syria. Simply, this cannot be predicted and should not be pre-determined by this government or those of our international allies. Like our allies, this government is sickened by the heinous
acts of terrorism that we have seen in Iraq and Syria and will assess any calls for additional military involvement in the context of both Australia's domestic and international responsibilities.

In saying that, while I stand in this place to commend the Prime Minister's statement, I also commend President Obama's recent address to the United Nations and the sentiment that the threat of ISIL will not be stopped or degraded through peaceful discussion—the only option the international coalition has is to fight force with force. As President Obama stated:

No God condones this terror. No grievance justifies these actions. There can be no reasoning—no negotiation—with this brand of evil. The only language understood by killers like this is the language of force. So the United States of America will work with a broad coalition to dismantle this network of death.

With this statement in mind, I also take a moment to address those in this place who have claimed that this government's response to the protection of our national security is just a beat-up for other political purposes. We just heard the member for Wright talk about the recent ABC Q&A program. To those people I say: I hope your condemnation of the National Security Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2014 and the government's actions to try to prevent or reduce the threat level onshore and abroad is not answered by the harsh whip of reality when you turn on your television screens.

This is not about politics. It is about the safety of every Australian, whether they were born here or have chosen to call our great nation home and live peacefully under our laws. It is shame on them for not being able to look past their own cynicisms and see the bipartisanship that has been shown by this government and by the other colleagues in this place. It is shame on them for not opting to be part of the unity that could be and should be fostered in the name of national security, and it should be shame on them for not having the ability to look past the strain of their own shadow and the need to see their name branded across the headlines.

Unlike them, I stand in unity with my fellow Australians in this place and outside it who understand that we have a responsibility to protect all Australians and the innocents abroad from this evil. I stand in unity with the Prime Minister and my fellow government colleagues who are doing everything in their power to keep Australians safe and to ensure that, no matter what age, gender or race we and our international allies come from, we will fight this evil together.

I recently met the Turkish community president in Western Australia and had a lengthy discussion about where this is going. He also said, as we have heard other people say: people who come to this country should join us, not change us.

**Ms O’DWYER (Higgins) (11:49):** I am delighted to join my friend and colleague the member for Swan, who gave such an eloquent address to the chamber. I also rise to speak today on a matter of great importance. We have all heard the phrase 'the world is getting smaller'. Often this is applied to the positive aspects of a more connected humanity, such as better trade links, the sharing of information or the ability to travel freely. Yet this world made smaller by technologies of both transit and information has also enhanced the ability of threats to be imported into our once impregnable heartland.

Right now, Australian citizens are fighting in both Iraq and Syria, yet they fight for organisations which execute a policy of torture, rape and murder to achieve their ends. They fight with those that plan and prepare to bring their particular form of virulent extremism
inside our national borders. Our intelligence agencies report that there are currently at least 60 Australians fighting in Iraq or Syria and up to an additional 100 people involved in some form of support for offshore conflicts through financing terrorists or recruiting terrorists. These people represent a clear and present danger to our safety. We know that ISIL's leadership has called for its acts of terror to be enacted in the Western nations that oppose its appalling, immoral means of domination.

In a world such as this, we cannot afford to be complacent. We certainly cannot afford to live with a legal infrastructure which is dated to the extent that it limits the capacities of our intelligence services to protect us—for this was the essential finding of a bipartisan review by the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security. It has always been the case that there are people who stand in direct opposition to all that is humane and decent. Yet today, in our rapidly shrinking world, such dark creatures have the capacity to threaten us by means of so-called home-grown terrorism, which is in fact not home grown but transnational. It is a form of imported extremism enabled by our shrinking world.

Fifteen years ago there was no such device as a smartphone, and now we can barely live without one. Every day, new social networks are spawned capable of spreading both love and hate. Right now, today, such technologies enable men to execute the most heinous of crimes against humanity and distribute disturbing images of these acts on a global scale. They intend that such disturbing forms of promotion inspire similar acts and terrify their opponents.

Yet the agencies that have been charged with our protection have been operating in a framework which has not been prepared for this ever-evolving environment. This is not to denigrate the great work of our security intelligence agencies. They do tremendous work on our behalf. But we must acknowledge that our environment has changed. We now have an opportunity to modernise our laws to remove the unintended binds on our defenders' ability to act, whilst at the same time protecting the rights and freedoms for which we stand. I wholeheartedly believe that now is the time to act and that the measures proposed in the National Security Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 1), which was enacted this week, are balanced and effective and contain safeguards which protect our cherished liberties.

On 12 September, the then director of ASIO, David Irvine, raised the Australian terror alert to high. Further evidence of the need to act was witnessed in the terror raids carried out in September in New South Wales and Queensland and earlier this week in Melbourne. Further evidence, also, was the stabbing attack on two policemen by a teenager who had the ISIL flag on his person.

Australia's largest anti-terrorism offensive in our history provides some indication of the speed at which our security situation is changing. To respond to these very real threats, the government has announced new anti-terrorism laws in three stages. The national security legislation amendment legislation which, as I mentioned, was passed this week enhances our ability to gather relevant intelligence, enables greater interagency cooperation and empowers our agents with the right skills and protections. I would like to draw the House's attention to some of the elements of this act which I believe are worthy of note.

Firstly, the act will remove unnecessary bureaucracy, which only retards our ability to respond to threats. Before the changes contained in the act, ASIO was required to obtain a separate warrant to conduct separate elements of an investigation. This included separate warrants for tracking, listening devices and internet monitoring. Under the changes in the act,

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it is eminently possible to accelerate our ability to respond to threats by seeking one warrant, whilst maintaining the minimum statutory thresholds for individual warrants. In this way we can speed up our response without sacrificing our safeguards. As well as high thresholds in the statutory criteria for the issuing of warrants and requirements for ministerial level, the issue of warrants will continue to be subject to independent oversight by the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security.

Secondly, ASIO officers must, from time to time, engage in covert activity. In order to be genuinely effective, they may need to take some action that could be considered illegal. After all, an undercover operative would not look terribly credible if they only appeared willing to engage in strictly legal activities. Yet our ASIO officers were not given the same level of civil and criminal immunity from prosecution as other agencies enjoyed. So this act has addressed this imbalance and empowers our covert operations against domestic threats. But, once again, it is important to note the inherent protections in this act. It demands pre-authorisation in order to receive legal protection. It excludes entrapment activities and serious offences against person and property, or civil wrongs involving the causation of death or serious injury. Notably, there is no protection in the act for the practice of torture, for such activities are unacceptable to the Australian public and to the government.

Thirdly, before this act there were absurd practical limitations on ASIO's ability to share information with other organisations and enterprises. It now seems foolish to shackle ourselves with such restrictions, so this act outlines changes that clarify and improve the statutory framework for ASIO's cooperative and information-sharing activities. ASIO is now able to work more closely with its foreign intelligence counterparts, ASIS, enabling both organisations to better protect us.

Fourthly, the theme of information sharing is extended with the provision to be inserted that confirms that ASIO may cooperate voluntarily with the private sector to perform its statutory functions. Furthermore, the act will remove limitations on ASIO's ability to refer certain criminal acts to other agencies, including those that threaten the lives of agents in the field, such as revealing their identities. Leaving such gaps would only enhance the risks to the agents who already risk their lives to ensure that we are safe. Such a situation is no longer tolerable. In order to further enhance the safety of our officers, the act has further pragmatic elements to allow ASIS to provide training in self-defence and other forms of protective security training to ASIO officers and to those who are cooperating with it.

The package of measures which I have outlined strikes an intelligent and practical balance between enhancing our security, protecting our agents and maintaining safeguards to our liberty. Further measures are also included in the act to address the changing technology environment. In today's world, leaked information can be globally transmitted at the touch of a button. The leaking of secret information is a serious threat to the security of our citizens, for it lets those who wish to do us harm know our plans to protect Australia and thus act to counteract them. To address such risks, the act addresses the legislative gap on penalising those who disseminate covert information by implementing a maximum penalty of three years imprisonment for those who deal with intelligence related records, including copying, transcription, removal and retention. This information in the wrong hands could have dire consequences for our nation. Currently no offences such as these exist.
Furthermore, there are now greater penalties imposed on intelligence officers who leak secret information, with a maximum jail term of 10 years. Before this act, the maximum jail term sat at just two years, which is minimal given the significance of the crime. I would like to congratulate our security intelligence agencies for the job that they do to protect our citizens. The legislation has been brought before the parliament to enhance that capacity. The suite of measures in this bill and in other bills to be brought before the parliament will do just that.

We need to make sure that we enhance the ability of our security services to protect us in a world that is shrinking both physically through transport and ideologically through digital communications. The laws, changes and acts that we have announced strike the right balance between enhancing our effectiveness, protecting our agents and maintaining safeguards to our liberty—liberty that we all cherish in a free and democratic country, Australia.

Mr Danby (Melbourne Ports) (11:59): More than a year ago, on a low-rating ABC program I raised reports in the French press, particularly in Le Monde, that Australia had foreign fighters who might be returning from Syria. Since then, this issue has become front-page, indeed daily, news. I do not claim to be a seer but I learnt much from my stint on the Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security prior to being Parliamentary Secretary for the Arts in the last government, including learning much from the various officials of the various agencies including ASIO and the AFP.

Particularly, I want to pay tribute to the former director-general of ASIO, Mr David Irvine, whose balanced and moderate presentation both in the public media and elsewhere were so interesting to me and so resonant with the Australian public. He of course pointed out that there are currently a number of returnees from the fighting in Syria, tens of whom presently live in my home city of Melbourne.

The Economist pointed out that in terms of terrorists fighting with ISIL, per capita Australia ranks fourth in the world. We are, to use the Australian boast, 'punching above our weight', in a most unwelcome area.

To paraphrase the editor of The Economist, Edward Lucas, spies—unlike those in most countries—are responsible to their elected leaders and supervised by judges and law-makers. Covert agencies in the West, including Australia, are no longer unregulated as they were in the past. Quite understandably, people in the past had fears, particularly about the political agendas of some of their security agencies, including here in Australia, with what seemed particularly to people on our side of politics to be the biased political nature of some of these agencies. They are of course now subject to legislative and judicial control in a much more regulated and a much more welcome way than they were in the past.

Government agencies in Australia, if we are looking at this area of national security, are constrained by a vast amount of legislation already, particularly by the Attorney-General of the day and the non-partisan Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security, which has been having public hearings these last few days and which at the behest of former Attorney-General Nicola Roxon undertook a year-long inquiry into many of the changes that have been thought through and legislated in these recent days.
I think both the intelligence committee and attorney-generals of whatever stripe are very zealous in not being embarrassed—and that is a good motivation—about the activities of these agencies going too far, and that is a very good constraint on their behaviour.

In Australia we also have an enviable international reputation in this area because of the woman who appeared before the public inquiry this morning, the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security—not just as an individual but in that particular role. That role does not exist in many other countries.

Judges issue warrants. We have all of the kinds of systems that rightly should be put in place in a democratic society in order to constrain the legitimate activities of security services and to see that they act in a democratic way. Now, thanks of course to Labor and particularly to the energetic activities of the shadow Attorney-General, the Independent National Security Legislation Monitor has been restored—a position that otherwise might have been dispensed with by the so-called elimination of red tape in the government's cutbacks that they foreshadowed with the budget. I might leave it there and resume my remarks in the adjournment debate.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr COULTON (Parkes—The Nationals Chief Whip) (12:04): I move:
That the Federation Chamber do now adjourn.

Iraq and Syria

Mr DANBY (Melbourne Ports) (12:04): I resume my remarks on the issue of national security. There has been much coverage given to the critics of the now anti-terrorist legislation, best exemplified in today's Sydney Morning Herald headline, 'Security laws pave the way for a police state'. They are not my views nor the views of the vast majority of people in this parliament. My views will not be reported from this speech.

Unfortunately, the highly developed and indeed intricate views of the shadow Attorney-General were barely reported yesterday. In his speeches and remarks he explained the many caveats that would, for instance, exclude journalistic reporting of secret or security matters. He is working very effectively to see that the government is held to its own rhetoric of being open to excisions in this area and that journalists pursuing legitimate stories will not be constrained in their reporting.

However, in a general sense, why might we be concerned about the reckless leaking of intelligence secrets? Because we face new circumstances: a conflict, not of our making, with an unspeakably evil group like IS. I much prefer the Arabic name Da'ash. People in that part of the world use that expression because it describes a group that seeks to impose its view on other people without consultation.

Let me focus on one narrow area. Let's remember the crusade for privacy, which is one of the paradigms used against the legislation that was passed over the last two days, particularly proffered by the Snowden-Assange-IPA axis, to defend the rights of citizens in democracies like Europe, Australia and the United States. Following some of Mr Snowden's leaks, one of the most disgraceful things that happened was that interceptions done by the West in northern Iraq, in Mosul, were leaked to the international media. As a result of that, National Public Radio in the United States reported that it was discovered that al-Qaeda did not just change its seven-year-old encryption software; it was totally rewritten.
I question the motivation of someone who would leak this kind of information on our interception capabilities of telephone traffic of al-Qaeda in Mosul. This has nothing whatever to do with privacy. This simply undermines the activities of the Western countries assisting Iraq, in northern Iraq, to prevent the activities of al-Qaeda. Isn't it coincidental that, just some months later, after Mr Snowden's revelations, al-Qaeda and IS encrypted all of its telephone traffic in a way that made them invisible to what we were doing? That is the big mystery of what happened in the last few months. How did IS roll into northern Iraq and Mosul without secret services being able to pick this up? What on earth does it have to do with the privacy concerns of Western publics in Melbourne, Manhattan or Manchester? To put it bluntly, it is extremely likely that, after seeing Snowden's expose of intelligence capabilities, al-Qaeda modernised and updated its software to avoid detection. Selective leaking of how Five Eyes countries intercept in the Mosul area was questioned not by me but by the Christian Science Monitor's Dan Murphy, who publicly asked: 'How does this have anything to do with preserving the privacy of Western publics?'

The purpose of the legislative changes in the Counter-Terrorism Legislation Amendment (Foreign Fighters) Bill and the National Security Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2014 is to help us stop people in Da'ash bringing their new skills to Australia. The kinds of numbers that I talked about are in The Economist: 250 people from this country. They explain why the Australian parliament is legislating to enhance the security of all Australians, including those who could not care less about the Greens, IPA or Edward Snowden. (Time expired)

Industrial Hemp

Mr COULTON (Parkes—The Nationals Chief Whip) (12:09): I would like to speak today about industrial hemp. At the moment there is discussion in New South Wales and other parts of the country about legalising cannabis for medicinal purposes. I want to state from the beginning that the issue I am speaking about is entirely different. I do have a view on medicinal cannabis—for the record, if it is obviously having beneficial effects on terminally ill people then we should not be denying those people the right to that medication.

Industrial hemp is a crop that goes back thousands of years. It suffers greatly because of its appearance. It is a hemp. It looks pretty well much the same as a cannabis plant, but it does not have the same qualities as, or affect humans in the same way as, the drug cannabis.

Hemp can be used in various ways. The seed can be harvested at the same time for oils, lubricants, biodiesel and health foods. The herb, which is the inner stalk, can be combined with other materials to create building materials. The bast, the outer stalk, can be used in composites to replace plastic and can be further treated to produce a fabric that is very durable and has lots of qualities. Finally, the leaves can be used as stockfeed.

At the moment it is illegal in New South Wales to grow industrial hemp. I understand the reasons why up until this point it has been so, but I think this issue needs another look. In my electorate in the Macquarie Valley there is a group of farmers investigating growing hemp. It uses less water per hectare than cotton and is a great rotation crop. It is deep-rooted and certainly frees up the soil for further crops. Because of the diversity of the product the potential for employment in regional areas in value adding what comes through is quite large. The problem is you need to grow enough in the first place to have the infrastructure to produce the end products. So we need to have not one or two farmers growing this crop; we
need to have a few growing it on the first occasion so we have a critical mass. It has huge potential for job creation.

A division having been called in the House of Representatives—

Sitting suspended from 12:13 to 12:25

Mr COULTON: In conclusion, the Macquarie 2100 group, which is a group of Landcare community organisations, is keen to progress the possibilities of growing hemp. I understand the difficulties in the past but I do not think that is a good enough reason not to pursue the possibilities. In a time when we need to help farmers become viable and also look at crops that are more sustainable and environmentally friendly, I believe that hemp certainly has the ability to fill that gap.

The week after next I will be going to Narromine and meeting with a group of farmers at a public forum who are going to have a discussion about the possibility of growing hemp, and I certainly am looking forward to that.

Taxation

Ms PARKE (Fremantle) (12:26): A recent report by Oxfam titled Working for the few found that rapidly growing inequality is worsening poverty around the world. Oxfam noted that the richest 85 people in the world own as much wealth as half the world's population and observed:

This massive concentration of economic resources in the hands of fewer people presents a significant threat to inclusive political and economic systems. Instead of moving forward together, people are increasingly separated by economic and political power, inevitably heightening social tensions and increasing the risk of societal breakdown.

Through the use of tax havens, the world's wealthiest individuals and corporations are avoiding their tax obligations on a scale so grand as to make all foreign aid combined appear trivial by comparison. It is conservatively estimated that $21 trillion to 32 trillion is held unrecorded and offshore. If these financial assets were reported, the tax revenue generated— at a rate of 30 per cent—would be between $190 and $280 billion annually, according to the Tax Justice Network. The Tax Justice Network notes this is:

...roughly twice the amount OECD countries spend on all overseas development assistance around the world.

As the wealthiest few individuals and corporations—for example Apple, Google and 21st Century Fox here in Australia—engage in capital flight to tax havens with their ever larger share of the economic pie, governments will increasingly struggle with tumbling revenue. It is the working poor and middle income earners who will bear the burden of tax and suffer the public service cuts.

Oxfam notes that while the use of tax havens hurts the populations of both developed and developing countries:

The impact of extreme inequality is most keenly felt in developing countries where missing out means remaining trapped in the cycle of extreme poverty.

A Christian Aid report has found that tax avoidance practices—which include profit-shifting, transfer pricing, false invoicing, intra-company loans and the use of legislative instruments allowing extreme company secrecy—are bleeding developing nations of more than $160 billion in tax per year. This is a much larger figure than the amount received by these
countries in aid, which in 2009 was US$120 billion. Christian Aid estimates that these lost revenues could save the lives of around 350,000 children each year.

Having worked in developing nations and witnessed poverty-driven instability around the world, I am with the critics of secrecy jurisdictions like the US state of Delaware—it is home to more than half of the world's Fortune 500 companies—the City of London, Switzerland, the Maldives, and the Cayman Islands, among around 65 others who make up the Financial Secrecy Index. As Leslie Wayne found in his 2012 *The New York Times* investigation of Delaware's tax-friendly attraction:

Big corporations, small-time businesses, rogues, scoundrels and worse—all have turned up at Delaware addresses in hopes of minimizing taxes, skirting regulations, plying friendly courts or, when needed, covering their tracks.

As the Tax Justice Network observes of tax havens, in its second edition of *Tax Us If You Can*:

All they provide is a place to record a transaction whose impact is elsewhere … the aim is to make them accountable to no one, pay tax to no one, and to have no duty to report anything to anyone because it can deny it is anywhere.

Many community organisations including Oxfam, Oaktree, and the Micah Challenge through its campaign Shining the Light on Tax Dodging and Corruption, are calling upon Australia, as chair of the G20, to show strong leadership in addressing this issue, which would also serve the G20's already-stated objectives regarding economic growth and job creation.

These community campaigners have identified the three necessary measures for the G20 as follows. The first is that the automatic exchange of information between tax authorities, which is already supported by Australia, needs to become a global standard and developing countries need support to make use of that system.

The second is disclosure through a public register of the true owners and beneficiaries of companies, trusts and foundations. Currently Australian law does not require multinational corporations to disclose the existence of all their subsidiaries that exist in tax havens—unlike the EU, which voted in March this year to create a publicly accessible register.

The third is country-by-country reporting, or CBCR, for multinational corporations. Currently, international reporting standards only require multinationals to produce reports at a global level, which makes it impossible to discern how much was earned or invested and how much tax was paid in each country in which they operate. The US requires listed companies in the oil, gas and mining sector to do CBCR and the EU has mandated it from 2015 for large companies, including banks. The OECD has developed a draft template for CBCR which will make it harder for companies to shift their profits and give citizens the access to information they require to hold their governments to account for the revenue they receive. Some corporations, such as Rio Tinto and Paladin Energy, already report this way. The challenge now for Australia, as G20 host, is to adopt CBCR itself and to ensure that country-by-country reporting is endorsed by the G20 as the standard.

Clearly the issue of global inequality is a large and growing problem that will not be resolved only by ridding the world of tax havens but also by supporting the drive to greater transparency and accountability and by reducing the ability of the wealthy to avoid contributing to society in the places from which they derive their profits. *(Time expired)*
Pearce Electorate: Infrastructure

Mr PORTER (Pearce) (12:32): Yesterday the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development announced that applications for the coalition government's National Stronger Regions Fund are now to commence. This landmark $1 billion fund has the potential to drive economic growth in the communities that need it by providing much-needed federal funding towards community infrastructure development at local level. This is particularly important for my electorate of Pearce, which includes 10 local government shires, many of which fall in outer metro or semirural and regional areas. Each of these can benefit from the National Stronger Regions Fund in order to accomplish specific projects which are designed to provide community support to their local residents. Already I am in discussions with a number of these local government authorities within my electorate who have approached me with proposals for projects which, if successful, could contribute to revitalisation in many of these regional communities.

The National Stronger Regions Fund is just one example of the funding that this government is directing towards local governments in order to promote growth and development at a local level. Recently the councils and shires within Pearce were the recipients of over $5 million in federal funding as part of the Roads to Recovery program for the 2014-15 financial year. In total, these councils and shires will receive during the next five years over $30 million as part of this excellent program so that local governments can take control of road upgrades across their own communities. Certainly, this present coalition government is of the view that these local government authorities are in the best position to make important decisions as to where money can be best spent on road improvements, and this $2.1 billion program gives them the ability to do exactly that. By doubling the contributions provided to local government authorities over the 2015-16 period to a total of $700 million, this government is allowing councils to immediately get on with the job of repairing and upgrading roads in their areas.

One notable example in the electorate of Pearce is the Shire of Mundaring, which will receive over the next five years approximately $2.8 million in funding as part of this program, which will allow it to focus that money towards important upgrades and developments.

One project that I wish to make specific mention of is the Great Eastern Highway Greenmount to Mundaring upgrade. This upgrade is a project that is of considerable importance to the residents of this area. It exists on the fringe of the Perth metropolitan area and operates as the main arterial road connecting the city of Perth to the goldfields and continuing on towards the eastern states of Australia. It is therefore part of the national road network. Because of its importance, it carries a volume of tens of thousands of vehicles a day, in both commercial traffic and personal traffic, through many areas that are classified as residential. Indeed, going to the goldfields, it is probably a road that has contributed more to the national wealth than just about any other road in the nation.

Unfortunately, as a consequence of this high volume of traffic, there have been a significant number of accidents in the Greenmount to Mundaring stretch of the Great Eastern Highway, with a total of 224 accidents occurring between 2007 and 2012. Tragically, three of these were fatal accidents. Prompted no doubt by these unfortunate occurrences, a road safety audit was conducted in 2004. It identified a number of required works on the road including upgrading intersections, creating slip lanes, improving driveways into local residences,
improving street lighting and creating paths for safe pedestrian travel. In total, 31 individual hazards were identified, of which 24 were rated as high and three were rated as extreme.

The funding required for this project has been estimated at approximately $24 million, with the Western Australian state government confirming in its budget that it would contribute a half-share, a commitment of $12 million, across the 2015-16 and 2016-17 financial years. Moving forward, it is a very important task for me as a local member to remain a strong advocate for this project. I have to date had many useful discussions with federal ministers in the hope of seeing it through to fruition, given the particular importance that any upgrade will have for the people within my electorate and indeed for growing the wealth of the nation.

**Ebola**

Ms PLIBERSEK (Sydney—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (12:36): The World Health Organization said last week:

The Ebola epidemic ravaging parts of West Africa is the most severe acute public health emergency seen in modern times.

As a generous, wealthy nation, Australia must redouble its efforts and give a rapid response to this emerging crisis.

I am very pleased to acknowledge that the government today has contributed another $10 million, further to the previous $8 million contributed, to help tackle this crisis. But it is not just money that is needed at this time. In question time yesterday, the Minister for Foreign Affairs again refused to offer support for skilled, experienced Australians who are willing and able to fight this crisis. Of course there are significant risks for health workers, and we absolutely need to ensure that we are able to address those concerns. But this is a crisis of such magnitude that we have to take up the challenge. Instead of seeing all of the problems that prevent us from acting, we have to see them as challenges that can be solved. Instead of warning about the difficulties of evacuating health workers, we have to maximise our efforts to find a workable solution.

The dimensions of this crisis are staggering. So far, 6½ thousand people have contracted the illness and more than 3,000 people have died. But this crisis is growing exponentially. On some estimates, 1.4 million people may be affected by January next year. The world community, in recent weeks, has recognised the gravity of this crisis and the urgent need for a response. The United States and the United Kingdom have already committed medical teams to the region. President Obama said last week that the Ebola outbreak was a ‘national security priority’ for the United States. He says it has to rise to the same level of urgency for the rest of the world. He said:

… it is unacceptable if, because of lack of preparedness and planning and global coordination, people are dying when they don't have to.

Australia co-sponsored a unanimous UN Security Council resolution on 18 September which called on all nations to:

… facilitate the delivery of assistance, including qualified, specialized and trained personnel and supplies …

The resolution was co-sponsored by a record 131 countries. But, from what we have been told by the government, unfortunately Australia is not assisting with qualified, specialised and trained personnel or supplies.
The foreign minister said yesterday that the government would not put Australian health workers at risk in the absence of credible evacuation plans. It is quite right not to put our people at risk, but we must find those evacuation plans. We must demand solutions instead of focusing on problems. Around a dozen Australians are already on the ground in West Africa working with non-government organisations and others dealing with the crisis. We have to negotiate with our international partners to set up arrangements for any Australian personnel in the event that they are needed.

Today the United Kingdom is hosting a pledging conference to get countries and international donors to pledge beds, medical staff and money to help tackle Ebola in Sierra Leone. As late as yesterday, Australia were not able to confirm whether we would be represented and what we would be pledging, so I am very pleased to hear about the extra $10 million today. As many health experts have said, the spread of Ebola is preventable, and health workers can be very well protected with the right infection control techniques. Our infection control techniques are indeed second to none. Medecins Sans Frontieres say our capability is unique. If we fail to act now, the consequences will only grow in seriousness. The Executive Director of Medecins Sans Frontieres in Australia, Paul McPhun, says he wonders why the foreign minister will not, at the very least, pledge to send Australian volunteers to the region as soon as medivac agreements are reached with partner countries. MSF is the largest NGO working in West Africa. Mr McPhun said:

... we are not asking for financial support, we are asking the government to evaluate Australia’s emergency medical capacity and mobilise it on the ground in West Africa.

The President of the Australian Medical Association, Dr Brian Owler, said:
The AMA is calling on the Government to urgently coordinate the recruitment and deployment of volunteer doctors and other … professionals to West Africa, and provide ongoing practical support such as protective and medical equipment and supplies, transport and accommodation.

If the international community pulls together, the Ebola outbreak can be contained. But the moment is passing. If we wait, the task will become harder; it will become more difficult. The illness will become worse. That is why Australia must significantly increase our efforts and do it now.

**Lindsay Electorate: Small Business Awards**

Ms SCOTT (Lindsay) (12:42): Without doubt, small business is the engine room of the economy. For regions like the Nepean Valley, where two-thirds of our local community need to commute every day for work, building our local small businesses and family businesses is crucial to the success of our region. I come from a small business background and have seen firsthand the difficulty, sacrifice and commitment it takes to have a successful small business.

Last night in the great region of Lindsay there was one of the most exciting events of the small business calendar: the local small business awards. It was great to see 30 small businesses that were recognised for their achievements, for their excellence, for their commitment and for what they provide our local community. I would like to take the opportunity today to congratulate and formally recognise in this place some of those amazing recipients who received awards last night.
Business of the Year went to Steve Sutton and his team at Workin' Gear Penrith. This is a business that has traded for over 24 years. I have had to buy the odd pair of hiking boots or what have you from this business. It also sells a whole range of high-vis wear and KingGee wear for people who are out working in the region. It has a whole host of other heavy duty supplies. It was wonderful that it won the Business of the Year award last night.

Wayne Harrison, from Advanced Airbrush, was awarded Business Person of the Year. Wayne is an incredibly talented airbrush artist and has been airbrushing for 35 years. Many of his artworks are winning awards in the USA and here at home. Further, he was recognised for receiving significant attention for murals and airbrush art throughout automotive shows right across Australia.

These two businesses are really phenomenal success stories of our region. Further, I would also like to acknowledge David Robertson, of Nana's Teddies & Toys, for the antiques, art, crafts and gifts category; Claire Hills, from Angus Car Service, another business I have known for many, many years, for the automotive services category; Dario Poles, from Poles Patisserie at the Nepean Village, for the bakery or cake shop category; Monique Pastega, from Chic Skin & Laser Clinic, for the beauty services category; Scott Hogan, from Deli Delights, for the butcher/delicatessen category; and Stefan Dorakay, from Coffee Guru, which is in South Penrith, out at Southlands, for the cafe category. It is a wonderful place to get a cup of coffee.

I would also like to acknowledge for the childcare services category, Tessa McGavock, from UWS Early Learning Penrith; for the education services category, Rebecca Liu-Brennan, from Performance Art Western Sydney; for the fast food take away category, Penny Wang, from Subway Nepean Village; for the fitness services category, Mira Guric, from Oxigen Fitness; for the florist category, Vicki Barnes, from Emu Florist, Centro Lennox; for the fruit and vegetable shop category, Johan Susanto, from Harris Farm Markets, Penrith; for the hairdresser category, Alison and Martin Lazaar, from Esteem Hair and Beauty Spa, High St Penrith; for the health and improvement services category, Isobelle Chahine, from Nepean Radiology; for the home based business category, Petrina Mullineaux, from Petrina's Family Day Care; for the home furnishings and furniture category, Tani Halal, from Plush Homemaker Centre in Penrith; for the jewellery category, Jane Smith, from York Jewellers at Westfield Penrith—another business that has won so many awards. The Ely boys' costume jewellery and exquisite jewellery have been internationally renowned. They are very talented jewellers.

Further, I would acknowledge for the new business category, Jenna Knights, from Property Maintenance—Lawns and Gardens; for the pet care category, Kelly Tickner, from Coreen Avenue Veterinary Clinic and the Western Sydney Cat Hospital; for the pharmacy category, Adam Kennedy, from Kingswood Compounding Pharmacy; for the professional services category, Tony Tanti, from Tanti Financial Services; for the real estate category, Nicole Waterhouse, from Property Central Penrith; for the restaurant category, Maria Pezzella from Cucina Casareccia; for the service and trade category, Nigel McKitney, from Uphire; for the specialised business category, Michael Morris; for the specialised retail businesses category, Steve Sutton, from Workin-Gear, Penrith—who also won the Business of the Year; and for the youth award, Emma Garziniti, from Explore and Develop in Penrith.
I would like to congratulate all these winners. It is a wonderful achievement. These businesses really are a foundation of our region and are sure to create more small businesses and more employment in the great region of Western Sydney.

Question agreed to.

Federation Chamber adjourned at 12:47.
QUESTIONS IN WRITING

Sydney Airport

(Question No. 161)

Mr Albanese asked the Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development, in writing, on 26 May 2014:

(1) Has he sought advice on options for changing the regulation on the cap on hourly movements at Sydney Airport?

(2) Can he specifically advise on any options being considered to change the movement cap from the current 80 movements an hour?

Mr Truss: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

The Government is committed to maintaining the cap at Sydney Airport and is not considering any proposals to amend the current cap of 80 movements per hour.

Options for increasing flexibility within the cap have been raised by stakeholders from time to time.

Environment

(Question No. 210)

Mr Kelvin Thomson asked the Minister for the Environment, in writing, on 14 July 2014:

(1) Is it a fact that under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999, any action that has the potential to significantly impact a population of a threatened species must be referred to his department for assessment.

(2) Was the Victorian Department of Environment and Primary Industries’ burning in the
   (a) Little Desert National Park,
   (b) Lower Glenelg National Park,
   (c) Cobboboonee National Park, and
   (d) Rennick State Forest, in April 2014 referred to his department for assessment; if not, should it have been, if so, what action will be taken.

(3) Did this burning program include 5000 hectares in the Rennick State Forest, which had a population of 30 to 60 of the south eastern sub-species of the Red-tailed Black Cockatoo (Victoria’s 2006 Commonwealth Games emblem).

(4) Is there agreement that no more than 15 per cent of the south-eastern Red-tailed Black Cockatoo stringybark habitat should be burnt within a ten year period.

(5) Did the Victorian Government’s burning program mean that 27 per cent of the south eastern Red-tailed Black Cockatoo habitat has now been burnt in the last ten years.

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

(1) Any person proposing to undertake an action that is likely to have a significant impact on a nationally listed threatened species must refer their action for assessment and decision under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act).

   It is important to note that not all activities that have the potential to impact on nationally protected matters will result in a significant impact that requires referral.

(2) The prescribed burns listed were not referred under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 and, based on advice provided at the time by the Victorian Department of Environment and Primary Industry; the Department considered that there was not likely to be significant impact on a matter of national environmental significance. I am advised that the Department...
of the Environment has engaged with the Victorian environment department to address state wide prescribed burns in a strategic manner.

(3) With respect to the honourable member’s questions regarding the extent and areas burned by the Victorian Government, I suggest the member direct these questions to the relevant Victorian department which conducted the burns and hold the relevant information.

(4) I am advised that there is no formal agreement between the Australian Government and the Victorian Government defining the percentage of south-eastern Red-tailed Black Cockatoo stringybark habitat that can be burnt within a 10 year period.

(5) For specific details on the areas burned I suggest the question be directed to the Victorian Department of Environment and Primary Industries.

Langston, Private Wendy
(Question No. 291)

Mr Katter asked the Assistant Minister for Defence, in writing, on 28 August 2014:

In respect of Private Wendy Langston being removed, at a very considerable public expense, from her Dubai posting in December 2013 following a health issue for which she subsequently received medical clearance, (a) why did this happen, (b) is the Minister aware of the perception that it was retribution for Private Langston questioning, in her capacity of being the relevant staff administrator, the probity and fiscal procedures of an incident involving her senior officer, and (c) can the Minister provide assurance that this probity issue will be fully and impartially investigated, and the soldier's standing, reputation and postings restored.

Mr Robert: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

(a) Due to privacy considerations, it is not appropriate to make public comment on personal matters that relate to an ADF member.

(b) and (c) A number of concerns have been raised by Private Langston. They are being addressed in accordance with extant Departmental policy.

East West Link
(Question No. 293)

Mr Albanese asked the Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development, in writing, on 28 August 2014:

Were monetary amounts paid by the Commonwealth to the Victorian Government in 2013-14 in respect of (a) East West Link Stage 1, and (b) East West Link Stage 2; if so, (i) what sum, (ii) on what dates, (iii) what was the title of agreement under which each payment was made, and (iv) what were the terms under which the payments were made.

Mr Truss: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

(a) Yes

(b) Yes

(i) $500 million was paid to the Eastern section and $1 billion to the Western section.

(ii) Both payments were made on 30 June 2014.
