INTERNET

The Votes and Proceedings for the House of Representatives are available at

Proof and Official Hansards for the House of Representatives,
the Senate and committee hearings are available at

For searching purposes use
http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au

SITTING DAYS—2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 22 23, 24, 25, 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 15, 16, 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>18, 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>2, 3, 4, 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>30, 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>1, 12, 13, 14, 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>10, 11, 12, 13, 17, 18, 19, 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>7, 8, 9, 10, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 28, 29, 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RADIO BROADCASTS

Broadcasts of proceedings of the Parliament can be heard on ABC NewsRadio in the capital cities on:

- ADELAIDE: 972AM
- BRISBANE: 936AM
- CANBERRA: 103.9FM
- DARWIN: 102.5FM
- HOBART: 747AM
- MELBOURNE: 1026AM
- PERTH: 585AM
- SYDNEY: 630AM

For information regarding frequencies in other locations please visit
http://www.abc.net.au/newsradio/listen/frequencies.htm
FORTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION—FIRST PERIOD

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

House of Representatives Office Holders
Speaker—Hon. Anthony David Hawthorn Smith MP
Deputy Speaker—Mr Mark Maclean Coulton MP
Second Deputy Speaker—Mr Robert George Mitchell MP

Members of the Speaker’s Panel—Hon. Sharon Leah Bird MP, Ms Sharon Catherine Claydon MP, Mr Steven Georganas MP, Mr Ian Reginald Goodenough MP, Mr Andrew William Hastie MP, Mr Kevin John Hogan MP and Ms Maria Vanvakinou MP
Leader of the House—Hon. Christopher Pyne MP
Deputy Leader of the House—Hon. Darren Chester 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. Malcolm Bligh Turnbull MP
Deputy Leader—Hon. Julie Isabel Bishop MP
Chief Government Whip—Ms Nola Bethwyn Marino MP
Government Whips—Mr Albertus Johannes van Manen MP and Mr Rowan Eric Ramsey MP

The Nationals
Leader—Hon. Barnaby Thomas Gerard Joyce MP
Deputy Leader—Senator the Hon Fiona Nash
Chief Whip—Mr George Robert Christensen MP
Deputy Whip—Ms Michelle Leanne Landry 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 Joanne Catherine Ryan MP and Mr Graham Douglas Perrett MP

Printed by authority of the House of Representatives
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Members</th>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abbott, Hon. Anthony John</td>
<td>Warringah, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albanese, Hon. Anthony Norman</td>
<td>Grayndler, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexander, Mr John Gilbert, OAM</td>
<td>Bennelong, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aly, Dr Anne</td>
<td>Cowan, WA</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrews, Hon. Karen Lesley</td>
<td>McPherson, QLD</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrews, Hon. Kevin James</td>
<td>Menzies, VIC</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bandt, Mr Adam Paul</td>
<td>Melbourne, VIC</td>
<td>AG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banks, Ms Julia Helen</td>
<td>Chisholm, VIC</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bird, Hon. Sharon Leah</td>
<td>Cunningham, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bishop, Hon. Julie Isabel</td>
<td>Curtin, WA</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowen, Hon. Christopher Eyles</td>
<td>McMahon, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad, Mr Andrew John</td>
<td>Mallee, VIC</td>
<td>NATS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadbent, Mr Russell Evan</td>
<td>McMillan, VIC</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brodtmann, Ms Gai Marie</td>
<td>Canberra, ACT</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buchholz, Mr Scott Andrew</td>
<td>Wright, QLD</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burke, Hon. Anthony Stephen</td>
<td>Watson, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burney, Ms Linda Jean</td>
<td>Barton, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butler, Hon. Mark Christopher</td>
<td>Port Adelaide, SA</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butler, Ms Terri Megan</td>
<td>Griffith, QLD</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Byrne, Hon. Anthony Michael</td>
<td>Holt, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chalmers, Dr James Edward</td>
<td>Rankin, QLD</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Champion, Mr Nicholas David</td>
<td>Wakefield, SA</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chester, Hon. Darren Jeffrey</td>
<td>Gippsland, VIC</td>
<td>NATS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chesters, Ms Lisa Marie</td>
<td>Bendigo, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christensen, Mr George Robert</td>
<td>Dawson, QLD</td>
<td>NATS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ciobo, Hon. Steven Michele</td>
<td>Moncrieff, QLD</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clare, Hon. Jason Dean</td>
<td>Blaxland, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claydon, Ms Sharon Catherine</td>
<td>Newcastle, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coleman, Mr David Bernard</td>
<td>Banks, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collins, Hon. Julie Maree</td>
<td>Franklin, TAS</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conroy, Mr Patrick Martin</td>
<td>Shortland, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coulton, Mr Mark Maclean</td>
<td>Parkes, NSW</td>
<td>NATS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crewther, Mr Christopher John</td>
<td>Dunkley, VIC</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danby, Hon. Michael David</td>
<td>Melbourne Ports, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dick, Mr Dugald Milton</td>
<td>Oxley, QLD</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dreyfus, Hon. Mark Alfred, QC</td>
<td>Isaacs, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drum, Hon. Damian Kevin</td>
<td>Murray, VIC</td>
<td>NATS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutton, Hon. Peter Craig</td>
<td>Dickson, QLD</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elliot, Hon. Maria Justine</td>
<td>Richmond, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellis, Hon. Katherine Margaret</td>
<td>Adelaide, SA</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entsch, Hon. Warren George</td>
<td>Leichhardt, QLD</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evans, Mr Trevor Mark</td>
<td>Brisbane, QLD</td>
<td>LNP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Falinski, Mr Jason George</td>
<td>Mackellar, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeney, Hon. David</td>
<td>Batman, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitzgibbon, Hon. Joel Andrew</td>
<td>Hunter, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fletcher, Hon. Paul William</td>
<td>Bradfield, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flint, Ms Nicolle Jane</td>
<td>Boothby, SA</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freelander, Mr Michael Randolph</td>
<td>Macarthur, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members</td>
<td>Division</td>
<td>Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frydenberg, Hon. Joshua</td>
<td>Kooyong, VIC</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthony</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gee, Mr Andrew Robert</td>
<td>Calare, NSW</td>
<td>NATS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georganas, Mr Steven</td>
<td>Hindmarsh, SA</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giles, Mr Andrew James</td>
<td>Scullin, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gillespie, Hon. Dr David</td>
<td>Lyne, NSW</td>
<td>NATS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arthur</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goodenough, Mr Ian</td>
<td>Moore, WA</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reginald</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gosling, Mr Luke John</td>
<td>Solomon, NT</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hammond</td>
<td>Perth, WA</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Timothy Jerome</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hart, Mr Ross Anthony</td>
<td>Bass, TAS</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hartsuyker, Hon. Luke</td>
<td>Cowper, NSW</td>
<td>NATS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hastie, Mr Andrew William</td>
<td>Canning, WA</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawke, Hon. Alexander George</td>
<td>Mitchell, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hayes, Mr Christopher Patrick</td>
<td>Fowler, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henderson, Ms Sarah Moya</td>
<td>Corangamite, VIC</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hill, Mr Julian Christopher</td>
<td>Bruce, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hogan, Mr Kevin John</td>
<td>Page, NSW</td>
<td>NATS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howarth, Mr Luke Ronald</td>
<td>Petrie, QLD</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunt, Hon. Gregory Andrew</td>
<td>Flinders, VIC</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husar, Ms Emma</td>
<td>Lindsay, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husic, Hon. Edham Nureddin</td>
<td>Chifley, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irons, Mr Stephen James</td>
<td>Swan, WA</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jones, Mr Stephen Patrick</td>
<td>Whillam, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joyce, Hon. Barnaby Thomas</td>
<td>New England, NSW</td>
<td>NATS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerard</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katter, Hon. Robert Carl</td>
<td>Kennedy, QLD</td>
<td>AUS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keay, Ms Justine Terri</td>
<td>Braddon, TAS</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keenan, Hon. Michael Fayat</td>
<td>Stirling, WA</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly, Mr Craig</td>
<td>Hughes, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly, Mr Michael Joseph</td>
<td>Eden-Monaro</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keogh, Mr Matthew James</td>
<td>Burt, WA</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khalil, Mr Peter</td>
<td>Wills, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King, Hon. Catherine Fiona</td>
<td>Ballarat, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King, Ms Madeleine Mary Harvie</td>
<td>Brand, WA</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lamb, Ms Susan</td>
<td>Longman, QLD</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laming, Mr Andrew Charles</td>
<td>Bowman, QLD</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landry, Ms Michelle Leanne</td>
<td>Capricornia, QLD</td>
<td>NATS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laundy, Hon. Craig Arthur</td>
<td>Reid, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samuel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leigh, Hon. Dr Andrew Keith</td>
<td>Fraser, ACT</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leeser, Mr Julian Martin</td>
<td>Berowra, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ley, Hon. Sussan Penelope</td>
<td>Farrer, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Littleproud, Mr David Kelly</td>
<td>Maranoa, QLD</td>
<td>LNP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macklin, Hon. Jennifer Louise</td>
<td>Jagajaga, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marino, Ms Nola Bethwyn</td>
<td>Forrest, WA</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marles, Hon. Richard Donald</td>
<td>Corio, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McBride, Ms Emma Margaret</td>
<td>Dobell, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McCormack, Hon. Michael</td>
<td>Riverina, NSW</td>
<td>NATS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McGowan, Ms Catherine, AO</td>
<td>Indi, VIC</td>
<td>IND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McVeigh, Hon. Dr John Joseph</td>
<td>Groom, QLD</td>
<td>LNP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitchell, Mr Brian Keith</td>
<td>Lyons, TAS</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members</td>
<td>Division</td>
<td>Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitchell, Mr Robert George</td>
<td>McEwen, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morrison, Hon. Scott John</td>
<td>Cook, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morton, Mr Ben</td>
<td>Tangney, WA</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neumann, Hon. Shayne Kenneth</td>
<td>Blair, QLD</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O'Brien, Mr Llewellyn Stephen</td>
<td>Wide Bay, QLD</td>
<td>LNP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O'Brien, Mr Ted Lynam</td>
<td>Fairfax, QLD</td>
<td>LNP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O'Connor, Hon. Brendan Patrick John</td>
<td>Gorton, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O'Dowd, Mr Kenneth Desmond</td>
<td>Flynn, QLD</td>
<td>NATS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O'Dwyer, Hon. Ms Kelly Megan</td>
<td>Higgins, VIC</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O'Neil, Ms Clare Ellen</td>
<td>Hotham, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O'Toole, Ms Catherine Elizabeth</td>
<td>Herbert, QLD</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owens, Ms Julie Ann</td>
<td>Parramatta, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pasin, Mr Antony</td>
<td>Barker, SA</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perrett, Mr Graham Douglas</td>
<td>Moreton, QLD</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pitt, Hon. Keith John</td>
<td>Hinkler, QLD</td>
<td>NATS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plibersek, Hon. Tanya Joan</td>
<td>Sydney, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Porter, Hon. Charles Christian</td>
<td>Pearce, WA</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prentice, Hon. Jane</td>
<td>Ryan, QLD</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price, Ms Melissa Lee</td>
<td>Durack, WA</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pyne, Hon. Christopher Maurice</td>
<td>Sturt, SA</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramsey, Mr Rowan Eric</td>
<td>Grey, SA</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rishworth, Hon. Amanda Louise</td>
<td>Kingston, SA</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert, Hon. Stuart Rowland</td>
<td>Fadden, QLD</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rowland, Ms Michelle Anne</td>
<td>Greenway, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ryan, Ms Joanne Catherine</td>
<td>Lalor, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharkie, Ms Rebekha Carina Che</td>
<td>Mayo, SA</td>
<td>NXT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shorten, Hon. William Richard</td>
<td>Maribyrnong, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smith, Hon. Anthony David Hawthorn</td>
<td>Casey, VIC</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snowdon, Hon. Warren Edward</td>
<td>Lingiari, NT</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanley, Ms Anne Maree</td>
<td>Werriwa, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudmalis, Ms Ann Elizabeth</td>
<td>Gilmore, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sukkar, Mr Michael Sven</td>
<td>Deakin, VIC</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swan, Hon. Wayne Maxwell</td>
<td>Lilley, QLD</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swanson, Ms Meryl Jane</td>
<td>Paterson, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taylor, Hon. Angus James</td>
<td>Hume, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tehan, Hon. Daniel Thomas</td>
<td>Wannon, VIC</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Templeman, Ms Susan Raye</td>
<td>Macquarie, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thistlethwaite, Hon. Matthew James</td>
<td>Kingsford Smith, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tudge, Hon. Alan Edward</td>
<td>Aston, VIC</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnbull, Hon. Malcolm Bligh</td>
<td>Wentworth, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vamvakinou, Ms Maria</td>
<td>Calwell, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>van Manen, Mr Albertus Johannes</td>
<td>Forde, QLD</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vasta, Mr Ross Xavier</td>
<td>Bonner, QLD</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallace, Mr Andrew Bruce</td>
<td>Fisher, QLD</td>
<td>LNP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wats, Mr Timothy Graham</td>
<td>Gellibrand, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wicks, Mrs Lucy Elizabeth</td>
<td>Robertson, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilkie, Mr Andrew Damien</td>
<td>Denison, TAS</td>
<td>IND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilson, Mr Joshua Hamilton</td>
<td>Fremantle, WA</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Members of the House of Representatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Members</th>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wilson, Mr Richard James</td>
<td>O'Connor, WA</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilson, Mr Timothy Robert</td>
<td>Goldstein, VIC</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood, Mr Jason Peter</td>
<td>La Trobe, VIC</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyatt, Hon. Kenneth George, AM</td>
<td>Hasluck, WA</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zappia, Mr Antonio</td>
<td>Makin, SA</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimmerman, Mr Trent Moir</td>
<td>North Sydney, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### PARTY ABBREVIATIONS

AG—Australian Greens; ALP—Australian Labor Party; AUS—Katter's Australia Party; IND—Independent; LNP—Liberal National Party; LP—Liberal Party of Australia; NATS—The Nationals; NXT—Nick Xenophon Team

### Heads of Parliamentary Departments

Clerk of the Senate—R Laing
Clerk of the House of Representatives—D Elder
Secretary, Department of Parliamentary Services—R Stefanic
Parliamentary Budget Officer—P Bowen
## Turnbull Ministry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Minister</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prime Minister</td>
<td>Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Indigenous Affairs</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Nigel Scullion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Women</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet Secretary</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Arthur Sinodinos AO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister Assisting the Cabinet Secretary</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Counter-Terrorism</td>
<td>Hon Michael Keenan MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister</td>
<td>Senator the Hon James McGrath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Cities and Digital Transformation</td>
<td>Hon Angus Taylor MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Anne Ruston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister to the Deputy Prime Minister</td>
<td>Hon Luke Hartsuyker MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>Hon Julie Bishop MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment</td>
<td>Hon Steve Ciobo MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for International Development and the Pacific</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Concetta Fierravanti-Wells</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assistant Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attorney-General</td>
<td>Senator the Hon George Brandis QC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Vice-President of the Executive Council)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Leader of the Government in the Senate)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Justice</td>
<td>Hon Michael Keenan MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Revenue and Financial Services</strong></td>
<td>Hon Scott Morrison MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Small Business</td>
<td>Hon Kelly O'Dwyer MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Finance</strong></td>
<td>Hon Michael McCormack MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Deputy Leader of Government in the Senate)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Minister of State</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Mathias Cormann</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Regional Development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Local Government and Territories</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon Fiona Nash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Infrastructure and Transport</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Fiona Nash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Deputy Leader of the House)</td>
<td>Hon Darren Chester MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Urban Infrastructure</td>
<td>Hon Paul Fletcher MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Defence</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Defence Industry</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Leader of the House)</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Marise Payne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Veterans’ Affairs</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Defence Personnel</td>
<td>Hon Christopher Pyne MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Immigration and Border Protection</td>
<td>Hon Dan Tehan MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assistant Minister for Immigration and Border Protection</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science</td>
<td>Hon Greg Hunt MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Resources and Northern Australia</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Senator the Hon Matt Canavan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science</td>
<td>Hon Craig Laundy MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Health and Aged Care</td>
<td>Hon Sussan Ley MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Sport</td>
<td>Hon Sussan Ley MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care</td>
<td>Hon Ken Wyatt AM MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Rural Health</td>
<td>Hon Dr David Gillespie MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Communications</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Mitch Fifield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for the Arts</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Mitch Fifield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Manager of Government Business in the Senate)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Regional Communications</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Fiona Nash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Employment</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Social Services</td>
<td>Hon Christian Porter MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Human Services</td>
<td>Hon Alan Tudge MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Social Services and Disability Services</td>
<td>Hon Jane Prentice MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Social Services and Multicultural Affairs</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Zed Seselja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Education and Training</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Vocational Education and Skills</td>
<td>Hon Karen Andrews MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for the Environment and Energy</td>
<td>Hon Josh Frydenberg MP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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. Assistant Ministers in italics are designated as Parliamentary Secretaries under the *Ministers of State Act 1952.*
## Shadow Ministry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Shadow Minister</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leader of the Opposition</td>
<td>Hon Bill Shorten MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Indigenous Affairs and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Indigenous Affairs and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders</td>
<td>Senator Patrick Dodson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Cabinet Secretary</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Jacinta Collins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Preventing Family Violence</td>
<td>Terri Butler MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister to the Leader (Tasmania)</td>
<td>Senator Helen Polley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Leader of the Opposition</td>
<td>Hon Tanya Plibersek MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Education</td>
<td>Hon Tanya Plibersek MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Women</td>
<td>Hon Tanya Plibersek MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Schools</td>
<td>Andrew Giles MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Universities</td>
<td>Terri Butler MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Equality</td>
<td>Terri Butler MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader of the Opposition in the Senate</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Penny Wong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Penny Wong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for International Development and the Pacific</td>
<td>Senator Claire Moore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Don Farrell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Special Minister of State</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Don Farrell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Sport</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Don Farrell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Treasurer</td>
<td>Hon Chris Bowen MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Treasurer</td>
<td>Hon Dr Andrew Leigh MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Competition and Productivity</td>
<td>Hon Dr Andrew Leigh MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Charities and Not-for-Profits</td>
<td>Hon Dr Andrew Leigh MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for the Digital Economy</td>
<td>Ed Husic MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Consumer Affairs</td>
<td>Tim Hammond MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Treasury</td>
<td>Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Environment and Water</td>
<td>Hon Tony Burke MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Australia</td>
<td>Hon Tony Burke MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for the Arts</td>
<td>Hon Tony Burke MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager of Opposition Business (House)</td>
<td>Hon Tony Burke MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Australia</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Jacinta Collins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Australia</td>
<td>Julie Owens MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Families and Social Services</td>
<td>Hon Jenny Macklin MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Housing and Homelessness</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Doug Cameron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Human Services</td>
<td>Hon Linda Burney MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Disability and Carers</td>
<td>Senator Carol Brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Families and Communities</td>
<td>Senator Louise Pratt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Cities and Regional Development</td>
<td>Hon Anthony Albanese MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Tourism</td>
<td>Hon Anthony Albanese MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Regional Services, Territories and Local Government</td>
<td>Stephen Jones MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Infrastructure</td>
<td>Pat Conroy MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for External Territories</td>
<td>Hon Warren Snowdon MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Shadow Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Attorney-General</td>
<td>Hon Mark Dreyfus QC MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for National Security</td>
<td>Hon Mark Dreyfus QC MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Manager of Opposition Business in the House of Representatives</td>
<td>Hon Mark Dreyfus QC MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Justice</td>
<td>Clare O'Neil MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations</td>
<td>Hon Brendan O'Connor MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Employment Services, Workforce</td>
<td>Ed Husic MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Workplace Relations</td>
<td>Lisa Chesters MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Climate Change and Energy</td>
<td>Hon Mark Butler MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Climate Change</td>
<td>Pat Conroy MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Defence</td>
<td>Hon Richard Marles MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Veterans' Affairs</td>
<td>Hon Amanda Rishworth MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Defence Personnel</td>
<td>Hon Amanda Rishworth MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC</td>
<td>Hon Warren Snowdon MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Cyber Security and Defence</td>
<td>Gai Brodtmann MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Defence Industry and Support</td>
<td>Hon Mike Kelly AM MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Kim Carr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Manufacturing and Science</td>
<td>Hon Nick Champion MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Innovation</td>
<td>Senator Deborah O'Neil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Health and Medicare</td>
<td>Hon Catherine King MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Medicare</td>
<td>Tony Zappia MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Indigenous Health</td>
<td>Hon Warren Snowdon MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Early Childhood Education and Development(1)</td>
<td>Hon Kate Ellis MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for TAFE and Vocational Education</td>
<td>Hon Kate Ellis MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Skills and Apprenticeships</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Doug Cameron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Early Childhood</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Jacinta Collins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry</td>
<td>Hon Joel Fitzgibbon MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Rural and Regional Australia</td>
<td>Hon Joel Fitzgibbon MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Rural and Regional Australia</td>
<td>Lisa Chesters MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Resources and Northern Australia</td>
<td>Hon Jason Clare MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Trade and Investment</td>
<td>Hon Jason Clare MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Trade in Services</td>
<td>Hon Dr Andrew Leigh MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister Assisting for Resources</td>
<td>Tim Hammond MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Northern Australia</td>
<td>Hon Warren Snowdon MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Immigration and Border Protection</td>
<td>Hon Shayne Neumann MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Finance</td>
<td>Dr Jim Chalmers MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Small Business and Financial Services(2)</td>
<td>Senator Katy Gallagher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager of Opposition Business in the Senate</td>
<td>Senator Katy Gallagher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Small Business</td>
<td>Julie Owens MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Communications</td>
<td>Hon Michelle Rowland MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Regional Communications</td>
<td>Stephen Jones MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Ageing and Mental Health(3)</td>
<td>Hon Julie Collins MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Ageing</td>
<td>Senator Helen Polley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Mental Health</td>
<td>Senator Deborah O'Neil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each box represents a portfolio except for (1) which is in the Education portfolio, (2) which is in Treasury portfolio and (3) which is in the Health portfolio. **Shadow Cabinet Ministers are shown in bold type.**
CONTENTS

TUESDAY, 8 NOVEMBER 2016

Chamber
COMMITTEES—
Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Joint Committee—
Report .......................................................................................................................... 3095

BILLS—
Migration Legislation Amendment (Regional Processing Cohort) Bill 2016—
First Reading ........................................................................................................... 3095
Second Reading ...................................................................................................... 3095
Higher Education Support Legislation Amendment (2016 Measures No. 1) Bill 2016—
Second Reading ...................................................................................................... 3098

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS—
Burt Electorate: Kelmscott Show ................................................................. 3117
Corangamite Electorate: Crime ................................................................. 3117
Bendigo Electorate: Disability Services .................................................. 3118
Canning Electorate: Beenyup Brook Bridge ........................................... 3118
Working Holiday Maker Program ............................................................... 3118
Page Electorate: Woopi Tri Festival ............................................................ 3119
Perth Electorate: Coolbinia Bombers ............................................................ 3119
Immigration ................................................................................................................ 3120
Bushfires ................................................................................................................ 3120
Child Sexual Abuse ............................................................................................. 3121
National Security .................................................................................................. 3121
Battle of Beersheba: 99th Anniversary ..................................................... 3121
Jagajaga Electorate: Cyclone Winston Fundraising .................................. 3122
Migration ................................................................................................................. 3122
Lalor Electorate: Tarneit Secondary College ........................................... 3123
Brosnan, Austin and Dharma ................................................................. 3123
Sydney Electorate Office .................................................................................. 3123
Berowra Electorate: Berowra Christian Community School ............... 3124
Moreton and Rankin Electorates: Cricket ................................................ 3124

MINISTERIAL ARRANGEMENTS ........................................................................ 3125

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE—
Racial Discrimination Act 1975 ................................................................. 3125
Border Protection ............................................................................................... 3126
Racial Discrimination Act 1975 ................................................................. 3126
Asylum Seekers ................................................................................................. 3127
Racial Discrimination Act 1975 ................................................................. 3128
Agriculture Industry .......................................................................................... 3129
Border Protection ............................................................................................... 3130
Day, Mr Bob, AO ................................................................................................. 3131
Indigenous Rangers .......................................................................................... 3131
Day, Mr Bob, AO ................................................................................................. 3133
CONTENTS—continued

Budget .......................................................................................................................... 3133
Day, Mr Bob, AO ........................................................................................................ 3134
National Security ......................................................................................................... 3134
Day, Mr Bob, AO ........................................................................................................ 3135
Border Protection .......................................................................................................... 3136
Minister for Education ................................................................................................. 3137
Registered Organisations ............................................................................................ 3137
Day, Mr Bob, AO ........................................................................................................ 3138
Sports Tourism ............................................................................................................. 3139
Day, Mr Bob, AO ........................................................................................................ 3140
Asylum Seekers ............................................................................................................ 3140
Day, Mr Bob, AO ........................................................................................................ 3141
Budget ......................................................................................................................... 3142
Day, Mr Bob, AO ........................................................................................................ 3143
Superannuation ............................................................................................................ 3143

DOCUMENTS—

Presentation .................................................................................................................. 3144

MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE—

Employment .................................................................................................................. 3145

BILLS—

Appropriation (Parliamentary Departments) Bill (No. 1) 2016-2017—
Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2016-2017—
Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2016-2017—
Returned from Senate...................................................................................................... 3159
Water Legislation Amendment (Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment) Bill 2016—
First Reading ................................................................................................................ 3160
Higher Education Support Legislation Amendment (2016 Measures No. 1) Bill 2016—
Second Reading............................................................................................................ 3160
Third Reading............................................................................................................... 3161
Customs Tariff Amendment (2017 Harmonized System Changes) Bill 2016—
Customs Amendment (2017 Harmonized System Changes) Bill 2016—
Second Reading............................................................................................................ 3162
Third Reading............................................................................................................... 3163
Customs Amendment (2017 Harmonized System Changes) Bill 2016—
Second Reading............................................................................................................ 3164
Third Reading............................................................................................................... 3164
Social Security Legislation Amendment (Youth Jobs Path: Prepare, Trial, Hire) Bill 2016—
Second Reading............................................................................................................ 3164

ADJOURNMENT—

Calwell Electorate: Aged Care ....................................................................................... 3208
Building and Construction Industry ............................................................................. 3209
Tasmania: Salmon Industry ......................................................................................... 3210
Bruce Highway ............................................................................................................. 3211
Advice, Like Youth, Probably Just Wasted On the Young .................................................. 3212
Energy Security .................................................................................................................. 3214
Goldmining ....................................................................................................................... 3215
NOTICES ........................................................................................................................... 3215

**Federation Chamber**

**CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS**—
- Chifley Electorate: Broadband ................................................................. 3223
- Bonner Electorate: Broadband ................................................................. 3224
- Bass Electorate: Marriage ................................................................. 3224
- Safe Schools Coalition Australia ................................................................. 3225
- Novaskill ............................................................................................................. 3226
- Queensland: Liquor Licensing ................................................................. 3227
- Tasmania: Turnbull Government ................................................................. 3228
- Papua New Guinea ............................................................................................. 3229
- Mental Health ......................................................................................................... 3230
- Page Electorate: Sport ......................................................................................... 3230
- Page Electorate: Kyogle ......................................................................................... 3230
- Pensions and Benefits: Pension Assets Test ......................................................... 3231
- Boothby Electorate: Bushfire Season Awareness ......................................................... 3232
- Perth Electorate: Greek Glendi Festival ................................................................. 3233
- Calare Electorate: Daroo Business Awards ................................................................. 3234
- Macquarie Electorate: St Albans Community ......................................................... 3234
- Banks Electorate: Community Organisations ......................................................... 3235
- Frankish, Mrs Peggy ................................................................................................. 3236
- Moncrieff Electorate: Stronger Communities Program ......................................................... 3237
- Publishing Industry ................................................................................................. 3238
- Ryan Electorate: Men's Shed ..................................................................................... 3238

**COMMITTEES**—
- Economics Committee—
  - Report ..................................................................................................................... 3239
- Joint Standing Committee on Treaties—
  - Report ..................................................................................................................... 3242

**GRIEVANCE DEBATE**—
- Trade Unions ............................................................................................................. 3251
- Western Australia: Taxation ....................................................................................... 3253
- Death Penalty ............................................................................................................. 3256
- Economy ..................................................................................................................... 3258
- Human Rights ........................................................................................................... 3258
- Turnbull Government ................................................................................................. 3260
- Law Enforcement ....................................................................................................... 3263

**ADJOURNMENT** ........................................................................................................ 3265
The SPEAKER (Hon. Tony Smith) took the chair at 12:00, made an acknowledgement of country and read prayers.

COMMITTEES

Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Joint Committee

Report

Mr CHAMPION (Wakefield) (12:01): by leave—On behalf of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade I present a corrigendum to the report entitled *A world without the death penalty: Australia's advocacy for the abolition of the death penalty*, which was presented by the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade of the previous parliament.

I present chapter 1 of the report entitled *A world without the death penalty: Australia's advocacy for the abolition of the death penalty*. For the information of the House, the committee's report for the inquiry into Australia's advocacy for the abolition of the death penalty was presented on 5 May 2016, at the end of the previous parliament. Inadvertently, however, the first chapter, entitled 'Introduction and background', was not included in the report as presented. On behalf of the committee I now present chapter 1 of the report, which sets out the context and conduct of the inquiry, the structure of the report and summarises arguments for why the death penalty should be abolished worldwide.

BILLS

Migration Legislation Amendment (Regional Processing Cohort) Bill 2016

First Reading

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Dutton.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr DUTTON (Dickson—Minister for Immigration and Border Protection) (12:02): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Australia's recent history has seen extraordinary challenges to our border security.

Under the Labor government, there were 50,000 illegal maritime arrivals on over 800 boats. To deal with this influx, the Labor government opened 17 detention centres onshore and two regional processing centres offshore.

Over 8,000 children were put into detention and, sadly, there were at least 1,200 deaths at sea.

The way in which the coalition has responded to these challenges has been critical to maintaining the confidence of Australians in our migration policy and practices.

These policies and practices were not developed from a basis of fear—how could they be, because more than one in four Australian residents were born overseas and close to half of the
population have at least one parent born elsewhere. Immigrants and their descendants are foundational to Australia's human capital and social fabric.

Horrific images of people drowning trying to make it to our shores are etched in our national consciousness. Perilous voyages were arranged by people smugglers, criminal syndicates, motivated only by greed and trading in human misery.

It had to stop.

The coalition's response to Labor's policy chaos has been strong and consistent. Since coming to government, the coalition has diligently set about cleaning up Labor's border protection mess.

The government's reform of our border protection policies has sent the message to people smugglers that they cannot offer a path to Australia. Life in Australia is not an illicit commodity to be sold to the desperate and vulnerable at a great profit.

I am proud of the government's record at the border, because under the coalition:

- There have now been over 830 days since a successful illegal boat arrival;
- There have been no deaths at sea;
- We have closed 17 detention centres; and
- We removed those children from detention.

And today I introduce legislation which will bolster the government's border protection infrastructure under Operation Sovereign Borders.

The purpose of the Migration Legislation Amendment (Regional Processing Cohort) Bill 2016 is to reinforce the government's longstanding policy that people who travel here illegally by boat will never be settled in this country.

The bill will amend the Migration Act to further strengthen Australia's maritime border protection arrangements by barring certain illegal maritime arrivals, who are subject to regional processing, from applying for an Australian visa.

The legislation will apply to people transferred to a regional processing country after 19 July 2013, including people who are currently in a regional processing country, have left a regional processing country and are in another country, are in Australia awaiting transfer back to a regional processing country and who are taken to a regional processing country in the future.

This includes people temporarily transferred from regional processing countries to Australia for medical treatment and those who have since settled in another country or returned home.

This legislation, importantly, is consistent with the announcement by former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, who, when announcing the signing of the Regional Resettlement Arrangement with Papua New Guinea on 19 July 2013, declared, 'From now on, any asylum seeker who arrives in Australia by boat will have no chance of being settled in Australia as refugees.'

The bar will apply to all visas, both temporary and permanent. It is critical that the bar apply to all visas to Australia. Any visa that allows a former Illegal Maritime Arrival to come to Australia has the potential to provide a pathway to permanent residence. We cannot and
will not leave the door open for people smugglers to find a backdoor once again into our country.

Operation Sovereign Borders has successfully halted the criminal people-smuggling networks and strengthened our borders to ensure that any future attempts to reach Australia illegally by boat will fail. But we cannot afford to become complacent and risk a return to the time when over 1,000 men, women and children drowned at sea.

It is lost on many in this debate, and in particular on the Leader of the Opposition, but the Australian public understands the very clear fact that there are now over 14,000 people in Indonesia alone waiting to get on to boats to come to Australia to provide a new life for them.

The way of our country, the way of this government, is to provide support to refugees—and in record numbers—but to continue to do that the right way.

We need to recognise that thousands of people this year alone have drowned on the Mediterranean, amongst many of thousands—indeed millions—of people who seek to make the perilous journey into Europe and other parts of the western world. We need to recognise that this problem will be with us for our lifetimes. This is not a problem that has gone away.

Yes, we have been able to deal with it successfully in turning back now almost 30 ventures. We have, through Operation Sovereign Borders, with the compliance of 16 Commonwealth agencies, including our intelligence agencies, been able to deal with the immediacy of this threat, and we have been able to deal with the legacy left us by Labor. But make no mistake: this problem has not evaporated. These people smugglers have not gone away.

In particular, if people believe that the door in Europe has now closed for them, they will make a path to Sri Lanka, to Vietnam, to Indonesia, to elsewhere to make their onward journey to this country. And this government is not going to preside over a re-emergence of boat arrivals, because we are not going to allow those 17 detention centres to be reopened. We are not going to allow the 2,000 children in detention, a legacy we inherited when we came to government, to stay in detention. And we have got those 2,000 children out of detention. Most importantly, we are not going to allow the deaths at sea of innocent men, women and children.

People can bring all sorts of views and compassion to this debate, but the reality is that this government has demonstrated how to deal with this problem effectively over the course of the last three years. When Kevin Rudd came into power in 2007, there were four people in detention, including no children. Yet Labor presided over a mess where people smugglers took control of our borders, and it cannot be repeated.

Under the amended law, the minister of the day will have the discretion to lift the bar, if it is in the public interest, and allow a visa application to be made. The discretion may be exercised in a range of circumstances, such as meeting international legal obligations or where individual circumstances justify special consideration.

In addition, the bar will not apply to persons who were under 18 years of age at the time they were first transferred to a regional processing country. The bill also contains transitional arrangements to ensure that the small number of former transferees who have already been given permission to apply for a visa in Australia will not have that application affected by this proposal.
This legislation sends a strong message to people smugglers and those considering travelling illegally to Australia by boat: Australia's borders are now stronger than ever.

The government is serious about border protection.

The measures in this bill underscore that commitment, and on that basis I commend this bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

**Higher Education Support Legislation Amendment (2016 Measures No. 1) Bill 2016**

*Second Reading*

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

**Ms BUTLER** (Griffith) (12:11): The opposition supports the Higher Education Support Legislation Amendment (2016 Measures No. 1) Bill 2016. This bill contains proposals for two changes to the Higher Education Support Act and related acts. The first set of changes is contained in schedule 1, which relates to Indigenous students. Schedule 1 will make changes to the allocation and administration of grants for universities and higher education providers that support Indigenous students. If enacted, the bill will have the effect that three existing funds will be pooled into one. The three funds provide for support services, grants and other programs and bursaries for Indigenous students. By pooling the funds, the money can be used more flexibly and in a more streamlined manner. Making this change will relieve some of the administrative burden imposed on universities.

I am informed that the government has conducted consultation in relation to this streamlining and pooling of funds. The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education Consortium, which is an advocacy group for Indigenous higher education, has also gone on the record giving support to the proposed change. It is a change that we believe will be welcomed by the sector because the more streamlined and flexible approach will better allow grants to support Indigenous students and better allow universities to meet those students' needs.

The second schedule of the bill goes to VET FEE-HELP information sharing. Schedule 2 will amend various pieces of legislation to allow the Department of Education and Training to have access to tax file numbers for VET FEE-HELP debtors. This will ensure that data about students who utilise VET FEE-HELP can readily be shared between the Department of Education and Training on the one hand and the Australian Taxation Office on the other. This change will assist in bringing the VET FEE-HELP scheme into line with other loans under the HELP, including HECS-HELP, and it will assist in ensuring that the individual identifiers in the form of tax file numbers will be able to be used to better assist with information sharing between those two departments.

Insofar as this bill relates to Indigenous students, it deals with an issue that has long been a hallmark of Labor's work in this place. For many decades, we have been the party that has sought to promote access to and participation in higher education, including for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. You only need to go back as far as the Second World War to see that it was Labor that was involved in ensuring that there were scholarships for
returning servicemen. More recently, in the 1970s, Gough Whitlam made it possible for kids like me and many, many others to go to university. I have said many times before that I am the first in my family to go to university, and there are so many people in this country who, even now, are the first in their family to go to university and who have been able to do so because of Labor's legacy of reforming higher education.

More recently, again it was Labor that opened the doors of our universities to thousands more Australians. Today there are 750,000 undergraduate students at Australian universities, and one in every four of them is there because of what Labor did when last in government. We put 190,000 more students on campus. Labor has boosted Indigenous students by 26 per cent. We also boosted regional students by 30 per cent, and 36,000 extra students from low-income families are now there, compared with 2007.

The moves we have made over many years to increase participation stand in pretty stark contrast to the higher education policy of this government, since it was elected in 2013. In fact, notoriously, this government budgeted to fully deregulate fees, which of course would have led to the $100,000 degrees that were so unpopular with the public. In their discussion paper that must released this year there is still a move to deregulate some university course fees, which we of course have opposed. This comes at the same time as the government has a 20 per cent cut to Commonwealth Grants Scheme funding for higher education still in the budget papers, even though it has been unsuccessful in getting that cut supported through this parliament.

The coalition government is unfortunately not supporting the university sector, and that is a very great shame for a number of reasons. It is a very great shame because, of course, higher education forms part of our international education exports. International education exports and tourism together account for almost as much trade as iron ore. Those two sectors are symbiotic—international education tends to drive tourism and vice versa. So it is great shame from that perspective.

It is also very great shame, from the perspective of the future workforce and skills needs of this country, that the coalition is taking such a regrettable approach to higher education funding. Universities are needed because, as we move into the future, more and more occupations are going to require university-level qualifications. And it is a very great shame for the students and potential students of this country that the coalition has taken such an adverse approach to education funding, because of the growing inequality in this country. We have inequality at its highest level in 70 years and it is continuing to grow. It is an important reason why we need to focus more on investing in education and not less. We need to find forces to countervail against the forces that are making us a less-equal society. As you would be aware, one of the greatest forces for conversions—for bringing people together and for reducing extreme inequality—is education, and that includes higher education.

That is important for a range of reasons also: opportunity for the individual people who benefit from higher education in a private sense; the opportunity they get to go into higher paying jobs; and the opportunity for the country to have people working in those higher skilled occupations. But, from a broader perspective, it certainly is very broadly acknowledged that extreme inequality is a drag on growth. It is a drag on our ability to grow our economy. It obviously makes it more difficult for people to share in the benefits of the growth that we have in our economy.
So the difference between the coalition and Labor in relation to higher education and all forms of education is a very important one for the future of our nation and just what sort of country we want to be. Do we want to be the sort of country where your postcode is not your destiny, where your circumstances at birth do not determine the success or otherwise that you will have in life? Or do we want have a society where division is entrenched and where higher education more and more becomes the province of the more wealthy and those with higher incomes? Of course not. Of course we want the former. So we are very proud of our record on higher education as a force for countering the forces that push towards greater inequality in our society, and as a force for opening up opportunities for people of all backgrounds so that you do not have to be in a situation where your destiny is determined by the circumstances of your birth.

I was thinking about this the other day, because I found my grade 11 yearbook when we moved house recently. I opened my grade 11 yearbook and it had a list of what all the previous year's grade 12s had been up to—where they had gone. I counted about five who had gone to university. I grew up in a regional town in Queensland, and of all of the grade 12s in a very big school I counted about five who had gone off to university. It is not because they are not as smart. It is not because they are not as talented. It is for a few structural reasons. One of them is the absence of aspiration, because university does not even seem to be an option. It is not even something on the horizon. It is not on the radar. For the creation of aspiration in the minds of students who are outside the cities—who are outside the types of families where it is common, over many generations, to go to university—those types of students need to see, role models need to see, the opportunity for universities. That is why equity programs are really important: they build that aspiration. They make universities seem normal and make it seem normal to go to university after high school.

That is one of the reasons I have been so worried about the cut of $152 million to the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program. It has already been booked in the budget, even though the review into that scheme is still underway. It is the reason that so many universities are concerned about the cut to that scheme. It is not just a scheme that grows aspiration—but, of course, that is crucial—it is also a scheme that supports students from those more disadvantaged backgrounds, once they get to university, to help with participation, to help with graduation and to help with success.

These are not new issues. In fact, for a lot of different groups of people who have not traditionally been from families that go to university, Labor has been working on building equity and participation for a long time. I mentioned Gough Whitlam's reforms in the 1970s earlier, but it is also timely to remember that in 1990 Bob Hawke released the landmark paper *A fair chance for all*. This explicitly talked about the imperative to build involvement in higher education, and graduation from higher education, amongst groups that had not previously had those opportunities. That paper has been the subject of a recent book reflecting on progress in the 25 years that have passed since it was announced and released. It was a really important paper for putting onto the policy agenda the building of aspirations and participation and success in higher education. That was a very salient and landmark paper. Change did happen. Improvements did occur. You did see the increase in those equity groups' representation in higher education.
Fast forward to the last Labor government. By that time, around 2011, we were still in a situation where a lot had been done but more needed to be done. So the then education minister, the member for Lalor, Julia Gillard, commissioned the Bradley review to look at what had to be done in relation to higher education. That review found that Indigenous students continued to be vastly underrepresented in higher education, and that is a challenge we still have to contend with today. Another review, the Behrendt review, which was specifically in relation to education access and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, conducted in 2011 and 2012, recommended—among many other things—the pooling together of some of the programs, as we are seeing here this bill today.

The reason I am setting out those things is to talk about the fact that there has been a lot of work done over many decades to seek to improve representation by Indigenous students in higher education. But there is still more that needs to be done. At the moment, access rates for Indigenous students are around the 1.88 per cent mark compared with a population of about 2.9 per cent. So you can see that there is an underrepresentation of Indigenous students in higher education. Those are access rates. When you look at retention and graduation, the rates are even lower. The 2014 figures for retention are 0.89 per cent for Indigenous students. The 2014 figures for success are 0.84 per cent for Indigenous students.

It is very important that we continue to maintain a close eye on equity programs aimed at increasing Indigenous students' representation so that we are in a position to continue to build on those figures, to continue to improve representation, participation, retention and success. So we are very pleased to support this bill today. It is an improvement. But we are also very concerned about the more general propositions that the government has been putting forward in terms of participation in higher education: the increase in fees, which in my view is a barrier to participation; the prospect of massive public funding cuts for universities; and the prospect of the $152 million cut for the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program. These are all very concerning for all the reasons that I have articulated before—the trade reasons, the economic reasons, the participation reasons and the opportunity reasons. We are very worried about where those things might lead if the coalition government is allowed to continue to attempt to take the axe to higher education funding.

I ought to finish by saying, in relation to the VET elements of this bill, that we understand that there have been consultations with key stakeholders and they are supportive. That includes ACPET, the AEU and the TAFE directors' association. On that basis, and on the basis that the sharing of tax file numbers should assist in reducing administrative errors by providing that unique signifier, as I mentioned before, allowing that information sharing to occur, we are of the view that this bill is non-controversial in respect of vocational education and training as well. On that basis Labor supports the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms PRICE (Durack) (12:26): I rise to speak on the Higher Education Support Legislation Amendment (2016 Measures No. 1) Bill 2016. I would like to speak on an issue that is very close to my heart—the representation of Indigenous Australians at university. The desire to further Indigenous career prospects is a passion of mine, and I believe it has to be one of the few real, tangible ways to bridge the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. I am pleased to hear that Labor supports this bill.

The legislation we are debating here today aims to streamline the confusing and convoluted support system currently available to Indigenous students wanting to further their education.
post high school. Any improvement in this area is welcome, as the current system has far too many conflicting and overlapping guidelines to be practical and workable for young people attempting to study full time.

The Higher Education Support Legislation Amendment (2016 Measures No. 1) Bill 2016 serves two functions. Firstly, it creates a new section in the Higher Education Support Act 2003 so that existing Indigenous student assistance can be combined into a single division and managed under simpler and more consistent guidelines. It will also allow the Minister for Education and Training to allow his department to collect tax file numbers for the purposes of administering student assistance and managing information collected under the scheme. The purpose of these changes is to encourage Indigenous Australians currently attending university to maintain their studies and to complete their degrees. This will greatly improve their employment prospects and will allow them to advance themselves in the ever-changing Australian job market.

As our economy changes, so will the requirements needed for entering it. As our economy moves towards a more combined resources economy and a skills economy, our workforce will need to be highly educated and upwardly mobile to meet the challenges facing it in the years to come. It is expected that young people in today's world will move through at least five different industries and take up some 17 different jobs over the course of their working lives. I believe it is vitally important that we are equipping young Indigenous Australians with the skills and qualifications to function in this new economic climate. That is why it is imperative that, as our job market changes, our policy towards furthering the opportunities for Indigenous students changes with it. Indeed, we cannot allow the disparity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students to continue into the future. This is why we have to change policy now—to beat these challenges before they become too difficult to overcome.

The Higher Education Support Legislation Amendment Bill is intended to reduce the red tape and overlap that currently exist between the many different programs available to assist Indigenous students. The collection of tax file numbers is a good example of this, as it allows refunds and deposits to be paid directly back into students' accounts when rebates are available. Tax file numbers are currently collected for all other loans under the Higher Education Loan Program except for VET FEE-HELP. This incompatible Labor policy will now be brought into line with the other higher education support programs, providing clarity for prospective Indigenous students.

This current practice, unfortunately, exposes vulnerable students to predatory loan services, coerces students to take out loans when they are neither required nor necessary, and leaves them without an avenue for compensation for their student loans. This legislation will bring VET FEE-HELP into line with all other current university FEE-HELPs, simplifying the process for application for both the applicant and the governing department. The intention is that this will streamline the process of accessing government assistance and will improve Indigenous education outcomes.

Undoubtedly, we as a nation have been successful in engaging Indigenous students in university and higher education. We have seen a 70 per cent rise in Indigenous student enrolments in university in the last decade, which is a credit to our higher education institutions around the country and the hard work of the Department of Education and Training—not forgetting, of course, the Indigenous students for taking the first step. But we
must now do more. Rather than simply getting Indigenous students through the door, we now need to work on bridging the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous completion rates for post high school study. We want to ensure every dollar we are putting into Indigenous student assistance programs is working as hard as possible to improve the outcomes for Indigenous Australians. We can no longer be simply content with creating Indigenous students; we need to be producing Indigenous graduates and leaders.

This is a core facet of this government’s election commitment to change the way our economy functions and views itself. With a dynamic, skilled and engaged young Indigenous workforce, we will take incredible steps towards bridging the gap between the quality of life currently experienced by Indigenous Australians and that experienced by non-Indigenous Australians. This is an issue that I am particularly passionate about as chair of the House Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs and as the member for a very large electorate with the third largest Indigenous population in Australia. I am pleased that the aim of this legislation is to simplify the guidelines, making the variety of supplementary programs available for Indigenous students more workable and more accessible.

Currently, because these supplementary programs are drawn from different sections of the Higher Education Support Act, as well as several other appropriations outside of the Higher Education Support Act, a number of Indigenous students are unaware of or unable to claim the support services they need because of the complexity required in obtaining services. This is an issue that this bill seeks to address. The bill will consolidate the Commonwealth Scholarships Program, the Indigenous Support Program and the Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme into one single body administered under a single set of guidelines. This will make the application process far more streamlined and far easier to understand for potential Indigenous applicants. Funding will be distributed to universities based on their full-time enrolment, progression and completion rates of Indigenous students, as well as their share of regional and remote students. This is part of our election commitment to eliminate red tape and to allow services for Indigenous Australians.

It is imperative that this legislation be introduced now and be passed quickly through the House, thereby allowing universities to present Indigenous students who are thinking of studying in 2017 with a clear indication of what government programs are available to assist them. It is therefore a matter of urgency. These measures are critical to allowing Indigenous Australians who want to further their education the best possible chance to do so at the earliest possible date, starting with the very next semester and the next round of university admissions.

When we improve the lives of Indigenous Australians, we lift up and improve all of Australia. Education is the key to closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr HILL (Bruce) (12:35): I am pleased to speak on the Higher Education Support Legislation Amendment (2016 Measures No. 1) Bill 2016, not to oppose but it but indeed to support it. That is a good thing and worth remarking on, because I know people in the gallery and elsewhere in Australia often have the erroneous impression that we disagree about everything. That is not the case, although you might not believe that from watching question time, which misses the fact that on many issues there is strong support across the chamber.
This bill, as we have heard, has two elements, two schedules, the first being changes to arrangements regarding assistance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to participate in and, as the member for Durack pointed out, graduate from university. The second I would characterise, having tried to read the amendments last night, as—and no offence to the drafters!—mind-numbingly boring but very, very sensible technical amendments to facilitate better data sharing between government agencies in relation to all HELP debtors.

While this is worthy enough, I do want to remark that it is not exactly substantial education reform, is it? I suppose the House should be grateful that these two elements or schedules have been combined into a single bill, which is a nice change from some of the habits we have seen in the past few weeks of splitting things into multiple bills to fill time in the House and distract from the fact that the government really appears to have no agenda. At least today we are not—although it is early in the day, and who knows what will come later—fixing grammar and punctuation and rearranging clauses and calling that deregulation. But I will make some brief comments in turn about each of the schedules and areas. As has been noted by the member for Griffith, this bill provides an important opportunity also to reflect on the broader context in relation to education policy and on what is not in the bill and what is lacking.

In relation to the first schedule, the objective of the provisions to combine the three existing programs is fine. Who could argue, really, with the stated goal of allowing universities and institutions to better decide, as suits their circumstances and students, how best to support their students to study, succeed and complete their qualifications? And I do not mean just to enrol, but to study. I saw this firsthand in my previous life, when I was a public servant who sometimes drafted such pieces of legislation. One of the most privileged tasks I had in my time in the Victorian Public Service was as the senior executive responsible for oversight of Indigenous policy coordination across the Victorian government and for managing the Commonwealth-state liaison. In that time I actually worked for a Liberal-Nationals coalition government and minister, and it was an area where we did have broadly bipartisan agreement and worked around the Victorian Aboriginal Affairs framework and economic strategy. In talking to elders across the state and to communities and in diving into the policy, it became absolutely clear that education is the key to solving long-term disadvantage and economic opportunity. From all the work and research and conversations, we realised that the single most important thing we could do in the long term for Indigenous people was to help them succeed in education and lay the foundations for a prosperous life.

The early results in Victoria in relation to early childhood and school completion rates in the past few years were encouraging. Indeed, participation in higher education has improved across the country. That needs to flow through. As we know, targeted support is absolutely critical at every level, but it is fair to say that it is not necessarily received by every student. We need to be careful not to put some kind of welfare disadvantage frame over every individual Indigenous student, because of course many students come from the kinds of backgrounds and have the kind of intellect and aspiration to sail through university and succeed. But the evidence is clear that the systemic disadvantage—the intergenerational disadvantage—requires this kind of support for the foreseeable future.
In the last decade we have seen a 70 per cent increase in the number of Indigenous students awarded higher education courses, but that compares with a 43 per cent increase across all domestic undergraduate students, and it is a fantastic thing that that rate of entry into the higher education system is improving and increasing faster than the broader population. But, as the data says and the explanatory memorandum makes clear, completion rates are a problem, and only 48 per cent of Indigenous students, compared to 74 per cent of other domestic students, completed their studies between 2005 and 2014.

While on completion rates, I have heard in the minister's second reading speech, the explanatory memorandum and the previous comments of the member for Durack 'if only the government had paid attention to completion rates more broadly across the board'. The evidence is clear that attrition rates have become worse in the last few years. Indeed, this was a key point of difference between the government's policy and Labor's policy at the last election—and it is still up there on the website—that quality and encouraging and supporting students not just to sort of churn in and enter the system but to complete their qualifications is critical. Enrolment at university is not an end in itself.

The Department of Education figures show that 23 per cent of people who started a degree as full-time students in 2006 had not completed it after eight years. I should just do a true confession moment and say that I was one of those students who meandered their way through a chemistry degree and a law degree. I did kind of get to nine years and think: 'Oh, God, they are about to throw me out. They gave me 10.' So having a time limit was a great motivator to complete those last few subjects and exit university.

With the Commonwealth investing $14 billion plus of taxpayers' funding in universities every year, it is important that we reflect on the data that is coming out and see what we need to do to improve completion rates. A Shorten Labor government's commitment at the election was to have quite an ambitious goal to increase the number of students completing their study by 20,000 graduates by 2020, and to work with the university sector to introduce more incentives into the demand-driven system to achieve that improvement.

You cannot go past the topic of completion rates without remarking on the disgraceful failure of the government in relation to the VET system and completion rates. It is a scandal, as everyone knows. Billions of dollars was wasted in rorts. In fact we debated that legislation in the last sitting week, I believe, and it has just sailed through a Senate inquiry—I would not say 'sailed through'; many flaws have been picked up, given the rush. But billions of dollars have been wasted on dodgy private providers, leaving vulnerable students across the country, and certainly in my electorate, with a mountain of debt for effectively no meaningful qualification.

Completion rates were one of the clearest warning signs that something was amiss in the last two to three years. They were matters that Labor kept pointing out. At which point, we were told it was somehow all our fault and we designed the system badly. Absolutely, there were improvements that were needed in the system. But, at the end of the day, if you are in government, if you are sitting in the chair, it is what you do in 2015 and 2016 that matters, not what happened in 2012. And, indeed the starkest reminder, in a statistical sense, is that in 2014 the graduation rate in the largest 10 private providers across the country was five per cent. So $900 million of federal money was invested to produce a five per cent graduation rate in a vocational set of courses, which amounts to $215,000 for every graduate.
So the focus on completion rates is correct—it is laudable—but it is somewhat hypocritical given the government's complete failure in the vocational space and lack of attention in the broader higher education area. Again, as in the vocational area, they would be well advised to have a look at Labor's policy, talk to us and see what we could agree on together.

It is good that they are finally talking about completion rates. On that point of picking up Labor policy, I do have to note that the intent of combining these three programs arose in 2012 from a Labor commissioned review. In fact, it was the Review of higher education access and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that recommended Commonwealth scholarships for Indigenous students be amalgamated and that overall these programs be reformed. They were recommendations 13 and 17, as the explanatory memorandum, the background section, notes.

Concluding my remarks on this schedule in the bill, I do have to note the last line in the explanatory memorandum: 'No savings were taken through this Budget measure.' That is a cause for celebration to be remarked upon—indeed, you may want to frame it as a collector's item—that this government proposed a budget measure in relation to higher education without taking a hack and cutting funding.

As we know—at least, as we on this side of the House believe—investing in education is the single most important thing that we can do to maintain Australia's prosperity and secure the jobs of the future. It will underpin innovation across the economy. The OECD continues to remind us that the best investment a nation in a situation like ours can make is in improving our human capital—that is, investing more into education and infrastructure, which is a topic for another day. Contrast this government's continued efforts to hack and cut the higher education sector with the investments that our neighbours, partners and competitors in the Asia or Indo-Pacific region are making, and we are really putting our future prosperity at risk. That is why, again, the government would be well advised to have a look at Labor's policy around the student funding guarantee to provide greater certainty for universities and remove the need for higher fees.

Schedule 2, relating to the VET and technical amendments, deals with administrative processes. It will see agencies efficiently exchange loan data. There is no argument with that—they are sensible technical amendments—but it must be disappointing for the government to have to keep talking about the VET FEE-HELP scheme again, because they introduced this bill before they introduced their last-minute fix-up four years on to the entire VET loan system only a week ago. Of course, if the government had acted more quickly, billions would have been saved. Instead, successive ministers—five, actually—in the vocational space failed. I think I did the math last time I spoke: on those averages, the current minister's tenure will end in about February. As we have said, we have no issue with the bill as drafted, but we are deeply concerned about the rest of the government's education agenda, or lack thereof.

I doorknocked 14,000 houses in my electorate during the election campaign. I had a street stall in three or four suburbs in various parts of my electorate only this Saturday. The public focus on education has not abated. It is indeed, in a social sense, the great equaliser. It has been the key over time to Australia's higher levels of social mobility, to our great egalitarian society, and people get that. As the member for Griffith outlined, the proud history of Labor—stemming from the Whitlam government's bold decision to open up higher education
to everyone based on merit, not their ability to pay—is something that Labor will always be
proud of. Our reforms and commitment to access to higher education continue. That is why
we oppose the $100,000 degrees, full deregulation, the Americanisation of our university
system, which would have left students with a lifetime of debt, which everyone, in their
honest moments, knows would deter students from low-income families from entering higher
education, maintaining our social mobility. As I have said, it is fundamentally unfair.

Indeed, there is still a lot of love for Gough out there. I was chatting to a local chap called
Stavros at the Waverley Gardens Shopping Centre on the weekend. He remembered fondly—
he is an older chap—that it was his generation who benefited from free education from the
Whitlam government, and he believes that Labor should return to its roots and reintroduce
free education. We had a robust conversation, as you tend to do with some people. We did
agree in the end that it probably was not, fiscally, the right thing to do. There was a strong
policy case for people who benefitted throughout their lives and received higher incomes to
reinvest some small percentage of that in their education. Nevertheless, the people keep us
honest.

The final thing I would say in closing in relation to economic prosperity is that it is
profoundly dumb for Australia, not just at a social level but at an economic level, to pursue
this government's agenda of locking the poorest students out of the system—those from
working-class families; those who, as the member for Griffith said, have come from families
that have never had anyone enter or complete higher education.

I thank the House for the opportunity to speak on this bill. We do think that this is a
technical bill and that it will sail through, but as always with this government it is an
opportunity, and a sad opportunity, to reflect on what is not being put forward to the
parliament—important matters that may actually improve the education system as opposed to
tweak around administrative arrangements, as necessary as they may be.

Mrs ELLIOT (Richmond) (12:49): I rise to speak on the Higher Education Support
Legislation Amendment (2016 Measures No. 1) Bill 2016. As we have heard, this bill
proposes two new schedules to the Higher Education Support Act 2003 and related acts. The
first of these changes relates to providing more support for Indigenous students and the
second assists with information management. As stated by members on this side, we have
made it clear that these bills are supported by the opposition. While supporting these
measures, many speakers on this side have highlighted the fact that Labor continues to call on
the government to do much more when it comes to education and invest much more at all
levels of education. We have indeed seen some harsh cuts over the past three years. We
should be seeing a greater investment, not cuts, when it comes to education.

The first schedule in this bill relates to greater support for Indigenous students. The
Indigenous Student Success Program aims to address the current inequality between the
higher education outcomes of Indigenous students and the higher education outcomes of
students in general. Whilst over the last decade we have seen an encouraging increase in the
number of Indigenous students participating in higher education, in fact there has been a 70
per cent increase in the number of Indigenous students in higher education award courses.
This compares favourably to the 43 per cent growth experienced for all domestic
undergraduate students. It is, however, quite disappointing that less than half—only 48 per
cent—of Indigenous students who commenced their studies in 2005 had completed those
studies 10 years on. This stands in stark contrast to non-Indigenous students who have a completion rate of 74 per cent. So we do have to do more to make sure that we can encourage Indigenous students into universities, provide more support and make sure they are retained in the universities and graduate. We need to create the conditions for universities to capitalise on improvements to Indigenous students’ participation in higher education. We can do that by providing that whole of support to ensure they can graduate and to ensure they can succeed in their higher education studies.

This bill creates, in the Higher Education Support Act, the facility to enable assistance for Indigenous students through grants to certain higher education providers. It makes consequential amendments to other legislation to ensure that scholarships provided for under these changes will be treated in the same way as scholarships provide for under the Higher Education Support Act, particularly in relation to the calculation of income for social security purposes and eligibility for other forms of student assistance.

The amendments in schedule 1 are in response to the 2012 Review of higher education access and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The recommendation from the review to amalgamate three Indigenous student funding sources would create greater flexibility with funding and the environment for administrators to increase their focus on addressing current problems, such as the retention and completion rates. This measure consolidates existing funding from three sources into the new Indigenous Student Success Program, which will be administered under the Higher Education Support Act. The three funding sources are the Indigenous support program, which is currently administered under the other grants guidelines, the Commonwealth scholarships program and also the tutorial assistance offered under the Indigenous Advancement Strategy.

The changes this bill brings to the first schedule relating to grants available for universities to support their Indigenous students is, I understand, supported by the sector. The sector highlighted that often the red tape involved in manoeuvring across three separate funding pools was an impediment and a challenge to the delivery of good service due to the fact that it was not very flexible and it had become somewhat of a burden administratively. The proposal will assist universities in better responding, in terms of having all those three pools into one. It will make it a lot more easier.

The second schedule is essentially about information management and amends various pieces of legislation to allow the Department of Education and Training to access tax file numbers of VET FEE-HELP debtors in order to streamline some of the data exchanged between the department and the Australian Taxation Office. As our speakers have said, of course we support any changes like that that do allow greater information management.

Whilst we are touching upon issues relating to VET FEE-HELP, I know some speakers on this side have highlighted what an absolute bungle it has been by the government—it really has been. We have seen over the last three years that they do not really seem to have much understanding or concern about technical and vocational education, or, indeed, about TAFE. With VET FEE-HELP, from one bungle to the next we have seen them basically do nothing. We have seen a whole range of dodgy providers run rampant. Students were being ripped off. We saw people being saddled with massive debts and huge amounts of distress because of the fact that the government failed to act on this. This crisis was continually in the media. We saw it on the front page over and over again and we kept asking the government what they were
going to do about it, but they did not seem to act at all. It certainly has been blown out and the
government has been too focused on their internal matters to focus on issues like this in
education.

So when we are touching on any matters relating to vocational education and training I
think we do have to look at what has been a complete debacle with this government across a
whole range of training measures, but certainly with VET FEE-HELP. Funding for education
is a really core Labor value. When it comes to education, Labor has always been the party of
greater investment and focus on education. We have always looked at improving educational
outcomes through a whole range of measures, because we understand how accessing a good
education is life-changing.

There are many measures we are incredibly proud of, particularly the Building the
Education Revolution. In my electorate I still see firsthand what an incredible difference it
makes in the lives of so many students. More than 90 schools benefited from the over $100
million investment in that. Indeed, it is a very proud Labor legacy we have right throughout
the country. It is built on so many Labor legacies in relation to educational opportunities.

Labor has opened the doors of our universities to thousands more Australians. Today there
are 750,000 undergraduate students at Australian universities and one in four of them is there
because of Labor. Compared with 2007, we have more than 36,000 extra students from low-
income families in our universities. Labor has put 190,000 more students on campuses. We
have boosted Indigenous student numbers by 26 per cent and regional students by 30 per cent.
It is a great record, especially for my electorate of Richmond on the far North Coast of New
South Wales. My focus in terms of education is making sure those regional students can
access university.

Labor has a very proud record of making sure that regional and rural students can have the
same access to educational outcomes as those within the cities, because we have always seen
such a great divide. In contrast to all of that—the funding, the investment and the focus that
Labor has had upon, particularly, higher education—we have the really harsh plan by the
Turnbull Liberal-National government when it comes to higher education. Their plan is for
$100,000 university degrees. I quite often hear families tell me of their disillusionment and
anger with the government in regard to that particular plan, because it means they just cannot
go to university. They just cannot access it.

I do not quite understand why they keep cutting it, particularly when we know that an
investment in education is an investment in the country’s future. When we look at the
economic growth we have had in this country it has of course been achieved by many
necessary economic reforms and one of the cornerstones is the raising of workforce skills
through education and training. That is a reality. There is a very clear linkage between
increased funding for education and economic growth. The challenges ahead are very clear. If
we want to ensure that we continue to be competitive globally and that we are a fair society
with a high standard of living, we have to invest in education. It is that straightforward. Our
future prosperity will depend upon that transition to an economy that is more diverse and
upon embracing education in this increasingly technology-driven world.

It is estimated that by 2020 two out of every three jobs created in Australia will require a
diploma or a higher education qualification. The Liberal-National policies continually fail to
recognise this and would indeed see us falling behind other nations, committing us potentially
to a lower standard of living. We know universities across Australia are facing very significant budget cuts under this current government. It is a concern for students, parents and teaching staff. For many areas right across the nation their harsh cuts are very concerning.

I know that in my area regional Australians do not want to see $100,000 university degrees. We do not want an American-style system where only the wealthiest can afford to go to university. As I have said, there is that strong linkage between our economic growth and our investment in education. We see that all the time. We see evidence right across the board, from Australian economists and the OECD, that investment in education builds a more prosperous nation over a long period of time.

I always find it quite remarkable when we hear the Prime Minister waffling on about pursuing economic growth. If we know that investment in education is one of the best ways to do that, why does he continue to make cuts across the education sector at all levels?

We do continue to see those funding cuts at all stages, and they are all equally detrimental. We see funding cuts in early childhood education, funding cuts in schools, funding cuts for the TAFE and vocational education sectors, and apprenticeships, and, indeed, as I have referred to, we see many funding cuts for universities.

In contrast to all this, look at some of Labor's proposals before the last election. We said we would invest an extra $13 billion over the decade in higher education, including a higher education funding guarantee so that, year after year, the money to support teaching extra students in universities would continue to increase. We wanted to see an extra 20,000 students graduating each year by 2020 and were supporting those students getting a really good quality education. We made a range of other announcements as well, ensuring we got more, not fewer, students into universities and ensuring that funding really guaranteed teaching standards in our universities, and making sure that university education was in fact available.

We had a very comprehensive higher education plan, particularly focused on making sure that university was much more affordable to so many people.

In schools, Labor had a very clear set of goals that we wanted to pursue over the coming years, including increasing the number of students who are being taught coding in our schools, making sure that more of our teachers have science, technology, engineering and maths qualifications, and making sure that our young people are more connected to Asia through studying Asian languages and fostering positive relationships with Asian schools. We need to set very clear goals about targets for returning Australia to being one of the top-performing school systems in the world, and we need to have a government that understands that and invests in that. Labor understood this and we acted through our commitment to Gonski, unlike those on the government side, who have continuously attacked everything about Gonski and the needs-based funding our schools really need.

The Gonski school education funding had barely even started when the government began their $29 billion cuts throughout our schools. People on this side have talked about the impact of the Gonski funding and what it meant in terms of improving literacy and numeracy outcomes by focusing on some of those children who may have fallen behind, by making sure that kids who are gifted and talented get the opportunity to explore some of their talented outcomes, by making sure things like occupational therapy or speech therapy is available to those students who need it, by ensuring that we had that needs-based funding there. In regional and rural areas, the Gonski funding was an absolute game changer. The fact that the
The government has cut so much funding means that those students now just will not be able to access that greater individualised training that they were getting under the Gonski funding. We were making sure that schools got the resources that they needed, and that was so important. Indeed, throughout the election one of the most positive responses I had was in relation to Labor’s ‘Your Child. Our Future’ plan, which would have benefited every child in my electorate of Richmond, with an additional $20 million set to flow to local schools—a huge amount that would have made a massive difference. Extra funding does make a massive difference. By committing to the Gonski reforms on time and in full, every student in every school in my electorate and right throughout the country would have been better off under a Labor government. That is the reality, and parents know that.

In contrast to that, what we saw from the government side, from the Liberal and National parties, were cuts of $29 billion in classrooms over the next decade—cuts which will continue to have negative impacts on the future of our students and the future of our nation. Properly funding our schools and our educational sectors at every stage of life is vitally important, and we will continue to hold this government to account and raise these issues. Its lack of funding and continuous funding cuts are hurting the future prospects of young Australians, hurting the future prospects of our economic growth, and they are hurting, in particular, those in regional and rural areas because they limit the opportunities that younger people have. Not only do they have cuts in the whole vocational educational sector, and cuts to apprenticeships, but their access to university is limited as well. These areas, as we know, have high rates of youth unemployment, and this government has done nothing to address that. When it comes to education, we do need to see a much greater investment, not less.

In conclusion, as I and other speakers have said, we do support the measures in this bill but ultimately we want to see a greater investment in education, because those in the opposition, in the Labor Party, understand that it is education that transforms lives and it is only education that will sustain future economic growth. Labor will always continue our commitment to do that. We are very proud of what we took to the last election and we are very proud of our history and our legacy in terms of our commitment to educational funding.

Mr THISTLETHWAITE (Kingsford Smith) (13:05): Like my Labor colleagues, I support the passage of the Higher Education Support Legislation Amendment (2016 Measures No. 1) Bill 2016, which makes a number of minor amendments and changes to the Higher Education Support Act and related acts. Schedule 1 will make necessary changes to the allocation and administration of grants for universities and higher education providers that support Indigenous students. There is a great Indigenous population in the seat of Kingsford Smith, revolving around the La Perouse community, and there has been a concerted effort by many institutions, both school institutions and the University of New South Wales, to encourage more Indigenous students through a tertiary education pathway through a number of programs. This amendment bill is pleasing to those who work in that space in the community that I represent. The changes will also remove some of the red tape and back-office processes imposed on universities and merge three separate funds into one.

In 2015 there were more than 16,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders studying at Australian universities. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student numbers have increased by 50 per cent since 2009. We talk about closing the gap and increasing opportunities for Indigenous Australians, particularly through education and employment pathways. This is a
very pleasing statistic. Unfortunately, it is one of the few areas where, in terms of closing the gap, Australia is making progress on encouraging more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to take up university education. This increase is greater than the increase seen more broadly in Australian university enrolments. It is encouraging to know that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are enrolling in university now more than ever.

When Labor were in government we did as much as we possibly could through a number of reforms and new policy areas to open up universities not only for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students but more broadly for people from a non-English-speaking background and those from low socio-economic backgrounds. Labor did open the door to university for thousands more Australians. We boosted Indigenous student numbers by 26 per cent during the period in which Labor were in government.

In my electorate of Kingsford Smith, the University of New South Wales has a number of great programs that actively encourage Indigenous people to study and support them through their higher education journey. The university's Nura Gili program is designed to ensure access for Indigenous students to all that that important university has to offer. Through Nura Gili the university runs an Indigenous science and engineering program that allows Indigenous students in years 7, 8 and 9 to explore the world of science and engineering at university. The university runs a year 12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander information day and offers enabling programs designed for Indigenous people who have the potential but are not yet prepared for first year or undergraduate studies. These programs generally run for one year and provide the students with a pathway to transfer into a degree program at the University of New South Wales.

I am also very fortunate to be involved in and a member of the advisory committee for the University of New South Wales Matraville Education Partnership. This partnership exists between the University of New South Wales and Matraville Sports High School, which is in the south of Kingsford Smith. Matraville Sports High School has had a very distinguished career producing many great Australians. Many great Australians have graduated from this high school, including the likes of Bob Carr; the Ella brothers, who played rugby union for Australia; Eddie Jones—he is not in the good books at the moment, but he nonetheless was a graduate of Matraville Sports High School—and Russell Fairfax. The list goes on of great Australians who are graduates of Matraville Sports High School.

I think it is fair to say that in recent years the results and enrolments at the school have fallen dramatically. This has raised concerns among a number of people in the community, myself included. A number of leaders of the community came together with the University of New South Wales. I must pay tribute and credit to the new Vice-Chancellor of the University of New South Wales, Professor Ian Jacobs, who has done a marvellous job and actually comes along and chairs this very important committee on a regular basis to improve educational standards at Matraville Sports High School. It involves a partnership. It involves the university's education faculty working with teachers, students and parents of Matraville Sports High School to improve in a number of important educational areas. There are key performance indicators that the school hopes to achieve through this partnership. Basically, what they are doing is encouraging the best and brightest education students at the university to come and experience and work with students at Matraville Sports High School.
Although the program has only been working for one year, they have achieved amazing results on a number of key performance indicators. They include the percentage of year 9 students in NAPLAN bands 8 to 9. Over one year, in terms of reading and literacy, it has gone from seven per cent in the baseline of 2014 to 16 per cent achievement in 2015. In terms of aspirations of Matraville Sports High School students and increasing the number of year 12 completions, we have seen great results already—going from 31 year 12 completions in the baseline of 2014 to 43 achieved after the first year. Building capacity for parents, carers and families to engage with the school: there was no school engagement with the wider community and with parents. From a number of parent events held and the average attendance going from a baseline of zero in 2014 to two events in 2015 and 40 attendees from parents of students at the school. Connecting existing community organisations and individuals with UNSW departments to provide programming and opportunities to elevate the school's community profile: again, there has been great achievement and increases in that key performance indicator. Building the capacity of Matraville High School staff and teachers at surrounding schools to teach diverse learning outcomes effectively through hands-on professional educational sessions: the number of teachers from the school involved in those programs has gone from three in the baseline to 15 over the course of one year. Providing the necessary infrastructure to encourage teachers to encourage more collaborative, critical reflection and improvement of their own practices: we have seen a 50 per cent increase in one year.

The university has also got something from this program. In terms of better equipping UNSW preservice teachers for work with students, parents and community members from diverse backgrounds, there has been a 50 per cent increase in the number of those students that are involved in that program.

Again, this is an example of the University of New South Wales working with a local school that has a very high proportion of Indigenous students—around 70 Indigenous students in a total enrolment of around 230, which is quite a large number. The university has been working with those students, their teachers and their parents to improve educational outcomes. It is a program that is paying dividends and something that I am very proud to be involved in.

Of course, Kingsford Smith has a very strong Indigenous culture and heritage. It is an Indigenous community that is active with many outstanding individuals excelling in art, music, business and so much more. Recently I commissioned an artwork for my office by two of the Indigenous students at the school. They presented that artwork to me last week at a ceremony at the school. It is a fantastic depiction, in an Aboriginal dot painting, of Botany Bay. The different cultures that come together and are depicted in the artwork are very, very special. It is something I cherish. It is a great symbol of the work of those young Indigenous students, and I have to congratulate those students who were involved in putting together that particular artwork for me.

We have a proud local Indigenous heritage and community, and I am pleased that this bill does something for them and has something in it for them. Importantly, the more streamlined and flexible approach to grants to support Indigenous students that is detailed in this bill will allow universities like UNSW to better meet the needs of their Indigenous students. Schedule 2 of the bill will ensure that data about students who utilise VET FEE-HELP schemes can be
readily shared between the Department of Education and Training and the Australian Taxation Office. This change will ensure that VET FEE-HELP has the same provisions as other loans under the Higher Education Loan Program.

Unfortunately, I think it is fair to say that the Turnbull government has shown a complete lack of ability to properly manage VET FEE-HELP. As the government has sat idly by, the sector has been filling with shonky providers who, rather than provide valuable educational experiences for students across the country, have been dishing out pain and suffering through crippling debt to thousands of Australians. VET FEE-HELP loans have blown out from about $700 million in 2013 to a staggering $2.9 billion in 2015. But, in the face of such wastage and human suffering, for years the government sat back and let the chaos continue, before belatedly adopting Labor's course of action that we announced in the lead-up to the last election.

Before that election, Labor's VET spokesperson, Sharon Bird, announced a very positive suite of reforms to make good changes to the operation of this scheme and weed out some of the shonks. Those have, thankfully, been adopted by the government, and we have discussed those changes in recent weeks in this chamber. They involved capping student loans to stop rip-offs, cracking down on brokers, linking publicly funded courses to industry need and skill shortages, requiring providers to reapply under new standards so only high-quality providers could access the loan system, linking funding to student progress and completion, and a VET loans ombudsman. Thankfully, the government has copied a lot of those reforms and introduced those proposed measures. I understand that the Senate will amend the legislation, to adopt all of Labor's proposals.

Meanwhile, the future of TAFE does remain in the balance under Liberal governments—particularly the combination of Liberal governments at a federal and state level, such as in the state that I represent, New South Wales. TAFE, as we know, is the backbone of the apprenticeship system in Australia and, unfortunately, under the combination of federal and state Liberal governments, apprenticeships have been decimated in Australia, with $2.5 billion cut from skills training, including $1 billion stripped from apprenticeship programs and the Tools For Your Trade program since 2013. The $1 billion cut to apprentices has seen apprentice numbers across Australia plummet from 417,700 since September 2013, with 122,400 fewer apprentices in training. In Kingsford Smith, in our community alone, apprentice numbers have fallen from 3,211 in June 2014 to 2,137 in March 2015. That is over 1,000 fewer apprentices in training in our area. We talk about growing the productivity of the nation and we talk about providing high-quality skilled jobs for people, but we are going backwards in doing that, in terms of apprentice numbers throughout Australia.

On higher education, we support this bill. We believe that Labor has a positive story to tell. In terms of access to education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, this bill does go some way to improving that access, and it is something that Labor supports. But we do have a long way to go if we are going to improve our training system and our apprenticeships system, and if we are going to right some of the wrongs that have been occurring in VET FEE-HELP over recent years.

Mr GEORGANAS (Hindmarsh) (13:19): I rise to speak on the Higher Education Support Legislation Amendment (2016 Measures No. 1) Bill 2016. The first schedule of this bill relates to grants that are available for universities to support their Indigenous students.
Previously, there were three separate pooling funds available for support services, grants and other programs, and bursaries for Indigenous students. You can understand why the sector found operating across three separate pools of funds absolutely administratively burdensome and inflexible. So the proposal makes sense. Schedule 1, for example, is for the three existing funds to be pooled together into one. This allows universities to better respond to the needs of individual Indigenous cohorts. This change should be welcomed by the sector.

I am pleased to speak on this bill because Labor has a very strong record when it comes to education and helping students, regardless of background or postcode, to go on to higher education. We know that if you want to better someone's life, if you want to change their world and make it a better place, we can do this through education. Our record was extremely strong, when we were in government, on this particular topic. Labor has opened the doors to our universities to thousands more Australians.

In the Whitlam era we brought in free education for university students. Many thousands of people who would have been unlikely to get an education or a degree at university ended up getting degrees. For some people it was the very first time and, for the majority, it was the first in their family's history. Prior to the early seventies it was the circumstances that people were born in that determined whether they went to university. We have Gough Whitlam to thank for that. I am sure all my colleagues, on this side, are very proud of one of the greatest achievements that Labor has ever come up with.

Today there are 750,000 undergraduate students at Australian universities, and one in every four of them is there because of the policies we put in when last in government. We put 190,000 more students on campus. We boosted Indigenous student numbers by 26 per cent. We boosted regional student numbers by 30 per cent. We now have more than 36,000 extra students from low-income families in universities compared to 2007. This is in contrast to the current government, who have the wrong plan for Australia's education system. Prior to the election we heard the debate about introducing $100,000 degrees, which put debt walls around universities, making it very hard for people to go to university and pay their debts. The government's policies would see us fall behind, committing us to lower standards of living and lower incomes.

Since the last election, in 2016, the Labor Party has wanted to reset the relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians in a renewed push to close the gap on Indigenous disadvantage. One way of doing that is through education and higher education. Education plays a very important role. It was Labor that created the close the gap framework and only Labor has a clear plan for meeting the ambitious targets—that we designed, when last in government.

Addressing Indigenous disadvantage will not happen in one term. We know it is a long road ahead, and we know that it will not happen in one term of government. So what have we seen after three and a bit years? We have seen the Liberals sideling the voices of Aboriginal people, slashing funding for community controlled services and neglecting the closing the gap framework. We need to put forward a series of positive policies to help close the gap on Indigenous disadvantage. We on this side are committed to improving early childhood outcomes, health outcomes and education and employment outcomes, as we drive a new agenda for tackling the outrageously high levels of Indigenous incarceration and victimisation. Most importantly, unlike the government, Labor is committed to working in a
meaningful partnership with Indigenous Australians to close the gap and improve those outcomes for Indigenous Australians.

Investing in education is the single most important thing that we can do to maintain Australia's prosperity and secure the jobs of the future. It is no good talking about the jobs of the future and talking about the cutting-edge jobs that will be developed in the future; if you do not get the foundations right and provide the funding, those jobs will never come. That is what we have to do. Labor has always been committed to opening access to higher education for more Australians and supporting universities as critical drivers of innovation across the economy. We are committed to this not just because it is the fair thing to do but also because our future prosperity depends on it. Two in every three jobs created in the future will require some form of higher education degree. So we need to be building the workforce of the future today—and that starts today. The role of a government should be to improve access and to make it easier for people to gain higher education, not to put walls around our universities through massive debt burdens.

As I said earlier, Labor is the party of education and expanding opportunity to higher education. This additional investment will ensure that students are encouraged rather than deterred from studying at university, improving the productive capacity of our economy to provide certainty and confidence to a sector that is vital to maintaining Australia's prosperity. We want to legislate the student funding guarantee and index the value of the investment to ensure the value of the contribution is not eroded over time. Again, only Labor is committed to investing in higher education to create and sustain those jobs of the future.

The previous Labor government opened access to universities. As I said, 190,000 more students are at university today as a result of our reforms. Access will always matter to Labor and we will continue to support the demand-driven system, but our next wave of university reform will focus on completion and quality. We want Australian students who start university to finish university with a degree. Department of Education figures show that 23 per cent of people who started a degree as full-time students in 2006 had not completed it after eight years. So you can see that there needs to be a real focus on ensuring that people complete those degrees. There is evidence that attrition rates have been getting worse in recent years, meaning even more students are likely to leave university with a huge debt but no degree.

With the Commonwealth investing $14 billion of taxpayers' money in universities every year, Australians are right to expect outcomes that benefit the entire community, with young Australians graduating as teachers, nurses, doctors, engineers and scientists enhancing our society and our economy. We have set an ambitious goal to increase the number of students completing their study by 20,000 graduates per year from 2020. Labor will also work with the university sector to ensure that incentives within the demand-driven system are introduced to achieve this goal. Investing in education is the single most important thing that we can do to maintain Australia's prosperity and secure the jobs of the future. Labor has always been committed to opening access to higher education to more Australians and supporting universities as critical drivers of innovation across the economy.

The second part of the schedule amends various pieces of legislation and this proposed change would make data exchange of individuals using VET FEE-HELP consistent with other aspects of the HELP program. We welcome this change. However, it is not enough to make
up for the government's neglect of the VET sector and of TAFE. Over the last three years the Liberal government have shown they simply do not care about technical and vocational education.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Coulton):** Order! The debate is interrupted in accordance with standing order 43. The debate may be resumed at a later hour.

**STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

**Burt Electorate: Kelmscott Show**

**Mr KEOGH (Burt) (13:30):** Last month I had the pleasure of attending the 116th Kelmscott Agricultural Show, along with the state member for Armadale and the show's patron, Dr Tony Buti, and Barry Urban, Labor's candidate for Darling Range in the 2017 state election.

The Kelmscott Show was first proposed at a meeting of the Kelmscott Farmers & Fruit Growers Society in 1896, and the first show was held on 3 February 1897. I attended my first show as a young child in the early 1980s and have been mesmerised by its fireworks ever since. The Kelmscott Show went into a brief recess in the 1930s due to the Great Depression and was disbanded in 1935.

The show recommenced in February 1938. Since then the Kelmscott Show has remained an annual event, run by volunteers from the local Armadale-Kelmscott-Roleystone community. The Kelmscott Show is held at Rushton Park near the original Kelmscott town site on the banks of the Canning River. It is the second largest agricultural show in the metropolitan area, after the Perth Royal Show.

Many of the society's members and volunteers are descended from the original families of the local area. These families have shown over the generations an impressive commitment to their local community. Currently the Kelmscott Agricultural Society, of which I am a proud member, has more than 100 members who continue to demonstrate a high level of community spirit—some have served on the society's council for more than 50 years. To all those volunteers and community members involved in the 2016 Kelmscott Agricultural Show: well done and let's hope for better weather in 2017!

**Corangamite Electorate: Crime**

**Ms HENDERSON (Corangamite) (13:31):** Across the Geelong region and in places like Ocean Grove, Barwon Heads and Torquay we are seeing a spate of crime like we have never seen before—robberies, car thefts, gangs staking out streets and targeting places like Highton and Wandana Heights. Thefts have risen an alarming 44 per cent over the past 12 months.

Last Sunday I joined Andrew Katos, the state member for South Barwon, and Edward O'Donohue, the Victorian shadow minister for police, at a law and order forum we convened at the Highton bowls club. We had a packed house, and that is because there is genuine fear in these suburbs about what is going on in our community.

Under the Andrews Labor government police stations are being closed or cut back, there are not enough police on our streets and young offenders are breaching bail with no consequences. That is because Daniel Andrews decided to change the bail laws so that it is no longer an offence for a person under 18 to breach a condition of his or her bail. So these young offenders are roaming the streets in gangs with a complete disregard for the law.
Local residents are angry. They are frustrated and we are seeing this soft-on-crime government allow a situation that is causing fear in homes in our community. We demand action from the Andrews Labor government to take community safety seriously.

**Bendigo Electorate: Disability Services**

**Ms CHESTERS** (Bendigo) (13:33): On Monday, 17 October Radius Disability Services entered into administration. It caught everyone off-guard and caused a lot of distress within the community. Radius had been serving people with a disability and their families in our communities for 62 years.

Going into administration caused a lot of distress for many people: 130 supported employees found themselves without employment, 102 day clients found themselves without a place to go, and 78 general employees were all caught up in the situation.

I would like to acknowledge the patience of the families and employees involved and how they have worked with the department to see placements going forward. It is good to stand here today and say that this week we have learnt that all 130 supported employees have been offered a place and that the day clients have also been found suitable services to take over their placements. We hope the general staff will transition with them.

I want to acknowledge the work of the assistant minister in this place, who has worked with my office and the agencies involved, but I call on the government to support the organisation taking on these clients and supported employees and, if extra funding is needed, to provide it.

**Canning Electorate: Beenyup Brook Bridge**

**Mr HASTIE** (Canning) (13:35): Last week I had the privilege of opening the Beenyup Brook bridge in Byford. During the 2015 Canning by-election, the coalition committed $1.7 million to this project under the Bridges Renewal Program. On average, 5,000 vehicles use this bridge on the South Western Highway each day, of which about 15 per cent are heavy vehicles. Before the Turnbull government delivered this new bridge, overweight trucks above the load restrictions were forced to bypass Beenyup Brook through the streets in the surrounding suburb of Byford. This long detour meant increased noise, safety concerns and general traffic congestion for many of the families who live in Byford.

The Turnbull government is delivering key infrastructure that improves the lives of everyday Australians. The delivery of this bridge means families no longer face the safety risk and inconvenience of heavy haulage trucks travelling past their homes. This bridge will increase freight efficiency, improve road safety and reduce business costs into the future, and the project also led to the creation of 100 jobs at the peak of its construction. The Beenyup Brook bridge is vital to the growth of Byford, which is part of the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale—one of Australia's fastest growing local government areas. It shows that the Turnbull government is committed to delivering real projects for the Australian people.

**Working Holiday Maker Program**

**Mr BRIAN MITCHELL** (Lyons) (13:36): It is time to end the backpacker tax farce. Labor is proposing amendments in the other place that will ensure Australian farmers remain internationally competitive, and I call on those opposite who claim to represent regional Australia to get behind us. You lost with the 32.5 per cent tax rate, and your 19 per cent was
no good either. It is time for the Deputy Prime Minister and his Nationals to stop their bluster, put politics aside and do what is best for regional communities. In supporting a reduction in the backpacker tax to 10.5 per cent, Labor has shown that we are putting regional communities first. We are supporting farmers and we are supporting regional towns, where backpackers spend their pay.

The backpacker tax debacle will go down in Australian history as a signature failure of this shambolic government and serve as a case study of how not to govern. What is the point of a 32.5 per cent tax or a 19 per cent tax if it drives backpackers away, the workers who are needed to pick the fruit? What is the point of it? Backpackers who do not come here do not pay tax and do not spend money in regional communities.

Page Electorate: Woopi Tri Festival

Mr HOGAN (Page) (13:37): The Woopi Tri Festival was held on 8 and 9 October. It involved a range of events for both adults and kids, including a 'tough kids beach challenge', two- and five-kilometre fun runs, a novice triathlon and a full triathlon. It is a community event run by volunteers, with all proceeds going to local charity. The event has been running for over 25 years and attracts international professional triathletes, beginners and everyone in between.

I thank the race director, Michael McFarlane; the treasurer, Sarvi Thompson; and committee members Lee and Rebecca Varney, Karen Dance, Nick Booth, Jenny Booth, Leanne Lloyd and Bridget Duffy-Redman. I also congratulate all the winners. Importantly, I acknowledge the local sponsors, which included: Seaview Tavern, Woodsey's Wheels, ETC, RETRO training, Woopi Chiropractor, G L Abbott & Co Solicitors, Coastal Travel Service, Woopi Physio, Dana Eden: Weight Loss Solutions, Simon Petrill Personal Training, True Therapies, Little Ripper Barber, Coffs Coast leisure park, Woolgoolga Chamber of Commerce, Woolgoolga Bottle Shop, Studio Move, Robina's Hair Boutique, That Shop, White Salt, Woolgoolga Newsagency, Rustic Table, Ground Earth eatery, Beach House Cafe, Maya Gift shop, Firelight Cafe, AMART All Sports, Lau Lau gifts, Warren Sullivan, Woopi Do and Nexus Gym. I thank all those involved.

Perth Electorate: Coolbinia Bombers

Mr HAMMOND (Perth) (13:39): I rise today to celebrate and acknowledge the wonderful work undertaken by the mighty Coolbinia Bombers Junior Football Club. I acknowledge and note the presence of the president, Robert Gearson, and the coach, Debbie Schneider, in the gallery today. The reason why they are here is that, I am very proud to say, they were the finalists in the 2016 National Disability Awards held in Canberra last night in the Excellence in Community Partnerships category, partnering with another favourite of mine—the mighty Fremantle Dockers.

The Coolbinia Bombers Junior Football Club are leading the way in relation to access for kids with disability to get into games like Australian Rules footy through the implementation of the wonderful Star Kick program. This allows kids with disability to engage and play AFL. It was the brainchild of the Coolbinia Bombers, Rob and Gabby and co. Forty-seven boys and girls aged from five to 12 with a number of disabilities and impairments, including autism, cerebral palsy, some blindness, and other physical and intellectual disabilities, are all getting onto the footy field and just having fun. These guys are absolutely fantastic. They are making
footies themselves with bells inside so kids can grab them. They are cutting down witches hats so kids can kick a footy. Well done to Rob, Gabby, Bryn Sawford, Nick Marsh and all of the parents. But most importantly, well done to those wonderful kids who are having the time of their lives. Well done to the Coolbinia Bombers.

Immigration

Mr HOWARTH (Petrie) (13:40): I notice today that the Labor Party and the Leader of the Opposition have come out and said that they are not supporting the Migration Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 1). Once again the Labor Party goes weak on border protection. What has the Leader of the Opposition said? What is his excuse for being weak on border protection? He says, 'Oh, they're genuine refugees.' Hang on, they are not genuine refugees; they are illegal maritime arrivals. Ask the people that have waited 15 years in the queue to come into this country whether people who arrive by boat are genuine refugees. He also said that citizens of the US and Canada may face a ban. I have news for the Leader of the Opposition: you do not represent the people of the US and Canada; you represent Australians, and they do not want people coming here illegally by boat. We know Labor's record.

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr HOWARTH: Every single one of those opposite, including the members for Sydney and Jagajaga, made the chaos when they weakened our border protection laws that John Howard had in place. What was the result? Fifty thousand people came on 800 boats, 2,000 children were in detention when I was elected in 2013, and 1,200 people drowned at sea. No, we will not go back there. Australians want sovereign borders. We know that Labor are weak on border protection. Every single person throughout the Petrie electorate and right around this nation will know, at the 2019 election, to put Labor last if they want Australia's borders to remain sovereign. (Time expired)

Bushfires

Ms SWANSON (Paterson) (13:42): Today I pay tribute to the incredibly hardworking firefighters who have been battling blazes in the Hunter Valley and in my electorate in Port Stephens in the past few days. It is so early in what we routinely call the firefighting season, and yet we have had properties and lives already at risk. Incredibly and thankfully, the worst has been averted. At Cessnock, Heddon Greta, Karuah, Swan Bay and Medowie, fires have been burning since Saturday. New South Wales fire brigade crews and Rural Fire Service volunteers have been working around the clock to keep people and their properties safe.

I know there are many people in our community who are incredibly grateful for this concentrated, coordinated work by fire crews, and I add my voice to theirs. We live in a beautiful country, but it is dangerous, and these firefighters make it that little bit safer for us all. At frightening times it is reassuring to hear the fire engines, to see in our skies the water bombers and helicopters and aircraft dumping fire retardant, and to have on the ground men and women who go into battle at the fire front to keep us all safe.

I also want to thank the emergency crews from Ausgrid who are working to get the power back on and keep it on, and the support organisations who keep everyone fed, watered, fuelled and able to keep on working so hard. Our community is in your debt, and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts.
Child Sexual Abuse

Mr IRONS (Swan) (13:43): Last Friday I joined our social services minister, the member for Pearce, in Perth to announce the Commonwealth redress scheme for survivors of institutional child sex abuse. I remind members of this House of my maiden speech back in 2007, where I said I wanted to bring focus on this national issue. I, along with other members of this House—and I note the member for Jagajaga is here—have been advocating for a redress scheme where institutions that inflicted this abuse are held accountable for what they did to far too many children of our nation. After years of hard work from people on both sides of the House, Friday was a day of relief for many survivors.

Many groups have welcomed the establishment of the scheme and have expressed their support for it. The Archbishop of Sydney, Anthony Fisher, said it was a scheme supported by the Catholic church and other churches, institutions, and survivors of sexual abuse and their families. The coalition will establish a scheme and invite other government and institutes to opt in on the 'responsible entity pays' basis recommended by the royal commission. The coalition recognises that these survivors need and deserve equal access and treatment. The scheme is about institutions recognising the harm that has being caused to and lasting impacts of the abuse on children in their care.

Before I finish, I want to acknowledge the victims, and I wholeheartedly thank those who gave evidence across the country during the royal commission. Your courage to give evidence is the reason why we were able to establish the scheme. I would also like to acknowledge the Wesley College from my electorate in Swan, who are here today, up in the gallery, and I welcome you to Canberra.

National Security

Mr FEENEY (Batman) (13:45): There is nothing in the government's proposed asylum seeker lifetime ban worthy of support. It is ridiculous, it is pointless, and it is cruel. That is why I am opposing it, and that is why Labor is opposing it. It is ridiculous that a resettled refugee could never return to Australia for work, for study, to visit families or for a simple holiday. It is ridiculous to ask possible third-party resettlement countries to create two unequal levels of citizenship, and it is pointless because this will not prevent deaths at sea. What is more, there are already robust compliances processes in place for visa applicants and those processes are well equipped to manage risk. It is cruel because it would permanently tear families apart by preventing resettled refugees and asylum seekers from visiting family in Australia—ever. While we are told ministerial discretion would apply, are we truly ready to trust Minister Dutton to make fair and reasonable decisions? This is the same minister who had to be forced by Labor into establish an inquiry when allegation of abuse in offshore processing emerged.

The government needs to stop playing dog-whistle politics and stop taking its policy cues from One Nation. Instead, I once again call on the government to find a third-party resettlement option as a matter of urgency, to increase our humanitarian intake and to act to ensure the health and safety of people in offshore processing. (Time expired)

Battle of Beersheba: 99th Anniversary

Mr CRAIG KELLY (Hughes) (13:46): Last Monday was the 99th anniversary of the charge of the 4th Australian Light Horse Regiment at Beersheba, late in the afternoon on 31
October 1917, which is remembered as the last great cavalry charge. With light fading and with Beersheba’s defences held by over 1,000 Turkish riflemen, nine machineguns and two aircraft, General Grant gave the orders personally to the 12th Light Horse Regiment. He said:

Men, you’re fighting for water. There’s no water between this side of Beersheba and Esani. Use your bayonets as swords. I wish you the best of luck.

With skill, daring, surprise and courage they stormed the trenches. They suffered 31 killed and 36 wounded, with over 70 horses killed. They captured the town of Beersheba as well as over 700 men, and a week later the British troops were able to enter Jerusalem.

I was honoured to attend a service of this 99th anniversary at Remount Park in Holsworthy in my electorate, which is part of the original remount depot of the Australian Light Horse. I would like to thank the Australian Christian Nation Association for organising the commemoration. I look forward to next year when we will be commemorating the 100th anniversary of this most important event in our history.

Jagajaga Electorate: Cyclone Winston Fundraising

Ms MACKLIN (Jagajaga) (13:48): I rise today to acknowledge the efforts of three young people in my electorate of Jagajaga. Finlay, Victoria and Georgia are 12-year-old students at Saint Bernadette’s primary school in Ivanhoe. After learning about the impact of Cyclone Winston in Fiji during February and March of this year, Finlay, an avid rugby fan, was inspired to help. The children decided to try and raise between $400 and $500 to purchase sport supplies to send to Fiji. But the community response was overwhelming. The children held cake stalls and fundraising games with prizes donated by local businesses and community members, and $1,600 was raised. They were able to buy 16 volleyballs, eight volleyball nets, 32 rugby balls, 16 netballs, 16 soccer balls, eight bags and eight pumps and needles.

The students at Saint Bernadette’s wrote messages on the equipment before it was taken to Fiji and distributed by the president of Finlay’s rugby club, the Harlequins. The equipment was gratefully received by the Fijians, who were taken aback at the kindness of strangers. Congratulations to Finlay, Victoria and Georgia, and thank you.

Migration

Mr LAMING (Bowman) (13:49): As a nation we welcome the 12,000 Iraqi and Syrian arrivals who have been deemed refugees and given permanent settlement in Australia. But when they come here, they do not come here simply for a life on welfare. They come here for the opportunity that Australia offers. Of those 12,000, 6,000 are here already and the employment outcomes are not good. I would be concerned if they do not have a chance to have at least one member of a family under a roof with employment. But alas—the employment figures for this group show 91 per cent on income support; 3½ per cent on disability and carer payments; and that means that around five per cent of these arrivals have a chance at employment. And it is not a long-term opportunity, either. Data going back 10 years shows that in this cohort, particularly from the Middle East, currently just nine per cent of them are in employment and 91 per cent of them from these parts of the world are on Centrelink as their only form of income.

As a nation, we can do better. You may defend resettlement as being settling into welfare, but this nation offers opportunity. It offers employment, and this group—just 40 people a day
being processed—deserve to be individually placed into work with tailored arrangements and bridging opportunities for their qualifications. We need an intensive, case-managed approach to work. The great bounty of this great nation can offer refugees work, but the labour system prevents it.

**Lalor Electorate: Tarneit Secondary College**

**Ms RYAN** (Lalor—Opposition Whip) (13:51): I recently had the pleasure of attending Tarneit Senior College's year 12 graduation night. What a wonderful evening it was. The music was inspiring; the speeches equally so; and, what was most thrilling, it was an evening of absolute joy. The parent community could not have been more joyful. This is a senior secondary college, so their graduating year 12 class makes up a third of the school. Principal Michael Fawcett spoke with incredible pride about this group of students. I was there to give the Julia Gillard award to Susie Garada and the Lalor Hero award to Charlie Novalis. I really enjoyed the evening, most importantly, because it was unashamedly a celebration of a state school. The students in the school come from 55 different nations and ethnic backgrounds. They celebrate their diversity absolutely joyfully. One of the most compelling things about the evening was not just the joy in the room, but also the fact that an enormous number of these children were not first in family to head to university—they were first in family to complete secondary education. It was a wonderful occasion, and I look forward to next year.

**Brosnan, Austin and Dharma**

**Ms LANDRY** (Capricornia—Deputy Nationals Whip) (13:53): I rise today to tell the House how proud our nation is of brother and sister Austin and Dharma Brosnan from Rockhampton. Recently the two teenagers helped to save a six-year-old boy from drowning while swimming in the Marlborough pool. Their heroic act was recognised on the front page of Rockhampton's *The Morning Bulletin* on 1 November. Dharma and Austin had been swimming in the Marlborough public pool, along with a large group of children, when Dharma noticed that a little boy had disappeared. She spotted him sitting motionless on the bottom of the pool. Dharma called on her brother Austin to help pull the young boy from the water before alerting a lifeguard. The child was airlifted to Rockhampton by rescue helicopter. On behalf of all Australians and our Commonwealth government, I congratulate the pair for their quick thinking and initiative. I also acknowledge their parents, Jim and Deborah Brosnan, who have raised such attentive and caring children. Dharma and Austin's heroic act in saving a young life is even more significant when you consider that drowning rates are rising. Sadly, last year in Australia 280 people lost their lives in the water. Congratulations to Dharma and Austin.

**Sydney Electorate Office**

**Ms PLIBERSEK** (Sydney—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (13:55): In Sydney my office is on Broadway. It is in a great location. It is close to public transport. It is wheelchair accessible. It is easy for people to drop in. In the electorate people know that we are there to help, and they can come to us for all of the usual things that a member of parliament's office can provide—tax help, JP services, social security, immigration help and all the rest of it.

On 1 August the ceiling in my office collapsed and my office was temporarily relocated to the Commonwealth Parliament Offices in Sydney's CBD. While we are still in the electorate it is not a place that is easy for constituents to find us, and they are finding it much harder...
than usual to access those electorate services that we like to provide. So I wanted to take this opportunity to provide my sincerest apologies to my electorate, to the people who have dropped into my Broadway office and found that we were not there to those who have been inconvenienced or disappointed that the usual services they rely on have not been available.

I cannot understand why it has taken 14 weeks for the Department of Finance to fix these problems. The Department of Finance have told me that we will be back in our office before Christmas. I am very disappointed that it has taken this long and that the work has been stopped for so long. I look forward to being back in our Broadway office and to being able to properly discharge my responsibilities as the member for Sydney.

**Berowra Electorate: Berowra Christian Community School**

**Mr Leeser (Berowra) (13:56):** I rise to congratulate Berowra Christian Community School on celebrating its 30th anniversary. I had the privilege of attending the school's thanksgiving service on 30 October, when 300 members of the school's community came together to celebrate this milestone. It was wonderful to be part of such a strong and committed community.

A small K-6 school in a beautiful bushland setting, Berowra Christian school has a strong philosophy of open communication and collaboration in delivering children's education. Based on a solid foundation of pastoral care and responsibility to children, the school's teaching and learning experiences are designed to nurture the unique talents of each child. This approach has been rewarded with outstanding academic results in recent years and happy, involved students who are excited about their school.

Berowra Christian school is a great example of the Liberal philosophy of providing parental choice in education. The school delivers high-quality education in the Christian tradition, with a nurturing environment that families value. I wish to acknowledge the great work of the Berowra Christian school's Parents and Friends Association, their president, Lys Karagun, and the hard work of Jeni Hayes, who has brought together the 30th anniversary celebrations. I also acknowledge the excellent work and leadership of the school's principal, Steven Dodd, and former founding principal, Stephen Spies, who retired three years ago.

The enthusiasm, commitment and dedication of families and staff, past and present, is evident and to be commended. I am very much looking forward to visiting the school again in December for their end-of-year presentation and thanksgiving evening. I wish Berowra Christian Community School a very happy 30th birthday.

**Moreton and Rankin Electorates: Cricket**

**Mr Perrett (Moreton—Opposition Whip) (13:58):** Yesterday was a sad day for Australian cricket at the WACA but there is hope, and that is the annual grudge match between the electorates of Moreton and Rankin—I see my good friend the member for Rankin is here—where the Islamic communities from Morton and Rankin come together to play a game of cricket. It is on Sunday, 12 November, 10 am start, and I thank St Lawrence's for hosting us at their fields on Nathan Road in Runcorn. I also thank Queensland Cricket for providing the umpires. Apparently, a player from the Queensland Bulls will drop in. The skilful Ali Kadri from the Islamic Society of Queensland is captain of the mighty Moreton team and he lets me join his team. Rankin, poor performers that they are, are led by Jim Chalmers and Ahsan Assadi from the Islamic Shia Council of Queensland.
Moreton, I would stress on the public record, are the current cup holders, but I will note that Rankin did win the inaugural match in 2014—although it might have been rigged, I would suggest. James Stedman, a great cricket fan, is the eagle-eyed scorekeeper. We will hold a community barbecue after the match. Everybody is welcome.

I will always do what I can—and I know the member for Rankin will do what he can—to promote inclusivity and cohesion in Queensland. I condemn every Queensland MP or senator who is peddling fear and division, particularly about the Islamic community. I condemn you now and so will history.

**The SPEAKER:** Under standing order 43, the time for members' statements has concluded.

**MINISTERIAL ARRANGEMENTS**

**Mr TURNBULL** (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:00): The Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science will be absent from question time today. The Minister for Defence Industry will answer questions on his behalf.

**QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**

**Racial Discrimination Act 1975**

**Dr ALY** (Cowan) (14:00): My question is to the Prime Minister. The former Prime Minister, the member for Warringah, cited national security concerns as the reason for dumping changes to section 18C, saying that, when it comes to cracking down on terrorism and cracking down on things that aid and abet terrorism, the 18C proposal was becoming a needless complication. Has the current Prime Minister sought the advice of the AFP or any other security agency on the implications of watering down section 18C; if not, why not—(Time expired)

**Honourable members interjecting**—

**The SPEAKER:** Members on my right will cease interjecting. The Leader of the House will cease injecting—it is only one past two and I am asking him to cease interjecting. The Prime Minister can address the wideranging statements in the question. I think there was going to be a question at the end that did not fit in the time.

**Mr TURNBULL** (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:01): I thank the honourable member for her question. Australia is the most successful multicultural society in the world. It is a democracy founded on the rule of law, founded on fundamental freedoms of speech, of worship, of assembly. We are a nation founded on freedoms, and clearly always we need to make sure that our laws get the balance right between defending the strength of our multicultural society and the mutual respect on which it depends and those freedoms. It is perfectly appropriate for a committee of this parliament—the Human Rights Committee no less—to consider those matters. The honourable member may reflect that only this morning the President of the Human Rights Commission, Professor Triggs, welcomed such an inquiry and recognised that there should be changes.

The fact of the matter is that there is a broad array of opinion. Parliamentary committees are an appropriate place for those opinions to be ventilated and heard and considered, and the honourable member, given her distinguished academic past, would do well to remember that it is best not to caricature views in this arena but to treat them with respect so that the
parliament, through its committee, can consider these important issues—defending freedom, preserving freedom of speech and ensuring that the foundation of our great multicultural society, mutual respect, is maintained.

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Parramatta will cease interjecting. The member for Barton interjected right through that answer. The member for Barton is warned.

Border Protection

Ms LANDRY (Capricornia—Deputy Nationals Whip) (14:03): My question is to the Prime Minister. Will the Prime Minister update the House on the continuing need for strong border security and the importance of ensuring the people-smuggling trade is shut down?

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:03): I thank the honourable member for her question. Over the last few days we have heard disturbing echoes of former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd. We have obviously heard him on Twitter and on the op-ed pages talking about 'Shortistas' and 'Gillardistas' as well. What we have heard are reflections of the complacency that led Kevin Rudd into the greatest policy failure of his government, when he, with his eyes open, believing that all was well, tore down John Howard's border protection policies with the utterly foreseeable consequence of 50,000 unlawful irregular arrivals and 1,200 deaths at sea of which we know. That is on Labor's record. That should be on Labor's conscience.

It is true that there have been no successful people-smuggling expeditions for over 830 days. It is true that we have closed 17 of the detention centres Labor opened. It is true that there are no children in detention in Australia. That has been the work of the coalition government. What Labor need to recognise is that the complacency they are exhibiting today is exactly what led Rudd into his mistakes some years ago.

During the election, the Leader of the Opposition said he was on a unity ticket with us in terms of border protection policies. We call on him to maintain that. The bill that has been submitted to the House today is one which will say unequivocally no more than that which was Kevin Rudd's revived policy in 2013, the unity ticket, and send a clear message to the people smugglers: 'If you seek to bring people to Australia by boat, they will not be able to come here; you will fail.' We need more than ever to send that unequivocal signal. We are getting people off Nauru and Manus. They are going home. We are seeking to find resettlement options for them. We are working overtime on that but, as we do that, as we seek to prioritise the women and children and the families on Nauru, we need to send the clearest signal possible to the people smugglers. It is vitally important that the government and the opposition stand as one on this, and we call on Labor to recognise the tragic failure that they made in government and not repeat it now in opposition.

The SPEAKER: Before I call the Leader of the Opposition, I again caution members about interjecting. We have already had one warning. I say to the members for McEwen and Barker that they will not interject in an argument across the chamber or they will both be out as a job lot.

Racial Discrimination Act 1975

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (14:07): My question is to the Prime Minister. On 17 October, the Prime Minister right here ruled out changes to section
18C of the Racial Discrimination Act. Less than a month later, the Prime Minister has opened
the door to changes. Prime Minister, what changed between then and now? What insults do
you want people to be allowed to say?

Mr Turnbull (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:07): There is one insult I would like
to see stopped right now, and that is the constant insult to the intelligence of the Australian
people offered by the Leader of the Opposition, with one misrepresentation after another.

Mr Perrett interjecting—

The Speaker: The member for Moreton is warned!

Mr Turnbull: Talk about post-truth politics!

Ms Catherine King interjecting—

The Speaker: The member for Ballarat is warned!

Mr Turnbull: The Leader of the Opposition has no regard for the facts, no regard for
the record and no regard for consistency, and he attempts to mischaracterise, to caricature,
anybody that stands in his way of inventing his Shortenian reality, which has no reality and no
connection to the real world.

The fact of the matter is this: we have committees in this parliament to consider important
issues of public interest, and they do their work—and the Human Rights Committee will do
its work. If the Leader of the Opposition wants to go down some road of saying someone
believes something could be changed or reformed about the Racial Discrimination Act and
those provisions, there will be a lot of racists there, I would say. It will include the Australian
Law Reform Commission. They have made suggestions for changes. It will even include
Professor Triggs, who has said that there should be changes made and has said that she has
been asking for them for years. Well, fair enough. She has welcomed the committee's
establishment. Let the committee do its work. We will have a calm, reasoned discussion, and
we will see what consensus emerges. I am not interested in gesture politics. I am not
interested in misrepresenting the facts. The Leader of the Opposition constantly misleads. We
will build consensus through that committee, and we will let it do its work.

Asylum Seekers

Mr Sukkar (Deakin) (14:09): My question is to the Minister for Immigration and
Border Protection. Will the minister update the House on the legislative steps the government
is taking to further—

Mr Albanese interjecting—

Opposition members interjecting—

The Speaker: The member for Deakin will resume his seat. Members on my left will
cease interjecting. The member for Grayndler prevented me hearing the question. The
member for Deakin will repeat his question. Members on both sides will listen in silence.

Mr Sukkar: My question is to the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection.
Will the minister update the House on the legislative steps the government is taking to further
enhance Australia's strong border protection policies? Is the minister aware of any alternative
policies?
Mr DUTTON (Dickson—Minister for Immigration and Border Protection) (14:10): I thank the honourable member for his question. This is a very serious issue and the Australian public know that the prospect of people drowning at sea is a very serious issue. The fact is that when Labor came into power in 2007 Mr Rudd had promised the Australian people that he would have a carbon copy policy implemented—he would adopt the policies of the Howard government to stop the boats and get people out of detention. When John Howard left government in 2007 there were four people in detention, including no children. What we know is that Kevin Rudd completely dismantled the success of that policy such that, tragically and to our national shame, 1,200 people drowned at sea. Last year Labor apologised for that. Labor apologised to the Australian people because they recognised that they had got the policy wrong. In addition to that, thousands of children went into detention and 17 detention centres were opened because the Labor Party could not cope with the influx of people. So people drowned at sea, there was an $11 billion blowout, children ended up in detention and Labor lost control of our borders to the people smugglers.

Well, this government, over the course of the last three years, has stared down the continuing threat of people smugglers. We have dealt with the situation in a consistent way and we have done it in spite of complete opposition from those opposite. When the Leader of the Opposition, who was then a cabinet minister in the Rudd government, went to the last election he wanted the Australian public to believe that he was on a unity ticket with this government when it came to border protection. The Leader of the Opposition is out today suggesting to the Australian public that this problem of people smuggling has gone away. On Sunday on Insiders he said, 'Oh, why don't you just send the people from Manus and Nauru back to their country of origin?' Those two statements demonstrate that this Leader of the Opposition is more incompetent than Kevin Rudd when it comes to border protection and the people smugglers in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Vietnam and around the world will be rubbing their hands together at the moment because they know that they have hit the jackpot with Bill Shorten. They know that they have now found a weaker leader than Kevin Rudd and Julia Gillard combined. They have found Mr Shorten, the Leader of the Opposition, the would-be Prime Minister of this country, who has demonstrated he does not even understand the basics when it comes to stopping the boats.

This government has presided over success. We have a bill before this parliament that will continue that success. Our policy has not only been to stop drownings at sea and get the kids out of detention, but it is to get people off Manus and Nauru, starting with the families. We will tell you the detail of the bill shortly but we need you support, which is, so far, not forthcoming. (Time expired)

Racial Discrimination Act 1975

Mr DREYFUS (Isaacs—Deputy Manager of Opposition Business) (14:13): My question is to the Prime Minister. This morning the member for Bennelong said that watering down section 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act is not a good use of the government's time and is causing fear. Why is the Prime Minister opening the door to changes that even his own MPs think are a waste of time?

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:14): The honourable member is obviously not paying any attention to what is now a very lively and active debate about the
application of the provisions that he spoke about to some university students in Queensland and to a cartoonist from *The Australian*.

*Ms Rowland interjecting—*

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Greenway is warned.

**Mr Turnbull:** There is a lively debate about that, and as a barrister he would well understand the importance of free speech. What we have done is refer the matter to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights. It is a committee of the parliament; it includes honourable members opposite and it includes senators. They will consider these issues and they will do so carefully and thoughtfully and respectfully. I expect that other parties with interests in this matter will make submissions to them. That is what parliament should do—it should listen to the people and it should enable them to make their submissions, and that is exact what is happening.

One area where the human rights of people are being neglected by honourable members opposite is with respect to the security of our borders.

*Ms Plibersek interjecting—*

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Sydney will cease interjecting.

**Mr Turnbull:** Let me say this to honourable members opposite: when your party was last in government, 1,200 and more people drowned at sea as a consequence of your policies.

**Mr Rob Mitchell interjecting—**

**The SPEAKER:** The member for McEwen is warned.

**Mr Turnbull:** That was the inevitable consequence of your policies, and you recognised that you had failed and, at the last minute, you brought Kevin Rudd back.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Isaacs, on a point of order?

**Mr Dreyfus:** Direct relevance, Mr Speaker.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Isaacs will resume his seat. The Prime Minister is in order.

**Mr Turnbull:** The Labor Party brought Kevin Rudd back, and at the last minute, just as he was about to go out of office, he said exactly what he had said just as he was about to go into office in 2007, which was that he agreed with the coalition's policy. Well, it was too late for the 1,200 who drowned, wasn't it? It was too late for them. No shame, no sense of conscience on the part of the Labor Party. That was the consequence. The Labor Party cannot escape the consequences of its failure. What we have done is stop the boats. We have stopped the drownings. We have ensured that children are not in detention, and we will continue to do that. We will not be lectured on human rights by a party that was so neglectful and so careless of the human rights of those who lost their lives at sea.

*Ms Plibersek interjecting—*

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Sydney is now warned and has been warned a number of times in recent sitting days. That is as subtle as I can be.

**Agriculture Industry**

**Mr Katter** (Kennedy) (14:17): My question is to the Treasurer. Fifty-one per cent of Australia’s land mass is registered desert lands, 21 per cent is Aboriginal lands without title.
deeds, precluding pastoral activity, and seven per cent is national parks, leaving only 25 per cent—180,000 hectares—available for agriculture. Australia's five biggest farming operations—the Ord Stage 2, Van Diemen's dairies, Cubbie, Nicoletti grains and Terra Firma—are all foreign owned. Foreign ownership, as researched by Fairfax, is increasing at over 20 million hectares a year. I refer to a question on notice from 12 October. Minister, why have you refused to give any guarantee that a majority shareholding in Kidman will not shift to foreign control after the sale to Shanghai CRED and Rinehart—(Time expired)

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Treasurer) (14:18): I thank the member for his question. As the member would know, under the relevant legislation, if the Kidman property were to be sold to what I understand is now the only bidder—which has a component that is 30 per cent foreign owned—and if there were to be any change to that arrangement in any subsequent purchase, it would have to come back again for consideration first by the Foreign Investment Review Board and then, on recommendation, by the Treasurer.

There seems to be some suggestion outside of this place—and I do not suggest that has come from the member who asked the question—that somehow, if that sale were to proceed, then subsequent to that property could be onsold with no further review. That is simply not the case. Any proposal that triggers the foreign investment threshold review, which a parcel of that size certainly would, would always have to come back and be considered by FIRB and by me, as Treasurer. I remind the member that on the two occasions that I was asked to consider the sale of the Kidman land I rejected it—on two occasions. I note that the shadow Treasurer indicated that he would have approved it before the last election.

Border Protection

Mr LEESER (Berowra) (14:19): My question is to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Will the minister update the House on why it is important to maintain strong border protection? Will the minister explain to the House comparable international experience?

Ms JULIE BISHOP (Curtin—Minister for Foreign Affairs) (14:20): I thank the member for Berowra for his question. I note his deep interest in this issue. The coalition government inherited the devastating consequences of Labor's massive policy failure on border protection—I would suggest the greatest policy failure in living memory. We have restored integrity and credibility back into our border protection policies. In doing so we have rebuilt confidence in our immigration system, including our capacity to accept a significant number of people on refugee and humanitarian visas. While Labor want to take us back to the chaos on our borders that they inflicted when in government—1,200 deaths at sea, 8,000 children in detention—it is instructive to look at what has been happening in Europe, where borders were opened.

Mr Conroy interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Shortland.

Ms JULIE BISHOP: In 2015, people-smuggling operations dispatched more than one million people via the Mediterranean Sea into Europe. It is horrific to note that in 2015 over 3,770 deaths occurred at sea. In 2016, to date, people smugglers have dispatched almost 337,000 people by sea into Europe. Even more tragically, over 4,230 people have died at sea. More than 2,200 people were rescued in a single day trying to reach Italy. Ten bodies have
been recovered, but many more are believed to have drowned. Over one million people have flooded into Germany since Germany opened its borders in 2015.

The impact of this has been devastating and, as described by the US Secretary of State, John Kerry, the mass influx of refugees and other migrants entering the continent spells a 'near existential' threat to the politics and fabric of life in Europe. Slovenian Prime Minister Cerar said, in a dire prediction, that the continent is at a tipping point and that a 'conflict' is inevitable if another wave of migrants makes their way through Europe. But the German interior ministry said today:

The elimination of the prospect of reaching the European coast could convince migrants to avoid embarking on the life-threatening and costly journey in the first place … and remove the basis for people-smuggling organisations.

The Austrian foreign minister said that the principles of the Australian model can be applied to Europe. So I say to Labor: back the coalition on border protection and save lives. *(Time expired)*

Mr Conroy interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Shortland is now warned.

Day, Mr Bob, AO

Mr BURKE (Watson—Manager of Opposition Business) (14:23): My question is to the Prime Minister. Why do documents tabled in the Senate confirm that the Minister for Finance agreed to back-pay rent on former Senator Day's electorate office effective from 1 July 2015, which was more than a year before rent was legally required under the lease?

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:23): The honourable member would be aware that the Minister for Finance addressed those issues in his comprehensive statement to the Senate.

Indigenous Rangers

Mr ENTSCH (Leichhardt) (14:23): My question is to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources. Will the Deputy Prime Minister outline to the House how the Indigenous ranger program assists in protecting Australia from biosecurity threats? Is the Deputy Prime Minister aware of any alternative policies?

Mr JOYCE (New England—Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources) (14:24): I thank the honourable member for his question and note the $12.4 million to be put into the Indigenous rangers program, which is so vitally important to how we keep our borders strong and protected. We note also that at Boigu Island, in the member's electorate, you can actually see the boats leaving Papua New Guinea. The same Indigenous rangers work as part of the process of making sure that we maintain the sentinel herds and keep our nation free not only from people but from the things they might bring in on the boats—things such as pigs, which could carry foot-and-mouth disease, issues such as screw fly and diseases that could come into our grain crops. It is vitally important, because it is not just the people who create the problems; it is also the things they might be carrying.

This is why we have the migration legislation amendment bill. We want to make sure that we close the circle on giving our nation strong borders. Strong borders are vitally important for making sure that we keep the biosecurity requirements in place and also that we keep our
borders secure. It is interesting that we always believed we were on a unity ticket with the Labor Party, but that unity ticket with the Labor Party seems to have been put aside. However, today they did manage to come up with a unity ticket with Senator Jacqui Lambie and One Nation. So we now have Senator Jacqui Lambie—

The SPEAKER: The Deputy Prime Minister will resume his seat.

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Grayndler! Members on my left!

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Members will cease interjecting while I am addressing the House.

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Chifley can leave, under standing order 94(a).

The member for Chifley then left the chamber.

The SPEAKER: The member for Leichhardt on a point of order.

Mr Entsch: The question I asked is absolutely critical to my electorate, given that the mainland of Papua New Guinea is within four kilometres of the boundary. I was trying to hear the answer from the minister, which is important to my electorate, but I could not hear a thing because of the clowns on the other side making the noise.

The SPEAKER: The member for Leichhardt will resume his seat. The member for Leichhardt is quite right.

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Members will cease interjecting. The member for Hunter will leave the chamber, under standing order 94(a). I do not know how many times I can say it.

The member for Hunter then left the chamber.

The SPEAKER: The Deputy Prime Minister has the call.

Mr Joyce: It looks like I am not going to get a question from the member for Hunter, so that makes it a year before I heard from him. What is also surprising is that they can come up with a unity ticket with Senator Jacqui Lambie and One Nation. I am sure the member for Grayndler's members would be interested in their unity ticket with One Nation on the backpackers tax, which talks about a rate for people who are past the tax-free threshold of $18,200—

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Deputy Prime Minister will resume his seat and the member for Grayndler will resume his seat. The member for McMahon will leave the chamber, under standing order 94(a).

The member for McMahon then left the chamber.

The SPEAKER: The member for Grayndler will resume his seat, as I was about to address the House before the member for Grayndler was on his feet. The Deputy Prime Minister was asked a question about a particular policy topic: the Indigenous rangers program. He is entitled to some latitude but he is now moving way beyond it. The Deputy Prime Minister has the call.
Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Lingiari is warned.

Mr Joyce: I think it is vitally important that we note the investment we have made through the agricultural white paper for Indigenous rangers. Indigenous rangers are part and parcel of this nation's program for having strong borders so that we can ensure that we not only maintain the sentinel herds of northern Australia but also protect our nation from such things as the incursion of foot-and-mouth disease, which would be decimating. It is very important to remember that it is not just the people who come in; it is the things they might be carrying that would cause our nation a catastrophic outcome if there were to be an outbreak of these diseases.

Day, Mr Bob, AO

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (14:29): My question is to the Prime Minister. Documents tabled in the Senate confirmed that the Minister for Finance agreed to back-pay rent on Bob Day's electorate office, from 1 July 2015, more than a year before the rent was legally required under the lease. The question is why. Why did the Minister for Finance attempt to back-pay over $30,000 in rent when the Commonwealth was not legally obligated to do so? And, no, Prime Minister, the matter is not fully dealt with in the statement of the Minister for Finance.

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:29): I can assure the honourable member that that very matter is addressed in Senator Cormann's address to the Senate, and I refer him to it. I also note that, if he studies Senator Cormann's address to the Senate, he will see that the minister notes that no rent was paid in respect of the premises occupied by Senator Day at all.

Budget

Mr HASTIE (Canning) (14:29): My question is to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer advise the House of the importance of a stronger budget at this delicate time in our transitioning economy? How is the government ensuring that good policy supports a balanced budget?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Treasurer) (14:30): I thank the member for Canning for his question and his strong support for a stronger budget, which means stronger growth in our economy, more jobs, more investment in our economy and higher real wages for Australians. The government have been curbing growth in spending since we were elected in 2013. We have been curbing as a result the growth in the level of debt to ensure that we can go forward with a budget that is sustainable, secure and free of the excesses of spending growth that were characteristic of the previous government. Growth in real terms approached well over six per cent under the previous government's watch.

At the election we set out $40 billion worth of budget improvement measures. We were very upfront about it, whether they were measures on expenditure control or revenue measures, particularly in the area of superannuation. We were totally upfront with the Australian people about the $40 billion in budget improvement measures that we were seeking to put in place to ensure that the budget remained on a trajectory to balance in 2021, given the current parameter estimates.
We have been successful so far in the short period of time during this term of securing around $11 billion—that is more than a quarter of the budget improvement measures already moving through the parliament. It is imperative that we continue down that path of realising both the expenditure and revenue measures, which are overwhelmingly opposed by those opposite, whose only answer to any of these issues is to raise taxes rather than control spending.

There is another area which is really important. You need to deal proactively with pressures that come on the budget. The previous government know what happens when you lose control of a particular policy area and it then starts to hit your budget. When those opposite were in government more than 50,000 people turned up on 800 boats and 1,200 died. If that was not bad enough, under their incompetent management of their borders the budget blew out by some $11 billion. I am proud to have been the minister, as a team with the former Prime Minister, who was able to stop the boats. On stopping the boats—

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr MORRISON: They call it a gesture; I call it a fact because that is what those on this side of the House have been able to deliver. I am proud to be part of a government, led by this Prime Minister and with this Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, which is continuing measures and putting in place measures like those now before this parliament that will ensure we will never see the tragedy that those opposite authored while they were in government. That tragedy was inflicted on human lives and was inflicted on the budget of this country. Those opposite sent out the shadow Treasurer this morning to be their poster boy for border protection. A close look at his record reveals that he is as good on border protection as he is on managing a budget.

Day, Mr Bob, AO

Mr HAMMOND (Perth) (14:33): My question is to the Minister for Revenue and Financial Services. The collapse of former Senator Day's building empire has left hundreds of people who are building houses facing an uncertain future with the prospect that they will lose not only their savings but their dream homes. Can the minister confirm that the tax office and the National Australia Bank will be paid ahead of these people in the liquidation of Bob Day's building empire and that no action has been taken to recover former Senator Day's donations of over $2 million to Family First, a party which preferenced the Liberal Party at the last election? (Time expired)

Ms O'DWYER (Higgins—Minister for Revenue and Financial Services) (14:34): I thank the member for Perth for his question. While obviously I am not going to go into matters that directly relate to an individual, what I can say to him is that, when it comes to the Corporations Act, it is very clear the line over which certain creditors are actually given precedence. I refer him to the Corporations Act to understand that.

National Security

Mr EVANS (Brisbane) (14:34): My question is to the Minister for Justice and the Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Counter-Terrorism. Will the minister update the House on the threat of terrorism? What is the government doing to keep our community safe, the Brisbane community safe and our borders secure?

Mr Rob Mitchell interjecting—
The SPEAKER: The member for McEwen has been warned. He will leave under 94(a).

Mr KEENAN (Stirling—Minister for Justice and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Counter-Terrorism) (14:35): I thank the member for Brisbane for that question. He knows that the threat of terrorism remains real in Australia. Since the national terror threat level was raised in September 2014 we have had four attacks on our soil, and the good work of our agencies has obstructed a further 11. Since 2012 around 200 Australians have travelled to Syria and Iraq to join in the conflict and as many as 68 have been killed. We would expect that number to continue to increase. Around 110 are currently fighting or engaged with terrorist groups in Syria and Iraq, and around 200 people onshore in Australia are being investigated for providing support to individuals and groups in the conflict.

Since 12 September 2014, 53 people have been charged as a result of 23 counterterrorism operations. In addition, there are 39 people currently before the courts for terrorism related offences, seven of whom are juveniles. Around 190 passports have been cancelled by the foreign minister or refused to people who wanted to go and participate in the conflict in Syria and Iraq. Last month we saw the arrest of two young men with knives, allegedly intent on carrying out an act of terror. Last week our agencies arrested two people in relation to foreign incursion offences. Since coming to government, the coalition has worked with our agencies to counter the increased prospect of terror in Australia, funding them an extra $1.3 billion and taking five tranches of legislation through this parliament to increase their powers and their ability to do their job of keeping us safe.

It is very well known that some of the perpetrators of recent terror attacks in Europe entered the target countries illegally. That is why it is absolutely vital for our national security that we maintain the integrity of our borders, and this remains an essential part of our national security strategy.

For the past three years we have continued to clean up the mess that we inherited from the Labor Party: 50,000 unauthorised arrivals, over 800 boats and up to 1,200 people drowned at sea—men, women and children. The Rudd-Gillard-Rudd government gave us this chaos, and the lessons that should have been learnt by the Labor Party during those years have clearly not been learnt, as today they announced that they will continue to stand in the way of the things that we are doing to keep our borders secure. There is a simple lesson from the history of this issue in the parliament: everything Labor did in government, every judgement they made, was wrong. Everything we said needed to be done turned out to be right and was the recipe for stopping the evil people-smuggling trade. That is the lesson the Labor Party should learn, and that is why they should not continue to stand in the way of the things we are doing to keep our borders safe.

Day, Mr Bob, AO

Ms PLIBERSEK (Sydney—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (14:38): My question is to the Prime Minister. I refer to reports that the government awarded a college linked to former senator Bob Day a $1.84 million grant, despite the fact he only asked for $1.4 million. Why did the government give the college almost half a million dollars more than was requested?

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House and Minister for Defence Industry) (14:38): I am delighted to answer this question. It is absolutely remarkable that the Labor Party—the party
of the home insulation scheme, the party of the school halls debacle, the party of cash for clunkers, Fuelwatch, as the Deputy Prime Minister points out, and GroceryWatch—would have to gall to ask that question of this government. The member for Ballarat did not ask the question, and there is a good reason for that. There is a good reason the member for Ballarat did not come to the dispatch box to ask the question. They have the gall to ask us about one of our successful vocational education and training programs!

This program has been so successful that the Minister for Education and Training, Simon Birmingham, visited North East Vocational College to see the good work they were doing, encouraging skills and training of our young people looking for work. But he is not the only person who has visited the North East Vocational College. Guess who else? Our old mate Tom Koutsantonis—

The SPEAKER: The minister knows the rule on props.

Mr PYNE: Tom Koutsantonis, the treasurer of the South Australian Labor Party, has been to visit the vocational education college as well.

So now the Labor Party has tried to cast aspersions on a successful vocational education college because it suits their base political purposes. Labor is not interested in outcomes for young people in skills and training. Labor is not interested in outcomes for jobs and growth and investment in our economy. The only thing this Leader of the Opposition is interested in is playing politics: politics on same-sex marriage, for example; politics on Medicare—frightening older people; politics on the backpacker tax right now in the Senate; and now politics on skills and training for young people.

There was absolutely no financial connection between former Senator Bob Day and the North East Vocational College. It went through all the normal processes that such a grant would go through and was awarded on its merits. The Labor Party stands condemned for trying to play politics with it.

Border Protection

Mr RICK WILSON (O'Connor) (14:41): My question is to the Prime Minister. How will the government's Migration Legislation Amendment (Regional Processing Cohort) Bill 2016 protect our borders? Are there any alternative views?

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:41): I thank the honourable member for his question. The government and our nation are engaged in a battle of will with the people smugglers. They are a determined, agile criminal group with enormous resources. They use modern social media as adeptly as anybody. Honourable members may scoff—they think people drowning at sea is funny. Is that right? Do they think national security is funny? It is no surprise that honourable members opposite trivialise this issue. Only this morning, the Leader of the Opposition demonstrated Labor had learnt so little from its past mistakes when he equated people smuggling with tourism. He talked about not being on a unity ticket to stop the tourists. So it is tourism now, is it? Is that how the Labor Party regards people smuggling? Is that how they regard the lives of thousands of people put at risk by some of the most evil criminals in the world? Is that how they regard the sanctity and security of our borders—‘It's tourism’? Trivialising it; joking about it.

We know that Labor cannot be trusted. Kevin Rudd demonstrated he could not be trusted. In 2007 he said he would turn the boats back—he would be a mirror image of John Howard's
policy. Then, despite our pleas to him not to do so, Kevin Rudd—filled with complacency, rejoicing in the fact that John Howard had stopped the people smugglers, delighting in the fact that the detention centres were empty and thrilled there were no children in detention—decided he could unpick that policy, and we know what happened. And if Labor has its way, it will do it again. We know the Leader of the Opposition is giving in again to the left of his party just as Kevin Rudd did in 2008 and 2009. He talks about a unity ticket, he talks about being tough on borders. The fact is, he trivialises it—talking about people smuggling as tourism. If the honourable member does not have respect for the people of Australia and the security of their borders, he should at least have respect for the people that drowned when he was last a minister of the Crown.

Minister for Education

Ms PLIBERSEK (Sydney—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (14:44): My question is to the Prime Minister. I refer him to the Minister for Education and Training's response to question on notice 108 given on 14 October regarding the Apprenticeships Training alternative delivery pilots program in which the Minister for Education and Training said:

I have not met with MBA, NECA or North East Vocational College about the program.

The minister representing him just confirmed that he has, in fact, met them. Has the Prime Minister asked the education minister to explain this photo that clearly shows—

The SPEAKER: Members know the rules on props.

Ms PLIBERSEK: that the minister visited—

The SPEAKER: The member for Sydney will resume her seat. Members know the rules on props. I am not going to endure this. I am going to the next question.

Registered Organisations

Mrs SUDMALIS (Gilmore) (14:45): My question is to the Minister for Defence Industry, representing the Minister for Employment. Will the minister outline why it is important to reform registered organisations to ensure that employer and employee organisations always act in the best interests of their members? And who is standing in the way of this outcome?

Mr Brendan O'Connor interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Gorton is warned.

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House and Minister for Defence Industry) (14:45): I thank the member for Gilmore for her question. The person standing in the way of being able to reform registered organisations in Australia is the Leader of the Opposition. He is standing in the way of reforming unions in order to support honest unions and honest union leaders. This side of the House—

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr PYNE: The HSU was never affiliated with the Labor Party. So you have done a great job! The HSU is not doing too well, fella. It is not doing too well. You have just put Kimberley Kitching—

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr PYNE: Thank you for the interjection, though. You have just decided that the most worthy person in Victoria in the Labor Party that you could put into the Senate is Kimberley
Kitching from the Health Services Union No. 1 branch—a branch described by the national secretary of the Health Services Union, Chris Brown, as stumbling from crisis to crisis. He said he would dissolve it if they did not get their act together. That is who you have just chosen to fill the Senate vacancy of the very well-regarded Senator Conroy, who has retired and been replaced with Kimberley Kitching—the same person that the Heydon royal commission referred to the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions for impersonating other union leaders in doing their safety tests for them, putting workers at risk in the workplace—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Melbourne Ports on a point of order.

**Mr Danby:** The minister is referring to—

**The SPEAKER:** The point of order?

**Mr Danby:** The point of order is he is not referring to the member by her correct title.

**The SPEAKER:** The Leader of the House will refer to members and Senators by their correct titles.

**Mr PYNE:** I will, Mr Speaker. It does not surprise me that the member for Melbourne Ports comes to Senator Kitching's defence because the member for Melbourne Ports has been quite involved in this murky story—this very murky story. Goodness knows what his connections are! I might come to those tomorrow, Mr Speaker.

Senator Kitching was referred by the royal commission to the Commonwealth DPP for impersonating union officials and doing their safety tests for them—and bragging about it. She is a person who has been found by the Fair Work Commission to be an unreliable witness—publicly stated the case. This is also a person who failed to pay six and a half thousand dollars worth of parking fines to the Melbourne City Council. Six and a half thousand dollars worth of parking fines! Surely she would have noticed all those sticky clear plastic things stuck on the windscreen of her $94,000 leased BMW. It seems surprising to me that she would have been able to see through her windscreen, Mr Speaker, with six and a half thousand dollars worth of parking fines that she just had not noticed.

In Queensland the minister for agriculture, Leanne Donaldson, had to resign over $8,000 of unpaid rates to the Bundaberg City Council. In the Shorten world—in the Leader of the Opposition's world—they get put into the Senate. If you do not pay your parking fines, you get put into the Senate. (*Time expired*)

**Mr Chester interjecting**—

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister for Infrastructure and Transport will cease—

**Mr Chester interjecting**—

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister for Infrastructure and Transport is warned.

**Day, Mr Bob, AO**

**Mr BURKE** (Watson—Manager of Opposition Business) (14:49): My question is to the Prime Minister. Can the Prime Minister confirm that the Minister for Finance was aware before the election that former Senator Day had provided vendor financing so that the new owner of the property which housed his electorate office could make the purchase? Is it not clear that the government knew before the election that this deal was completely inappropriate? When was the Prime Minister made personally aware of these circumstances?
Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:50): I refer the honourable member to my answer yesterday about my personal knowledge, which was referred to in Senator Ryan's statement to the Senate. As far as Senator Cormann's state of knowledge is concerned, he deals with that in his own statement, which is quite comprehensive, as I am sure the honourable member is aware.

Sports Tourism

Mr VAN MANEN (Forde—Government Whip) (14:50): My question is to the Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment. Will the minister explain how sporting events contribute to the Australian tourism industry? Is there anything that could jeopardise this important contribution?

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr CIOBO (Moncrieff—Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment) (14:50): They picked it, Mr Speaker: the CFMEU. They get the refrain; that is right. I am grateful to the member for Forde for his question because, like me, he has a great passion for the Gold Coast Sons and, like me, he is a passionate supporter of Australia's tourism industry. I am certainly pleased that sporting tourism plays a very major role with Australia's tourism industry. It helps to drive international tourists to come to Australia and it helps to drive domestic tourism as well. We saw, for example, last financial year that international tourists travelling to Australia to attend a sporting event spent over $367 million on local sporting events. That drives local jobs. That drives employment across the Australian economy. Indeed, it is a key part of the reason that this coalition government is investing record amounts of money into Australian tourism, making sure that we support the tourism industry substantially. Tourism and Events Queensland estimates that around 30,000 jobs across Queensland and on the Gold Coast are dependent upon sports tourism. One of the great attractions that we have and one of the reasons that Australians travel is the opportunity to watch AFL games. I know that you are quite a fan of the AFL, Mr Speaker. I am not sure whether you have had the chance to travel to watch the Gold Coast Suns yet, but they do play regularly in my electorate. That is part of the reason that I was so particularly pleased to have the former Minister for Sport, the member for Dickson, and the current Minister for Sport, as part of the coalition, back an investment of some $15 million in a purpose-built facility for the Gold Coast Suns that would also be used for the Commonwealth Games—a crucial investment in the community to help drive employment and help drive tourism numbers. But what we see reported in today's papers is that this investment, like other investments across the city, has been delayed by the CFMEU.

We continue to see the most militant and extreme union in Australia continue to call the shots for the Australian Labor Party. We saw only last week that the most extreme union and the AWU and others have made it clear that they will disendorse Labor members who do not adopt their position on the ABCC. Now we see investment in community infrastructure getting pushed to one side and the community's concerns pushed to one side, because this militant and extreme organisation, the organisation that donates $11 million to this man—$11 million reasons for him to look away—
The SPEAKER: I caution the Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment. He can talk about donations to political parties but, unless he is making an allegation that they personally donated it to an individual, he should not do that.

Mr CIOBO: The $11 million was clearly donated to the Australian Labor Party. But the point is that they look away while we continue to see this militant and extreme union delay important community projects.

Day, Mr Bob, AO

Mr BURKE (Watson—Manager of Opposition Business) (14:53): My question is again to the Prime Minister. Can the Prime Minister confirm that the Minister for Finance was aware before the election that the bank account nominated to receive rental payments for former Senator Day's electoral office was linked to Bob Day? Is it not clear from the statement of the finance minister that the government knew before the election that the deal was completely inappropriate? The statement does not go to when the Prime Minister was personally aware of these circumstances, and I ask him to advise the House.

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:54): I answered this question yesterday—

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Members on my left!

Mr TURNBULL: and I referred to my answer just a moment ago. I will answer this very precisely. The state of Senator Cormann's mind and his knowledge is set out in his statement to the Senate, and I refer the honourable member to that. The fact that there was an issue relating to Senator Day's office was drawn to the attention of my chief of staff by Senator Ryan on 18 August, as set out in his statement. My chief of staff was asked by Senator Ryan, if Senator Day sought to raise the matter with him or my office, to refer them to him—to Senator Ryan. Senator Ryan passed on the substance of that conversation to me shortly thereafter, some days thereafter, and that was the beginning of my awareness that there was any issue about Senator Day's office. In terms of details about the matter, they were first drawn to my attention on 4 October in a meeting that Senator Ryan refers to in some detail in his statement.

Asylum Seekers

Mr DRUM (Murray) (14:55): My question is to the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection. How will the government's border protection legislation protect Australia's borders, and is the minister aware of any other views?

Mr DUTTON (Dickson—Minister for Immigration and Border Protection) (14:56): I thank the honourable member for his question. The government does have a bill before the parliament now. It is absolutely essential that it be supported. It is regrettable that the Leader of the Opposition has indicated that Labor, in their latest demonstration of weakness on border protection, have said that they will not support this bill. The only reason the Leader of the Opposition has offered up is that somehow, in 40 years time—in his own words—somebody could apply for a tourist visa from a third country somewhere else. That is denying the reality that we face today. The bill is introduced now because of threats that we face now from people smugglers. The fact is that 14,000 people are on boats in Indonesia ready to come to our country now. This is not some hypothetical about what happens in 40 years time.
Somehow the Leader of the Opposition is worried about whether someone, in four decades, can travel on a visa to come to our country.

Dr Aly interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Member for Cowan will cease interjecting.

Mr DUTTON: It is a complete nonsense, and it is a fabrication. But there are many other reasons, and I refer to media reports in The Daily Telegraph and other News Ltd newspapers today about fake marriages, to get to Australia. I can confirm that my department is aware of a number of illegal maritime arrivals from Iran who have entered into relationships with Australian citizens. A number have accepted assisted voluntary returns to go back to Iran and have subsequently entered Australia on prospective marriage visas. I am advised by my department that there are six known cases of illegal maritime arrivals—

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr DUTTON: Well, they stop at six. Let me give you the detail and see how serious you are then. There are six known cases from Iran, marrying Australian citizens employed by the department's service providers on Manus Island. This suggests that they may be organised in this scheme to exploit marriage pathways to Australia. There is no information that a similar scheme is operating on Nauru, I am pleased to report.

Two of the transferees are known to have accepted one of the packages, around $7,000, to return to Iran. Two of the people who have accepted packages have subsequently entered Australia on prospective marriage visas. What we demonstrate is that people are entering into arrangements, they are subverting processes at the moment, and this government is moving to act against them. We are not going to allow people smugglers or people that enter into sham arrangements to rip off the Australian taxpayer or to rip off the generosity of the Australian people. We offer record numbers of refugees places in this country—

Mr Neumann: You are making it up.

Mr DUTTON: The shadow minister interjects. He has not asked a question since he has been in the portfolio, such is his gravitas—not one question, not even today when they are proclaiming some sort of high ground on this policy. The Leader of the Opposition is standing against this policy because of some fantasy of 40 years. He needs to stand up and be counted.

(Time expired)

Day, Mr Bob, AO

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (14:59): My question is to the Prime Minister. Yesterday and today during question time the Prime Minister has claimed that he was not personally aware there was a potential issue under section 44 of the Constitution in relation to former Senator Day until around mid-August this year. If this was the case, did the Prime Minister or his office seek advice from his department or other sources about whether and when to make this information public? If not, why not? How could the Prime Minister keep something like this secret?

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:59): The facts relating to this matter have been set out comprehensively by Senators Ryan and Cormann in the Senate. When Senator Ryan became aware of this issue—it was raised with him by Senator Day, as I recall; and, again, I refer honourable members to his detailed statement—he then proceeded to
investigate it and find out what the facts were. As I have referred to earlier, he alerted my office to the fact that there was an issue, for the purpose—so Senator Ryan says—of ensuring that, if Senator Day sought to contact me or my office, he would be referred to Senator Ryan. That was a prudent and proper thing to do.

Senator Ryan then went in a diligent way to ascertain what the facts were. He sought advice. He received advice from the Australian Government Solicitor. He saw me on 4 October and acquainted me with a time line and detail. There was considerable detail about the matter. Subsequently, he sought advice—through the Attorney-General—from senior counsel. Once that advice was received, he passed it on to the President of the Senate.

Honourable members would understand that in a matter of this kind it is very important that the Special Minister of State proceeds deliberately, diligently and carefully, and does not rush out and make statements which may be based on incorrect facts or may be based on an incorrect or ill-considered appreciation of the law. So what Senator Ryan did was establish the facts, including a lot of to and fro with Senator Day, as we have seen in his account of affairs to the Senate. He sought advice from the Australian Government Solicitor, and he got advice from that agency. He then sought advice from David Jackson, one of the leaders of the Constitutional bar in Australia, and he then presented that advice to Senator Parry.

The fact is that at the same time that the Leader of the Opposition was in Brisbane accusing my government and me of relying on Senator Day's vote—as he spoke—as he well knows, the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate had been made privy to this advice given to Senator Parry. So the fact is that the government proceeded diligently and carefully on a complex matter and sought advice. When that advice was received, we gave it to the President of the Senate. As a consequence, the matter has been referred to the High Court.

**Budget**

Mr TED O'BRIEN (Fairfax) (15:03): My question is to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer update the House on the government's efforts to balance the budget and arrest the debt? Is the Treasurer aware of any alternative approaches that would increase the debt and deficit burden on the Australian taxpayer and threaten our AAA credit rating?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Treasurer) (15:03): I thank the member for Fairfax for his question and for the experience he brings to this House on economic matters. Under the six budgets of the previous government, real growth and expenditure on average was 4.2 per cent a year. From our first government budget, that real growth and expenditure has been just 1½ per cent. That has been a significant curtailing of real growth in expenditure, which is working towards the sustainability of the government's budget, moving forward.

We are restoring the budget to balance and we are doing that by getting expenditure under control and by implementing policies that drive investment and drive the earnings capability of our economy. This will ensure that revenues can be lifted and that we can have a sustainable budget, over time, to support the important services in health, education and infrastructure that are so necessary.

At the last election, we had $40 billion worth of budget improvement measures that we were up-front with the Australian people about when we went to the election. That is $40 billion of measures—more than half of those in curtailing spending but also revenue measures...
in the area of superannuation and, indeed, in resolving the issue around the backpacker tax within the funding envelope that had been set out.

I note that was the position adopted by those opposite when they went to the last election—that they would resolve that issue within a $500 million envelope. That is what was in their costings. Before the last election Saul Eslake noted there was an alternative approach to what the government is doing; and I noted that we have already achieved more than a quarter of our budget improvement measures so far in this parliamentary term. Saul Eslake said:

…it hardly seems sensible for a would-be Labor government to tolerate a significantly greater budget deficit over the next four years.

He was also reported to say that 'they are potentially risking the AAA credit rating if they outline significantly bigger deficits'.

Despite that warning, they went to the election and they proposed $16½ billion more in bigger deficits, higher taxes and higher spending. That was their approach. The deceit of it all! They had to be dragged kicking and screaming into this House to own up to the spending measures that crept into their own costings before the last election.

Today they have been exposed again, because they have backflipped on the backpacker tax. The proposal they have put out today will cost the budget $500 million, which they can add to their $16½ billion deficit. On top of that, they refused to be up-front with the Australian people on their secret super tax of $1.4 billion, which they have also announced today. Just days before the election, the shadow Treasurer said that they would be committed absolutely to a superannuation package which raised the same amount of revenue as the government. Today they broke that promise, and their lie on their secret super tax has been exposed.

*Dr Leigh interjecting—*

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Fenner will cease interjecting.

**Day, Mr Bob, AO**

**Mr SHORTEN** (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (15:06): My question is to the Prime Minister. Yesterday and today the Prime Minister confirmed that he has been aware that, for every single day of the 45th Parliament, the composition of the Senate was potentially illegitimate. Why did the Prime Minister decide to keep this information secret from the Australian people? Surely, the Australian people have a right to know that there was doubt over whether the composition of the Australian Senate was constitutional.

**Mr TURNBULL** (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (15:07): I have answered this question previously. The Special Minister of State proceeded deliberately, responsibly; he fastidiously got to the bottom of the factual context; and he sought legal advice, as he should. The suggestion that the Special Minister of State should have gone off half-cocked without knowing the facts, without knowing the law—that is the sort of incompetence you would expect from a Labor government.

**Superannuation**

**Mrs WICKS** (Robertson) (15:07): My question is to the Minister for Revenue and Financial Services. Will the minister advise the House how the government is making it easier
for Australians to contribute to securing their retirement? Is the minister aware of any threats to improving superannuation balances?

Ms O’Dwyer (Higgins—Minister for Revenue and Financial Services) (15:07): Thanks very much to the member for Robertson for her question. I have had the opportunity to visit her electorate with her, and I know what a passionate advocate she is for those Australians in her community who are working hard to secure a future for themselves and for their retirement.

Like the member for Robertson, the Turnbull government wants to give those hardworking Australians the tools to help them to save for their retirement. We want them to be able to be self-reliant in their retirement. Our flexibility measures, announced in our superannuation reform package, will help those people to achieve just that. We are levelling the playing field for Australians to provide concessional contributions for their retirement. It will not matter whether somebody is employed by a small business or a large business, because both will allow them to provide concessional contributions. We are making sure that those people who receive part of a salary or part of an income earned through their small business are not disadvantaged—that every single Australian will be able to make a contribution, which will advantage more than 800,000 Australians.

We also think it is very important that those people who spend time out of the workforce are able to catch up on their concessional contributions, and we are allowing from 1 July 2018 a rolling catch-up on concessional contributions for people who have superannuation balances of less than $500,000. There are more than 230,000 Australians in that group. It is very important for women who have taken time out of the workforce because they are caring for a small infant. We know that women retire, on average, with a balance of around $138,000 compared to men, who have a retirement balance on average of around $292,000. It is important for carers, it is important for small business people—it is important for anybody who has an irregular income.

The member for Robertson has asked: ‘Are there any threats?’ I am afraid to say that there are, and they are sitting opposite. Today Labor announced with their latest superannuation package that they are going to rip more tax out of the superannuation system and they are going to stop this very important flexibility measure. This is on the same day that the Labor Party has announced that they are going to decrease taxes for foreign workers—they are not going to charge these backpackers as much tax but they are going to make it harder for people with superannuation balances of less than $500,000 to save for their retirement. Shame on them.

Mr Turnbull: After—I am reliably advised—25 questions, I ask that further questions be placed on the Notice Paper.

DOCUMENTS
Presentation

Mr Pyne (Sturt—Leader of the House and Minister for Defence Industry) (15:11): 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

Employment

The SPEAKER (15:11): I have received a letter from the honourable member for Gorton proposing that a definite matter of public importance be submitted to the House for discussion, namely:

The Government’s failure to help create decent jobs for Australian workers.

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 BRENDAN O'CONNOR (Gorton) (15:11): Creating decent jobs for Australian workers is a huge challenge for this nation and yet the government is lacking in its focus on a jobs plan to provide those decent jobs for Australians. Last month's unemployment figures paint a very disturbing picture. There are already more than 700,000 unemployed Australians, and 1.1 million extra Australians are looking for more work but cannot find it. There are more unemployed people today than was the case when the government was elected in 2013. What was most disturbing of all in last month's unemployment figures, according to the ABS, was that there was a fall of 53,000 full-time jobs, totalling over 100,000 full-time jobs being lost this year.

Added to that, we have the lowest wage growth on record. Wage growth in our labour market is lower than at any time for more than a generation. As a result, people are feeling the pinch. People are having trouble making ends meet. If you are talking to your constituents—and all members of this place should—you will find one of the reasons why they are having such difficulty is that wage growth is so low. According to the Reserve Bank, it is stagnating. Indeed, in some sectors of the labour market there is a wage recession. That is happening under this government's watch. There is underemployment and insecure work in a stagnant wage growth economy. If wage growth does not improve, which accords with the Reserve Bank's recent analysis, recent lows will see a knock-on effect for household income consumption and economic growth. Meanwhile, the true mission of this government is to create a labour market that is a low wage, easy to hire and easy to fire society. That is what they want to see.

With all of these challenges in our economy, in our labour market, you would expect the government to be focused—focused on delivering jobs for 700,000 Australians, focused on finding more work for the over one million Australians struggling to find sufficient work. But of course this government is divided, it is dysfunctional and as a result it is distracted from dealing with a most important national priority—jobs.

Whether this government is surrendering to the extreme Right on marriage equality or race hate laws, watering down gun laws or doing a tawdry side deal in refurbishing the office of a senator, the fact is that it is not focusing on the issues that most Australians are concerned about. That is why we are seeing a lack of attention to and a lack of regard for the growth of jobs in this economy. We will have to see whether that changes, but we do not hold out much hope that the government has any interest in maintaining employment conditions, improving and maintaining employment security, and finding opportunities for workers in this nation.
There is no doubt that we want to see, as most Australians want to see, jobs that are decent jobs—jobs that provide some security of work and that make sure people can pay the bills, pay the mortgage or the rent, keep a car running and look after their kids. Not only do they want to have a decent quality of life; they want to make sure their children are afforded the opportunity to have an even better life. Well, that aspiration is being lost under a government that is completely distracted, fighting with itself and not focusing on these issues. The labour market that we want is one that treats workers with dignity and that affords them the opportunity to contribute fully to society.

Before the election this government promised jobs and growth. We have seen neither growth nor decent jobs. In fact, there is very little that sits under the mantra 'jobs and growth'. There is one commitment, one policy—a $50 billion tax giveaway to big business and multinationals, the only constituency that seems to have the ear of this Prime Minister. The fact is that the theory of trickle-down economics has been repudiated by eminent economists and, indeed, by history. The idea that you take $50,000 million and give that to big business and multinationals, and that that will, through some kind of osmosis, provide opportunities for people in the labour market is a nonsense.

The reality is that this is voodoo economics. It did not work in America in the 1970s, when it started. Just look at the United States. If you want to work out why there has been the rise of Trump, why there is an internal anguish within that country, you only have to look at what has happened over the last 30 years. Thirty years ago, it was a country where the median household income was in excess of that in Australia. It was a country that, at least in that area, people aspired to match, but not now. The middle class of America has been hollowed out. Working-class Americans are working full time but are still below the poverty line in many instances.

That is not a society we want to see here. It is the rich getting obscenely richer that leads to this disquiet and anguish, and to this anger towards those who have presided over a system that does not include people in the benefits of growth. We say to the government: don't try and replicate the American system; stop trying to make it easier for workers to be sacked; attend to the exploitation that is in the labour market.

You only have to look at 7-Eleven as an example. It is a franchising model in which, as we know, up to $100 million was ripped off its workers, yet there has been no effort by the government to remedy that problem. In fact, 7-Eleven workers are still not paid their due. There has been another task force set up by the government—the minister has had three task forces—which seems to have no tasks and no force. It is about time they attend to that.

Let us look at the record of this government. Firstly, they killed off the car industry. They sacked Australian seafarers on our vessels and replaced them with foreign crew on $2 an hour. They have cut 120,000 apprentices from the system. They have actually treated their own workforce with contempt. Mr Deputy Speaker Broadbent, you always get an idea of a government's view of the world from the way in which it deals with its own workforce. What we have seen in the last three years from this government is an effort to not pay any wage increases to its workforce. Eighty per cent of its workforce have not received a wage increase, even though its ministers have. It has deliberately stymied the efforts of the unions and workforce to get any wage increase whatsoever, and that is an indictment of this government.
More recently, we have seen a loosening of the 457 visa provisions. Labor support the use of temporary work visas, and there are legitimate demands in the labour market that need to be attended to. But what we do not support is the misuse and exploitation of workers who are on those visas, which also lead to downward pressure on wages and do not afford opportunities for locals to get work. We need to get the balance right here. Of course, the government are not focused on these issues.

We have a government that are bereft of policy ideas when it comes to fighting for jobs in this country. We see that they are not interested in providing support for workers in the workplace. They have only contempt for their own workforce. They are not providing support for people who want to get into vocational training. They are not providing sufficient investment and partnership with industries to grow economies. They are not anticipating the emerging demand in our labour market in the new economy. They are not engaging with small businesses in the way they say they will. They like to say that they are the party of small business, yet they do not engage with them. There is no business confidence, and there is no consumer confidence. As a result, we are seeing major problems in our society. The reason this is occurring is that the government are fundamentally at odds with themselves. They are fighting with themselves. They are distracted. They are not dealing with those matters that are of most concern to the Australian people.

We need to see a government that partners with business, that creates consumer confidence and business confidence, and that actually restores some confidence in the system so that businesses start hiring people and, indeed, so that consumers start purchasing. What we are seeing is low wage growth and stagnation in the economy. Where we do see jobs growth, we are seeing it only in the form of part-time work. As I say, 100,000 full-time jobs have been lost this year and the government sit idly by and do nothing.

**Mr Joyce** (New England—Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources) (15:21): Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to rise and speak to this matter of public importance on employment. It is rather absurd that we are talking about what we are trying to do to create jobs on the day the Labor Party have signed a Faustian pact with both Senator Jacqui Lambie and One Nation on the backpacker tax. What is their proposal? Their proposal is that they will have a tax rate for foreign workers at 10.5 per cent, whilst Australian workers are working in the same field at 19 per cent, if they are above the tax-free threshold of $18,200. Obviously, what this means for Australian workers is that they are at a disadvantage. Obviously what the Labor Party have signed up for today with Senator Jacqui Lambie and One Nation is something that actually gives an impetus not to employ Australian workers in the agricultural sector.

We understand that you cannot have a tax rate at over 32 per cent, because no-one from overseas would turn up and we need that labour. But to go to the absurd position where we are offering a rate of 10.5 per cent means that if you are in the field and someone next to you is from Provence they will probably be on a cheaper tax rate. If they are from the Steppes at Ulaanbaatar, they will be on a cheaper tax rate. If they are from Umbria, they will be on a cheaper tax rate. If they from good old County Cork, they will be on a cheaper tax rate. Who proposed this? The Labor Party.

This is a complete disincentive to Australian workers, and today, of all things, Labor have an MPI on Australian labour. How on earth? We could never get something like that through.
How did the party that are supposed to represent Australian workers manage to come up with that? How did they come up with a proposal that makes it a strategic advantage to employ people from overseas over Australian workers? Where is the logic in that? We stick to our position of a 19 per cent tax rate so that they are comparable. The Labor Party are coming up with a policy merely to tear the scab off an issue that had been resolved. Who are they putting on the fire as they tear off this scab? Australian workers. Australian workers are the ones they are attacking. It is bizarre that someone from the National Party has to stand up on behalf of Australian workers—Australian farm workers—because you today, with Senator Jacqui Lambie and One Nation, your new cabal of friends, have announced that you are going to come up with a disadvantage for employing Australian labour.

You say, 'Well, maybe it is just there,' but, no, their desire to take off the scab and create dissent and turmoil is in other areas as well. It is at the Adani coalmine, in Central Queensland, which would employ up to 5,000 people on construction and 4,000 ongoing workers. Who fights against it? The Labor Party fights against it. The Labor Party takes up the cudgels against the working men and women of Central Queensland. Why? Because it is advantageous. It gets them closer to the Australian Greens. Their battle is not for the Australian worker any more. Their battle is in Balmain. Their battle is with the Greens. They have given up on representing regional Australia. They used to be the party of shearsers. They used to be the party of tradesmen. They used to be the party of miners. But that is no longer so. They have given up on that. Now they are the party trying to fight their battle street by street in Annandale, all the way up Trafalgar Street and all the way down to Glebe wharf. That is where the battle is. It is no longer a matter of looking after Australian workers. It was absolutely beyond compare seeing the shadow Treasurer and the member for Hunter, who in this place has not asked a question in the last year—he had a crack at it today but got kicked out—which is better than the shadow water minister, who has never asked me a question at all.

Mr Hartsuyker: How come?

Mr Joyce: They don't believe in those jobs! They are two jobs they do not believe in. So the shadow Treasurer, the shadow minister for agriculture and the member for Grayndler launched themselves into a press conference to announce that the new tax rate for the people from Umbria, for the people from Vermont, for the people who are making their way over here from Lithuania, for all those good backpackers making their way in from all countries around the world, will be at some stage a third of the marginal tax rate of Australian workers.

What else have we noticed lately? The closure of the power station at Hazelwood, costing 750 jobs. Who is responsible for that? Labor is responsible for that. These people are losing their work. Then, we try to get more work going by standing behind the construction of Rookwood Weir, which would create 2,100 jobs. Who fights against us on that? The Labor Party. Who is going to take away the funding for that? The Labor Party. Who is going to take away the extra billion dollars a year for Central Queensland? The Labor Party.

When you peel back this onion you find that there are no friends in the Labor Party for the workers. When we try to ensure we have reliable electricity, we look at the policies of South Australia, where the Labor Party is, and what do we see? A blackout. What is the result to industry? They are trying to work out how they can get out of there, because the policies of the Labor Party are so unconducive to keeping people in full-time work. We look forward to
the Labor Party's explanation. It is a shame that the shadow Treasurer was also booted out today, because maybe he could explain to us how he is going to pay for his rate at 10.5 per cent—how he is actually going to pay for the half a billion dollars.

Mr Brendan O'Connor: Ask George Christensen.

Mr Joyce: I will take the interjection. At least the member for Dawson stands up for workers, such as would be employed at Adani, because you do not. You do not believe in the mining workers any more. You have given up on the mining workers, because you are mates with the Greens. You know your true friends. That is who you are fighting for, and people get it. People know that you are not serious about the mining industry in Central Queensland. Today they were absolutely flummoxed that you have come up with an idea where foreign workers, imported workers, taking Australian jobs are going to be taxed at a marginal rate—my daughters will be up there picking fruit and their marginal tax rate will be 19 cents in the dollar. It would have been the same as for the foreign workers working beside them, but in your stroke of genius today their tax rate is going to be half of what the other farm workers are paying.

That is what you think of Australian workers. That is where you put your heart. What is your explanation for that? Do not laugh at the fact that you make a disadvantage. You do not laugh at the fact that you make a strategic disadvantage against Australian jobs, against Australian workers. You do not laugh at the fact that your party now is making it easier to employ overseas workers than Australian workers. You should not be laughing at that. You should be standing up on behalf of your workers, but you do not.

It is all rhetoric and rubbish. You do not actually believe it. You do not stand up for it—or you have no weight in caucus and you cannot get things turned around. Did you actually know about it today? Did you know about their announcement? Did you care about it? Did it matter? How could you possibly come in here and move an MPI on jobs for Australians the day you brought about a disincentive for jobs for Australians? This is amazing. It would be interesting if the next speaker could explain to us—I put this challenge to you—why, today, you have created an incentive to employ overseas workers over Australian workers. Explain to us why you are doing that. Explain why a person who is over a tax-free threshold of $18,200 a year—my daughter, other farm workers—will be paying tax of 19c in the dollar and your proposal today is that the people who will take their jobs will be paying 10½c in the dollar.

You explain that to me. Explain to me how that fits into the ethos of the Labor Party. What part of the Labor Party platform is that? And while you are at it you can explain why you do not believe in decentralisation, explain to me why you do not believe in the inland rail, explain to me why you do not believe in electricity reliability. You can explain so much, because it is a complete and utter hypocrisy, on a day like today, that you would be talking about Australian jobs.

Mr Husic (Chifley) (15:31): He asked me to respond! The Deputy Prime Minister would win a gold medal for jibber! How am I supposed to respond to that? This is an MPI about jobs, and he has spent most of the time talking about a backpacker tax, and even in regional Australia they all know that this will hurt business and put pressure on jobs. He spent all this time talking about that, but the Deputy Prime Minister cannot deal with the reality that there is a big jobs problem in this country. It is summed up by this one stat from the Reserve Bank.
When you look at all the jobs that are being created, and with unemployment down to 5.6 per cent—when you look at the way jobs are being created this year alone—part-time work accounts for all of the increase in jobs in 2016 and two-thirds of the increase since 2013. The bulk of the jobs that are being created are part-time work.

You will hear those opposite say that this is a good thing—that it means people have choices, flexibility. Wrong: when you ask most people, they want a full-time job; they do not have part-time mortgages, they do not have part-time bills. They need to know that the money is coming through to pay for the things that we all, rightly, understand are required for a decent standard of living. But this government does not care to worry about it and does not care to have a plan to provide for more job growth in this country. This government is quite happy to see people struggle and quite happy not to have an answer as to where the jobs will come from.

Look at youth unemployment. Those opposite used to say all the time, 'We're all about fixing youth unemployment; we're going to fix it.' Where is youth unemployment at? Under the Turnbull government's watch, youth unemployment now stands at nearly 13 per cent—double the national average. According to their own figures—

Mr Taylor interjecting—

Mr HUSIC: No, it is not. It is through estimates. Listen to your own departments. Your own department, in Senate estimates in May, handed over the figure about what youth unemployment is like and where it stands. The assistant minister might want to know that there are nearly 300,000 unemployed young people between the ages of 15 and 24 in this country right now. On top of this, the department acknowledges that there are another 170,000 who have been unemployed for more than a year and who are disillusioned by the fact that they look for jobs that simply are not there—170,000 on top of that 300,000, all admitted to by your own Department of Employment in estimates this year. But there is no plan for jobs.

Look at what job programs they have. Work for the Dole has been around under both coalition and Labor governments. Under this government nearly 90 per cent of participants who go through Work for the Dole are not in full-time work three months after they finish the program. Just a shade over 9,000 do get full-time work, which we are happy for, but it costs nearly $28,000 per head to get those people into work. The stunning fact is that nearly 90 per cent of people who go through Work for the Dole and expect to get a job as a result of it do not get one. This government does not have a plan to help those people.

Instead of fixing Work for the Dole, they have said they will bring in the internship program that the House will debate later today. It is an intern program but they cannot define what an intern is and they cannot define what work they will do. They have created a pool of cut-price labour in an attempt to get people jobs, but it will potentially displace jobs and cut wages. There are no protections in place.

Mr Christensen: That's rubbish! There is! There are multiple provisions!

Mr HUSIC: I hear the alternative Prime Minister chip me. Maybe you could use your powers for good instead of evil for a change, and get the Prime Minister to fix this sham of a program. The longer young unemployed people are locked out of the employment market, the longer they will stay unemployed. There are bigger changes happening in terms of automation.
Tuesday, 8 November 2016  HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  3151

and technology that will change the face of the job market in this country. We cannot afford for people to be de-skilled. Everything the government touch turns into a shambles. They are incompetent, dysfunctional and divided, and the unemployed of Australia are paying the price for it and they should not be forced to do just that.

Mr TAYLOR (Hume—Assistant Minister for Cities and Digital Transformation) (15:36): It is a great pleasure to speak on this matter of public importance on jobs today. I am surprised that Labor has chosen today to talk about jobs. If I were the Labor Party, I would not be talking about jobs at all this week. It is always important when we talk about a topic like this to be thinking about the history. History is a great leveller. It tells us much about how to understand any particular issue.

It is important to remember that in the six years of the last Labor government the Keynesian taps were turned on. There was 4.2 per cent spending growth a year, which is pretty Keynesian by any measure. We have an economist over here, the member for Shortland, who went to a very good university. Unfortunately, they did not learn how to link spending growth to jobs. Despite the fact that there was 4.2 per cent spending growth, we saw the unemployment rate rise from just 4.4 per cent in November 2007 to 5.7 per cent in September 2013.

We heard from the member for Chifley about youth unemployment. Let us look at youth unemployment. For 15- to 24-year-olds the youth unemployment rate rose from 10 per cent to 12.7 per cent over the same six years—that is 13 per cent, which is the number he quoted. We saw 200,000 jobs lost under Labor. The jobless queue grew by 200,000 people. They always look for excuses. That is what you expect from the Labor Party. But in the period when Bill Shorten was the workplace relations minister the number of unemployed people increased by around 72,000. The only job he cares about is his own. From November 2007 till the end of Labor's time in office, 128,800 manufacturing jobs—one in eight manufacturing jobs in this country—disappeared completely. During the two years of Labor's carbon tax 125,000 more Australians joined the unemployment queue.

This is economic vandalism if we have ever seen it. If we want an example of economic vandalism, let us look at the way Labor has looked at the loss of jobs in Victoria at the moment. It is astonishing that only three weeks ago federal Labor deliberately declared its intention to close down thousands of blue-collar jobs.

Mr Conroy: No, it didn't! That is untrue!

Mr TAYLOR: You should listen to this. Federal Labor senator Sam Dastyari moved in the Senate to close down power stations, such as Hazelwood, as well as major industrial facilities around the country. Make no mistake, messages such as 'You are not welcome,' and 'We want to close you down'—from your own senator—are heard loud and clear by business and investors around the world.

Indeed, this is the very policy federal Labor took to the recent federal election, and that message has been exacerbated by the decision of the Victorian Labor government to triple royalties on Victorian power stations in the Latrobe Valley. That is job creation, Labor style. We know they talk about jobs plans—the last time I saw a jobs plan from Labor it looked more like something from the Soviet Union in the 1950s—five-year jobs plans that deliver nothing. That is exactly what we saw under Labor.
Since the coalition came to office, in September 2013, 474,300 jobs have been created, with employment standing at just under 12 million in September 2016. That was with one per cent spending growth, as against Labor's four per cent. We have created far more jobs than in the time under Labor. Under this government employment has continued to grow, rising at 1.4 per cent over the last year. This has been a focus for this government, whether it is tax cuts for small businesses, whether it is historic free trade agreements, whether it is a record investment in targeted infrastructure from our fantastic urban infrastructure minister. We have seen serious growth in jobs, serious investment in the economy and a serious focus on the real job creators in the Australian economy, businesses. Every dollar of tax that is paid for a public sector job has to be paid for by a business somewhere. They are the real job engines, the real job creators, of our economy. That is who we back to create jobs in this economy.

Ms CHESTERS (Bendigo) (15:41): All Australians want is a government that can create good secure jobs, jobs that they can count on. That is all Australian workers want. That is all Australian grandparents want—for their grandchildren to have good secure jobs that they can count on. All parents want is for their children to have access to the same employment opportunities that they themselves had when they were younger. Yet what we have seen from this government is no plan. What we have seen from this government is an attack after attack on workers.

Let us talk about the miners in Central Queensland and this government's failure to stand up for the directly employed Anglo American mine workers who, right this minute, are facing forced redundancies. Their employer has said that they are going to make 80 to 90 of them redundant. At the same time, their employer has advertised for labour-hire workers to replace the directly employed workers. Where has the Deputy Prime Minister been speaking out and calling out this employer on that disgraceful act? Where is the member for Dawson? Where are the Central Queensland members standing up and calling on this company to keep the directly employed people working at that mine?

This is not just happening in mining. This is happening across the sector. And the government is letting corporate Australia get away with it. There are 100,000 full-time jobs that have been lost since the beginning of the year and they have been replaced by insecure labour-hire casual jobs. Underemployment is spiking in this country. Full-time employment is crashing, yet all the government can do is champion business for creating insecure work. All the government can do is champion the productivity gains. This government does not care about full-time jobs, it does not care about Australian workers wanting full-time jobs and it does not care about families relying on decent full-time jobs to secure their futures.

This government killed off the car industry. They like to pretend it was not them, but it was. They are also stalling and failing to properly create industry to replace those jobs being lost in the car industry, particularly in states like South Australia and Victoria. All we have seen this week is crocodile tears from the government about what is going on in Hazelwood. Where are the tears for the Holden workers? Where are the tears for the component suppliers of the car industry, people in regional Victoria, people in the south and the north of Melbourne? Where is the government's plan to help those workers into decent full-time jobs?

This government has also attacked its own workforce. It has sacked thousands of hardworking public servants. It has put pressure on our public system, making queues for Centrelink longer, making problems within our immigration department and within our
education department. This government is antiworker by the way it treats its own workforce. Let's take our cleaners here at Parliament House. One of the first things this government did back when it was elected in 2013 was cut the Clean Start guidelines. To this day, whilst every member of the House has received a pay rise, the cleaners who clean our offices have not received a pay rise. That is how much this government cares about low-paid workers. The cleaners who keep this building clean to this day have still not received a pay rise under this government's watch.

We have seen this government try to cut paid parental leave for 80,000 new mums. It is going to affect people who are pregnant right now and are making plans about how they will afford their mortgages and how they will work as a family unit. This government is saying to them, 'We are going to cut your paid parental leave entitlements.' This government has scrapped the low-income super contribution, hitting the retirement, again, of low-paid workers.

And then we get to what this government is doing in terms of temporary workers. We have seen a 5.6 per cent increase of temporary visa workers in our labour market, and that is putting pressure on local jobs. For all of their crocodile tears about the backpacker tax, what members of the government are not talking about is how they are going to clean up the exploitation. The Fair Work Ombudsman report exposed that one-third of backpackers are being ripped off, yet there is no plan from this government to clean this up, and that is putting direct pressure on the labour market. What Australian people want is a secure job that they can count on. What they are not getting from this government is a plan on how the government is going to create these secure jobs.

**Mr CHRISTENSEN** (Dawson—Chief Nationals Whip) (15:46): Today's MPI is intended to be a criticism of the government, but in reality it speaks volumes about the opposition that proposed it. Certainly what spoke volumes was the whining delivery we just heard from the member for Bendigo then. It really demonstrates her lack of understanding when it comes to the economy. The Labor Party subscribe to this economic view that jobs are created by governments, controlled by the government and paid for by taxpayers. That is the only job creation that they can get their minds around. They believe comrades simply need to line up at a government office and have jobs doled out to them by the state. That is the limit of Labor's understanding of the economy: you can fix any problem by throwing money at it, going round and round in ever-diminishing circles until you run out of someone else's money.

A smart government can play a role in direct job creation; a dumb government would give away $900 cheques, free insulation that burns your house down or something else like that. But a smart government would directly create jobs by building the infrastructure needed for new and expanding industries, where business can grow and employ more people. That is what this smart government is doing, because we need an economy with sustainable jobs that do not drain taxpayer dollars. That is why we have invested $6.7 billion in the Bruce Highway, with projects like the Mackay Ring Road in my electorate about to be underway, creating 600 jobs during construction. That is why we are investing in more dam projects like the Urannah Dam project in the member for Capricornia's seat. That will create new industries, new agricultural employment opportunities and thousands of jobs.

Labor need to overcome a major hurdle in their thinking. Governments do not create sustainable jobs; it is business and private enterprise that create jobs. It is the government's...
responsibility—and I have to say it is the opposition's responsibility as well—to get out of the way of business and create an environment where business can get on with the job of creating jobs.

This brings me to the most telling point yet. I point to the North Queensland and Central Queensland economy, where we have seen the largest job-creating project in this country sitting on the shelf for the past six years. The Carmichael coal project will create 10,000 jobs through its mine in the Galilee Basin, the expanded port at Abbot Point and the railway line connecting the two. The flow-on benefits of the construction and operation are enormous, not to mention the billions of dollars that will be paid in royalties to the state government, and the income tax and GST that will be paid to the federal government. Thousands of pay packets will come into my region, throughout North Queensland and Central Queensland, and there will be spend in the region, which will create more industry, more business and more jobs.

You would think that is the kind of project that would have the wholehearted support of a party that once cared about the worker, that once championed the coal mine worker. They do not these days because in their climate change action plan, which they released this year, they pledged to ensure the orderly transition of Australia's generation capacity from old and heavily polluting coal power to modern sources of clean and renewable energy. They are giving way to the green preference god that they chase, sacrificing those jobs. Thousands of jobs would be created in the Carmichael coal project—not created with taxpayer dollars but by private enterprise; not by government but by business, if they are allowed to do it.

We have got a situation where extreme green activists are abusing the Australian legal process with their own ideological agenda. They are using frivolous legal challenges, or lawfare, to frustrate and delay that project as long as they can. They are desperately hoping that Adani is going to get tired of waiting and simply walk away. If those opposite want to talk about a failure to create jobs they should get up now and talk about their failure to allow business to create thousands of jobs. They have had their chance. The government put forward legislation in this place to say enough is enough. It was legislation to allow legal challenges from those directly affected by a project, but not allowing frivolous political tactics to abuse our legal system for a green agenda. The Greens voted against that legislation, and that was hardly surprising, but Labor came in here and also voted against it and voted against all of those jobs for potential mineworkers in the Galilee Basin. We proposed that that legislation be brought forward again and immediately the Labor Party came out and said that they would oppose it, that they would not support it. So I say to those opposite: do not come in here and lecture us about creating jobs when you are standing in the way of creating jobs. You are happy to sacrifice thousands of mineworking jobs for your own political purposes on this altar of the green goddess Gaia—(Time expired).

Mr HAYES (Fowler—Chief Opposition Whip) (15:52): Like most members here I am very proud of my electorate. My electorate is multicultural and I get to see what the diversity of my electorate has produced. It has a rich tapestry of colour, vibrancy and ambition. I actually get to see the determination of people—they are committed to hard work to get better lives for themselves and their families. We are not a rich area in south-west Sydney, but I am often taken aback when people tell me that they work three and four jobs to support their families. What we need in south-west Sydney—it is what we need everywhere—is real jobs. We have seen the growth of part-time and casualised employment out there. The banks are
being protected by this government and do not want to be sitting before a royal commission, but none of these banks want to lend part-time mortgages for all those people who I represent in my community that live on casual employment. People cannot support a family like that and they are the jobs that are being created.

We heard a lot about jobs during the eight week election campaign—'jobs and growth' rolled off the tongue, but it was all about creating part-time and casual employment in this country. The fact is since the start of this year we have seen a reduction of 112,000 jobs in this country. So much for jobs and growth. But I will give it to the government—they have actually created growth in the casualised employment sector, there is no question about that, but none of the banks that they are protecting are going to be prepared to lend on casualised employment. So much for jobs and growth—you really cannot take it to the bank.

This is the same government, the same mob over there, who goaded Holden and Ford to leave the country. They got rid of our car industry and all the downstream activity that goes with that. So much for jobs and growth. This is the same mob that have made a response on how to address the issues of employment. What do they do? They go and make a referral to the Productivity Commission for it to have a look at penalty rates for the lowest paid workers in this country. If they get a successful outcome it could affect everyone on penalty rates. But they wanted to target retail workers—people who are working in the hospitality industry, people who really do rely on their penalty rates to make a living. They targeted them. So when they want to come in here and preach jobs and growth, just remember their record in this regard.

These are the same people who brought us Work Choices. I remember when they did that. I got to see people who were genuinely affected. For the first time in Australia's history, those opposite made it legal to pay people below the award rates of pay. That is their record when it comes to jobs. They want to target penalty rates. Notwithstanding the fact that at the moment we have the slowest wage growth on record—it is sluggish and it is affecting the economy—they want to put downward pressure on wages into the future. They are showing a total misunderstanding about creating employment opportunities—employment opportunities that sustain local businesses and sustain the local economies that we all represent here.

Youth unemployment in my area is running at about 15.7 per cent. That is dreadful. People are missing out on career opportunities, but this is really bad for communities. Young people have nothing to do and no job opportunities, and people wonder why they get into trouble—why we have issues on our streets. Why do law and order issues emerge out of that? You only have to stop and talk to your local police officers to know that, unless we can provide opportunities for young people, these problems will become manifest in the future of this country. We need to have a view—we need a plan. That is a good idea! Let us have a plan for jobs and growth—not just a slogan. Let us have a plan. We have a commitment in that regard. We have shown that we will work towards delivering sustainable employment opportunities for young people in this country. We need to make a difference. We need young people to make a difference. We need to give them some sustenance on why their ambitions can be realised. If we show that there is no benefit in working hard in this country, we are really relegating our country's future. (Time expired)

Mr COLEMAN (Banks) (15:57): It is really good to have the opportunity to speak on this MPI on employment this afternoon. I want to pick up on one of the comments made earlier by
the member for Gorton. He used the term trickle-down economics, and he said that the opposition did not support the government's proposed reductions in tax, because they were all targeted at people and businesses that would not benefit employment and so on. Frankly, it is just absurd, because what those opposite oppose is any tax reduction for any business that has turnover of $2 million or more. It is important to note—and this is often overlooked by those opposite—that turnover is not the same thing as profit. Turnover just means you might have taken $2 million in the door, but it does not mean that you are a very wealthy person with $2 million. It means that, probably, you have a very small percentage of that $2 million as the profit of the business. But those opposite oppose tax relief for any business that has a turnover of $2 million or more.

Helpfully, the Australian Tax Office has done some numbers on what the typical profit margin of a small businesses is. Let us take a newsagent. A newsagent with a turnover of around $2 million, according to the ATO, would typically have a profit margin of about six per cent. That means that the operators of that newsagent, after paying all their cost and so on, would be taking home about $120,000. They may be a family and there may be kids to support. And they may be employing other people in the newsagency. Those opposite think that is a big business—a newsagent making $120,000 a year—and they should not be entitled to a tax cut. We have all visited pizza shops. The ATO estimates that a pizza shop would make about 10 per cent on turnover—about $200,000. Again, they would no doubt be supporting a family and many other people for that quite small amount of money. But those opposite think that tax relief should not be provided to those small businesses that are employing so many millions of Australians. The list goes on. Furniture is seven per cent. A $2 million turnover furniture business, if it is doing well, will make $140,000 and support a family by doing so. But they think that is big business, and it demonstrates again the lack of understanding of how jobs are created.

Government does not create jobs; government simply facilitates an environment in which businesses can go forth and create jobs, and that is what this government has done very effectively. Since we came to office in September 2013, about half a million jobs have been created—half a million additional jobs since we came to office. Just in the last 12 months, the unemployment rate has fallen by more than half a percentage point. Dr Philip Lowe, the incoming Governor of the Reserve Bank, said back in September:

We thought a year ago that the unemployment rate would now be above six per cent, and here we are now at between 5½ per cent and 5¾ per cent.

Of course, in September it was 5.6 per cent. He said:

The various forward-looking indicators of the labour market that we track—job ads and job vacancies—are on a gradually improving trend. So I think we can look forward to continuing reasonable employment growth.

So there is declining unemployment and there is a plan to further boost the economy through providing tax relief to small business, but this is vociferously opposed by those opposite, who have a very bad record when it comes to job creation. Talk though they may about manufacturing, under the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd governments one in eight manufacturing jobs was lost. One in eight manufacturing jobs was lost under the previous Labor government, and that is a real indictment of their record.
What we do is take positive action that leads to job creation—nowhere more so than in the free trade agreements. Labor talked about such agreements for a long time but achieved nothing, with no major trade agreements closed in the six years in which they were in office. We then completed the China free trade agreement, and those opposite sought to oppose the China free trade agreement. They came to this place day after day after day, finding fault with the China free trade agreement, and of course that agreement has been a great boon to the agricultural sector and many others across Australia, delivered by this government. Under the stewardship of the member for Bradfield, we have an infrastructure plan, with $50 billion in investment across Australia, creating 10,000 jobs in the construction phase of WestConnex, a very important project in my electorate and another example of the very strong record of this government in job creation.

Ms VAMVAKINOU (Calwell) (16:02): My electorate of Calwell has suffered a stream of job losses in recent years. The latest has been the closure of Ford and the thousands of jobs in total that have been lost as a result of the end of car manufacturing in this country. In addition, the alarming rise in insecure work—especially underemployment, casualised labour and depressed wages—is adding to the financial burden of people in my electorate, who already have to deal with narrowing job opportunities.

If we look at the average unemployment rate under this government—which sits at six per cent as compared to 5.1 per cent, where the average unemployment rate sat under the previous Labor governments—we see an alarming rate of unemployed Australians: today, some 700,000 people, many of whom are residents of my constituency. Underemployment is at its highest on record, with 1.1 million Australians who are desperately in need of more work but cannot get it. Youth unemployment is double the national rate, at 12.8 per cent, and in my electorate of Calwell youth unemployment is double that, at 23 per cent and in some cases as high as 26 per cent and rising. In September, full-time employment fell by 53,000, the largest one-month fall since April 2011. Full-time jobs are down by 112,000 since the beginning of this year, and part-time jobs are on the rise and now make up one-third of all jobs, compared to 10 per cent in the 1960s.

If you look at the slowest wages growth on record, you begin to understand that this government is not interested in protecting and advancing the interests of working Australians. The people in my electorate understand loud and clear that this government is committed only to assisting the profit margins of big business at their expense. This government has turned a blind eye to the growing inequality in Australia. Nowhere is this more obvious than in my electorate, where the government is missing in action when it comes to putting forward proposals for creating the jobs desperately needed by my constituents. People in my electorate want more than smooth talking about innovation and start-ups. People in my electorate want to see real and practical plans that create jobs and offer a real and viable future, especially to our young people. They do not want to see massive company tax cuts to big business while they have to endure the hardships of unemployment and exploitation. They want to see support for local manufacturing. They want to see support for genuine, good-quality training and retraining that leads to real jobs.

This government is not interested in supporting the survival of Australian manufacturing. It has killed off the car industry in Calwell and it sits on its hands while other local industries are struggling to survive. And here I want to refer to Willow Ware in my electorate, the iconic
Australian company that is most famous for making the esky. Willow is based in Tullamarine and is one of Australia's oldest companies. Founded in 1887, it has been run by the same family since. It employs about 200 people in my local area and manufactures housewares, including pegs, plastic buckets and baking tins. Willow is pretty much the only supplier left in Australia for many housewares but is facing huge pressure from cheaper imports preferred by Coles, Woolworths, Bunnings and Kmart.

I have visited Willow on three occasions, and I want to thank the Leader of the Opposition for coming out with me on the last occasion. Willow approached this government both before and after the election seeking assistance from the federal government to save their business. They need help in order to invest in new machinery so as to improve their productivity and remain competitive. We first wrote to the government when the member for Sturt was the Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science, and we received a less than satisfactory result—something akin to 'on your bike'. Willow is still waiting for a response from the current industry minister, and so are the 200 people who rely on Willow's survival for their employment.

Labor has shown an interest in helping Willow in the same way that it has an interest and a commitment to helping working Australians by creating real and meaningful job opportunities. Unlike this government, Labor has a plan for our economy. We have a plan to grow full-time work and to improve my constituents' pay packets. Labor has a plan to protect workers from exploitation. Labor has a plan to tackle the growing misuse of 457 visas. But most of all, Labor believes in Australian manufacturing and believes that the path to employment and prosperity lies in investing in our economy for the good of all Australians, not just a rich few.

Mr DRUM (Murray) (16:07): It is a great opportunity to be able to stand in this place and talk about employment and jobs, especially when the opposition has put the MPI forward. Since the coalition came to office in September 2013, 474,000 jobs have been created, with employment standing at over 11 million in September 2016. Under this government employment has been steadily rising by 1.4 per cent over the last year. Compare that against Labor: in the six years that Labor was in government, the job queues grew by over 200,000 people. In that period, when Bill Shorten was the workplace relations minister, the number of unemployed people rose by 72,000. During the two years in which Labor's carbon tax was in place, they lost 125,000 positions of employment. Labor made it very difficult for people to employ anybody by hitting employers with a $9 billion a year carbon tax, hitting them with a mining tax and abolishing the Australian Building and Construction Commission.

It is also interesting that we have some Labor members who want to talk about how we were somehow party to the demise of the Ford Motor Company. It is a historical record that the Ford Motor Company decided to stop manufacturing in Australia under the Gillard government. It was in May 2013, not long after they had taken a nice handout from Prime Minister Gillard, that they then decided to turn around and stop manufacturing, at the end of Labor's six years. And we all understand that, once one of the three motor vehicle manufacturing companies decided to stop their manufacturing processes, it was always going to flow on and make it much more difficult for Toyota and GM Holden to continue to manufacture in Australia—when you took away so much of the critical mass.
Talking locally about what is important in the seat of Murray, you cannot help but think about what is going on in this House right now in relation to the backpacker tax. We have just heard from the Deputy Prime Minister—

*Honourable members interjecting—*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Hunter!

**Mr DRUM:** The Deputy Prime Minister has put down the Labor Party as one that is prepared to introduce a tax into this place that is going to see overseas workers pay half the rate of tax that Australian workers pay. I do not know how the Labor Party is planning to explain this to the workers around Australia—that they are happy to have overseas workers—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Hunter on a point of order.

**Mr Fitzgibbon:** I know he is a new member, but he cannot mislead the House. He does know that Australian workers have a tax-free threshold, as well as backpackers.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Hunter will resume his seat. The member for Murray has the call.

**Mr DRUM:** As we know, there will be Australian workers working in the field with overseas workers and the overseas workers will be paying 10 per cent tax. This is a ridiculous proposition that has been put forward by Jacqui Lambie and is supported by the Australian Labor Party, the party that is supposed to support and look after Australian workers. It is an absolutely ludicrous situation. Worse than anything else, the Labor Party understands that this is a time-critical issue. As I said yesterday, what you should always do in opposition is be very careful about doing no harm. When you are in opposition and want to attack the policies of the government that is fine, but, whatever you are attacking, make sure you do no harm to the industry. The way the Labor Party is going at this one is that they are just going to go ballistic and attack whoever, and they do not care whether any damage is done to the industry itself, providing they can have a go at the government.

I also want to touch on the member for Bendigo. During the signing of the last free trade agreement, the member for Bendigo spent most of the negotiating period attacking the free trade agreement as some horrendous attack on Australian workers, making out this free trade agreement was going to be the worst deal for Australia you could ever have signed. Then, once it was signed, without anything different being done, the member for Bendigo was on the front page of the *Bendigo Advertiser* saying what an amazing deal this free trade agreement was going to be for the wine growers— *(Time expired)*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The discussion has concluded.

**BILLS**

*Appropriation (Parliamentary Departments) Bill (No. 1) 2016-2017*

*Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2016-2017*

*Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2016-2017*

Returned from Senate

Message received from the Senate returning the bills without amendment or request.
Water Legislation Amendment (Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment) Bill 2016
First Reading
Bill received from the Senate and read a first time.
Ordered that the second reading be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

Second Reading
Consideration resumed of the motion:
That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr TUDGE (Aston—Minister for Human Services) (16:14): I thank all honourable members for their contribution to this debate on the Higher Education Support Legislation Amendment (2016 Measures No. 1) Bill 2016. In summing up the bill, I emphasise that it has two distinct purposes with two distinct benefits. Firstly, amendments aim to improve the way we assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to participate in and graduate from university. Secondly, the bill makes administrative amendments to ensure the Department of Education and Training can collect tax file numbers to improve the administration of the VET FEE-HELP scheme and the VET Student Loans program, which will replace it, and improve data management arrangements for the HELP scheme as a whole.

There is no doubt that access to university is an issue for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. However, as the year 12 completion rates of Indigenous students rise and university enrolments increase rapidly, the way we support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students must mature. It was never good enough just to get inside the university door. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have given us that message loud and clear. Universities recognise this too. The reforms that have been developed in partnership between the Minister for Indigenous Affairs and key stakeholders demonstrate that we all understand that the real outcome is graduating. The real outcome is taking up a profession. The real outcome is making the contribution to community, family and the knowledge of our country. Just as the government has worked with Indigenous communities on the development of this policy, universities need to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to ensure students have the right academic and pastoral support to successfully complete units and graduate.

The new Indigenous Students Success Program, developed in close consultation with universities and facilitated by this bill, combines three interrelated programs under a single set of guidelines. The time and effort universities previously spent preparing multiple applications, meeting multiple eligibility requirements and preparing multiple reports can now be devoted to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students through their studies. This government recognises that those working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are best placed to understand the needs of these students. Increased flexibility in the new arrangements allows universities to tailor their supports to the needs of their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in collaboration with the ATSI academic community. First
Australians should be entering university and graduating from university at a rate better than or equal to other Australians. Until that is the case, we have work to do.

This bill is quite routine and administrative on the surface of it; however, it is an important step in creating a new way for universities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to work together to meet the real here-and-now needs of each Indigenous student. We have seen broad support for the reforms across the university sector as well as an appreciation of the expectation that is being placed on the sector. This government is committed to working with Indigenous communities to deliver better outcomes for our First Australians, and this bill delivers on this important task.

The bill also introduces administrative amendments to the Higher Education Support Act 2003 and the Income Tax Assessment Act 1936 to allow the Department of Education and Training to access the tax file numbers of VET FEE-HELP students. Accessing the tax file numbers of VET FEE-HELP students will improve the efficiency of data exchange with the Australian Taxation Office and improve data quality. These amendments provide consistency across all five loan schemes and build on existing administrative processes already in place for trade support loans and for the other four higher education loan programs. Through this bill, more efficient and effective administration of the Higher Education Loan Program and, importantly, improved HELP data will be possible.

The amendments will also make it possible for students to use a new digital Commonwealth assistance form that is managed by governments, not providers. This will allow the Department of Education and Training and the Australian Taxation Office to efficiently exchange loan data using the common identifier that is a student's tax file number. Importantly, these amendments increase the government's ability to be responsive to the issues of student loan debts that were incurred in an unconscionable way and to remove these debts with speed and certainty, reducing stress on people who had never intended to incur a debt. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were among those targeted by unscrupulous providers that did not always have the best interest of these often vulnerable students in mind.

This government recognises that it is vital that the HELP scheme remains sustainable so that it can continue to be accessed by future generations of students. These amendments authorise the use and disclosure of tax file numbers between Commonwealth offices, specifically to improve available data on the HELP scheme and to assist in its future administration. To summarise for honourable members, to put all of this in context, the changes proposed in this bill improve support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The VET student loans bills are consistent with the changes proposed in this bill, ensuring that future loan arrangements are robust and sustainable and, above all, have the interest of students at their centre. 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 TUDGE (Aston—Minister for Human Services) (16:21): by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.
Question agreed to.
Bill read a third time.

**Customs Tariff Amendment (2017 Harmonized System Changes) Bill 2016**

**Customs Amendment (2017 Harmonized System Changes) Bill 2016**

Second Reading

Cognate debate.

Consideration resumed of the motion:
That this bill be now read a second time.

**Mr NEUMANN** (Blair) (16:22): I rise to say that Labor will support the Customs Tariff Amendment (2017 Harmonised System Changes) Bill 2016 and the Customs Amendment (2017 Harmonised System Changes) Bill 2016. The government is cutting it fine here, as it has to have this done by the beginning of 2017. But we will facilitate the passage of this legislation—indeed, both bills.

In relation to the non-tariff bill—I will call it that—this bill makes some minor amendments to maintain the collection of the correct import duties for biofuels and biofuel blends imported under the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement. The bill also implements some consequential changes required as part of the fifth review of the International Convention on the Harmonised Commodity Description and Coding System, commonly referred to as the harmonised system. It is particularly important, as Australia is a signatory to the World Customs Organisation and we are a part of the harmonised system. It is important for trade—there is no doubt about that.

I note that complementary amendments will be made to the Customs Tariff Act 1995 by the customs tariff amendment, as I have said, so we will support this particular legislation. We are a signatory, and Australia takes seriously its obligations regarding trade and particularly free trade, and Labor has a long history of supporting free trade. Labor will support that particular piece of legislation. In relation to the tariff amendment, this bill makes approximately 950 amendments to create, change and clarify tariff codes. I note that the amendments are the result of the World Customs Organisation's fifth review, as I said before.

Australia has had a significant input into their review, and government agencies and industry groups have been consulted on the changes during the review process. I thank the government for briefing the opposition on this. As a signatory to the harmonized system we are required to implement these changes by 1 January 2017. For those who do not know, the Customs Tariff Act provides an eight-digit classification with a six-digit international classification, supplemented by two digits for domestic purposes. The additional two digits are used for statistical purposes by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. There are some new subheadings, ensuring items are classified in the correct way. I note the International Narcotics Control Board made a request for the new subheadings to be inserted to better facilitate the monitoring and control of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

The amendments address some environmental and social issues, such as further enhanced monitoring of trade in certain fish and tropical woods by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. It removes tariff codes for items no longer widely imported and used, such as typewriters, and it includes changes to recognise new and
emerging technologies. It is particularly important in giving assurances to Australian importers that Australia's classification of goods accords with the harmonized system and is consistent with our major trading partners.

It gives effect to the applications of customs duties on certain imported goods in accordance with bilateral trade agreements, for example, the rules of origin in the following agreements—I will not go through them all—our free trade agreements with the United States, Thailand, Chile, Malaysia, Korea, Japan, China et cetera. The changes will be submitted to the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties in accordance with Australia's treaty-making process and, following that, I understand that the department will make arrangements to amend the relevant regulations for each and every agreement. We support both pieces of legislation.

Mr HAWKE (Mitchell—Assistant Minister for Immigration and Border Protection) (16:26): I rise to sum up the Customs Tariff Amendment (2017 Harmonized System Changes) Bill 2016 and an associated bill. I first want to thank the shadow minister and the opposition for their support and consideration of these important changes.

The Customs Tariff Amendment (2017 Harmonized System Changes) Bill 2016 contains approximately 150 amendments to the Customs Tariff Act 1995. These amendments give effect to Australia's obligations arising from the World Customs Organization's fifth review of the International Convention on the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System, commonly referred to as 'the harmonized system'. The bill establishes new tariff classifications, amends existing classifications, provides clarity and removes obsolete provisions.

The new tariff classifications established by this bill provide for the identification of new and emerging technologies. Reporting against the new and amended tariff classifications will provide a clearer picture of trade patterns, facilitate the collection and comparison of trade data and assist the monitoring of trade in certain goods. This bill ensures that Australia's tariff classifications are consistent with Australia's major trading partners.

Turning to the second bill, the Customs Amendment (2017 Harmonized System Changes) Bill 2016 contains amendments to the Customs Act 1901. These amendments, in conjunction with the Customs Tariff Amendment (2017 Harmonized System Changes) Bill 2016, which I just spoke about, give effect to Australia's obligations arising from the World Customs Organization's fifth review of the International Convention on the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System. The bill also makes minor amendments to the Customs Act 1901 to provide for the collection of appropriate import duties for biofuels and biofuel blends, imported under the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement. I commend the bills to the House.

Question agreed to.
Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Mr HAWKE (Mitchell—Assistant Minister for Immigration and Border Protection) (16:30): by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.
Bill read a third time.

**Customs Amendment (2017 Harmonized System Changes) Bill 2016**

*Second Reading*

Consideration resumed of the motion:
That this bill be now read a second time.
Question agreed to.
Bill read a second time.

**Third Reading**

Mr HAWKE (Mitchell—Assistant Minister for Immigration and Border Protection) (16:30): by leave—I move:
That this bill be now read a third time.
Question agreed to.
Bill read a third time.

**Social Security Legislation Amendment (Youth Jobs Path: Prepare, Trial, Hire) Bill 2016**

*Second Reading*

Consideration resumed of the motion:
That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr HUSIC (Chifley) (16:30): I rise to speak about the Social Security Legislation Amendment (Youth Jobs Path: Prepare, Trial, Hire) Bill 2016. This is a bill designed, in part, to support the introduction of the Turnbull government's Prepare, Trial, Hire program or PaTH. PaTH is supposed to prepare young people for work by providing jobseekers aged 17 to 24 with pre-employment training and placement in voluntary internships for between four and 12 weeks. During that time they may work 15 to 25 hours a week. Jobseekers will receive payments of $200 per fortnight, on top of their current income support payments, while they are participating in the PaTH program. Businesses will be paid $1,000 to take on an intern and will receive a wage subsidy of between $6½ thousand and $10,000 if they hire them at the conclusion of the internship.

This bill will give the government the ability to do two things that will help get PaTH off the ground. First, a provision will be inserted in the Social Security Act and the Veterans' Entitlements Act so the $200 payment interns receive is not counted as income for social security or veterans' entitlements purposes. Secondly, it will amend the Social Security Act to allow young people to suspend their payments if they are employed. They can then restart them, without reapplying, if they lose their jobs through no fault of their own within 28 weeks.

The government is going to argue that the measures in this bill are noncontroversial. They will argue PaTH is needed to fix youth unemployment. But, make no mistake, the opposition—like many in the community—have serious concerns about whether this overall program represents a fair deal for Australia's young unemployed. The reality is, these proposed changes form part of a deeply flawed program, something drawn up in a rush, as the Turnbull government retreats from other long-running employment programs that are failing
under their watch, victims of this government’s incompetence. As they scramble and pivot to the Youth Jobs PaTH Program the bigger story is this: the Turnbull government is failing to provide a plan for new jobs across the nation, particularly for young Australians.

During the election, the Prime Minister who promised us the end of three-word slogans came up with one of his own and used it endlessly: jobs and growth. They might not have had a concrete plans for jobs, but at least they had a concrete plan for slogans. This is cold comfort for unemployed Australians, especially young Australians, who are worried about being locked out of the job market. Despite promising it would tackle youth unemployment, an incompetent Turnbull government has failed to deliver.

On the Turnbull government's watch, youth unemployment has climbed to nearly 13 per cent, double the national average. According to their own figures, there are nearly 300,000 unemployed young people between the ages of 15 and 24. On top of this, the Department of Employment acknowledges there are another 170,000 people who have been unemployed for more than a year, who are disillusioned by the act of looking for jobs that are simply not there. It is a disgrace. This government has left young Australians high and dry, unable to come up with a real plan to find jobs for our young people.

Let us look at how the Turnbull government has tried to 'help' young unemployed Australians. Here is one of their ideas to help young unemployed get to their feet: they made them, potentially, wait for one month before they could access income support. Some help. Here is another: pushing young unemployed onto the Work for the Dole program when 90 per cent of the participants are not in a full-time job three months after finishing the program. Only 9,460 people managed to get a full-time job through Work for the Dole. That is a shade over 9,000. While it is great that those 9,000 found full-time work at a cost of $28,000 per person, there are another 78,000 young people who need the Turnbull government to get its act together and improve the program to help them get into full-time work.

Overall around $300 million was shifted in this program in the last financial year and yet again this government could not get nearly 90 per cent of the Work for the Dole participants into full-time work. When quizzed about the performance of the Work for the Dole program, what was the response of the government? At last month's Senate estimates the Secretary of the Department of Employment said:
The purpose of Work for the Dole is not necessarily to lead … to a full-time job.
What a jaw dropper. I will repeat what the government's own department said about Work for the Dole:
The purpose of Work for the Dole is not necessarily to lead directly to a full-time job.
With an attitude like that there is no wonder this program is floundering. Make no mistake: because of the incompetence of this government that program is failing badly. It is one of a range of measures that are supposed to get people into work, and yet this government has turned it into an expensive failure.

What has been the response of the Turnbull government to this failure? You would think they would focus on fixing the flaws and getting the program, which has run successfully I might add under both coalition and Labor governments, back on its feet. Not a chance. Instead, it has rushed in this PaTH program in this legislation. It is a poorly considered attempt to divert attention from the failing Work for the Dole program. It has taken millions
out of Work for the Dole. It has shifted over to PaTH nearly $800 million—$752 million, to be precise.

Again, taken in isolation, the government is going to tell you that the measures in this bill are non-controversial, but you simply cannot take these measures on face value without considering the concerns that exist about PaTH, and there are quite a few. Under what is being proposed every year PaTH will take in 30,000 young Australians, turn them into interns and place them in businesses around the country. That might not sound like a big deal, but this is a massive shift. Previously the Work for the Dole program was aimed at not-for-profits or government bodies like councils. This was done for a very important reason. It was to ensure young unemployed Work for the Dole participants were not used as cut-price labour, displacing existing workers from their jobs. The Turnbull government does not care about this. It does not understand the significance of the change it is about to make—or it does and it is not letting on. It is quite relaxed about the fact that for the first time it will provide big businesses with a pool of cut-price young unemployed people, who will be working at a rate that is less than the national minimum wage.

I will walk you through some of the issues associated with the PaTH program that this bill is going to help support. The Turnbull government has decided to call the program participants interns. They will have their income payment topped up by $200. That is provided for under this legislation. Most people outside of this place would think of an intern as being a young person working in largely a white-collar role—for example, in professional services firms like law firms. You can be pretty confident that the general public's idea of what an intern is will not match the Turnbull government's likely definition of an intern. That is because six months after announcing this program the Turnbull government still has not even defined what an intern will be. This should not be a hard thing to do.

The Turnbull government are trying to find a way to win over the general public to their new term of 'intern'. For example, it will be quite conceivable that we will see intern waiters, intern retail assistants or intern construction aides. Most Australians will see right through this. The Turnbull government will be slipping in a dodgy definition of what an intern is, and it will not benefit young Australians. The big concern about PaTH is that it will be used to displace workers. Ordinary young Australians trying to get their foot into an entry-level job will be fighting with 120,000 people in the PaTH program, who represent cut-price labour subsidised by this government. Remember that this program is not attempting to create jobs. It is creating an incentive for businesses to take government funded jobseekers.

Here is another grey area. What will these interns, undefined, actually do while they are in the workplace? We still do not know if they will simply be observing what is going on or be expected to perform as intern waiters or intern retail assistants. Again there is no detail from this government. How will workplace standards be monitored and audited across the 30,000 internships? What is the standard of supervision required for an internship to go ahead? All of these important questions are unanswered, yet we are expected to support this bill, which will give effect to that program.

Another question: what happens to those interns who unfortunately experience a workplace incident or accident? Will they be covered by workers compensation? According to the government, that will depend on the workers compensation regimes that operate in the particular state or territory in which these interns find themselves. But in some states and
territories an intern may be considered a volunteer, not an actual employee, and therefore unable to access workers compensation. This is an issue that cannot be ignored, but the government is not really stepping forward with clear assurances.

But here is the most important question: after being used for up to three months at a rate below the national minimum wage, will these interns actually get a job? Interns Australia recently wrote in *The Sydney Morning Herald* that unpaid interns are only offered employment with the same organisation 20 per cent of the time. Their conclusions about the PaTH program are absolutely scathing:

It creates an Australia where exploited interns are widespread but entry-level jobs are scarce, where business either flagrantly exploits its newest workers or doesn't know whether to hire them, and where the rights of interns are more confused and muddled than ever before.

PaTH interns were supposed to be placed into businesses where there was a 'real vacancy'. That is the way it was described when this program was announced and as what this legislation supports. But, since announcing PaTH, the Turnbull government quickly watered down this pledge to 'a reasonable prospect of a job'. It went from 'real vacancy' to 'reasonable prospect'—again, not a small issue. There is a concern that PaTH could cause wage deflation across entry-level positions as businesses use interns instead of hiring someone full time. Alternatively, there is a concern that young Australians participating in PaTH could be used and discarded every four to 12 weeks. There is little in the way of testing or sanction for employers that might churn through PaTH participants after the engagement with an intern concludes.

The review and monitoring process that will supposedly stop churn from happening is laughably thin—something along the lines of 'trust us, it will be fine,' which is not good enough when it comes to setting up Australia's next generation of workers. How will the government's 'trust us, it will be fine' checks and balances be implemented? The answer is that once again the government have washed their hands of the hard work and will ask employment service providers to do the heavy lifting. Employment service providers will be carrying the increased burden of risk assessments for waves of new interns, and the government have also admitted that employment service providers will do the up-front checks to try and weed out job displacement or churn. But they will not be paid any extra for these tasks. If I am wrong, I am happy to be corrected. Employment providers are supposed to find the resources to check whether larger companies, potentially with operations all over the country, might be hiding job displacement tactics and taking subsidised interns from the government instead. There could be as many as 18,000 to 20,000 companies required for 30,000 PaTH placements every single year. The government have outsourced the checking of the placements at all of those companies to the employment service providers without funding the process. Again, I am happy to be corrected, but that does not look like what is going to happen. The government's own up-front checking will not go much further than cross-referencing intern placements with company ABNs, hoping to catch out sneaky displacement tactics. This is the flaw with the government's 'trust us, it will be fine' approach. There is nothing to earn that trust.

Following on from this, I point out another concerning scenario to the House, one where we test the ability of the Department of Employment to keep an eye on business misuse of PaTH. What about the situation where big hotel chains, for instance, with a fly-in squad of
intern waiters, decide to roster those interns for 15 to 25 hours over a Friday, Saturday or Sunday? Would it simply be a coincidence—a sheer coincidence—that the usual penalty rates that would apply to an existing employee would not apply to those interns? It is not a coincidence. That is a real prospect, where both the interns and the existing employees lose out—especially those employees who suddenly find they are not required to work on weekends because an intern is doing their job. What have been outlined now are all serious concerns, and they have simply been glossed over by this government.

In responding to the debate over this bill, the government must provide concrete actual responses to these concerns. They should also tell us why they are so keen to deliver a rainbow right up the balance sheets of some of Australia's biggest businesses. Many of these businesses—the big businesses—have never taken a real and sustained interest in giving a substantive start to the nearly 800,000 Australians without work.

When you ask jobactive providers, as I do, who takes on jobseekers, is it small to medium enterprises or is it big business, the answer usually is small business. The government acknowledges this—they admitted as much in last month's estimates. In parlance that those opposite would well understand, there are definitely lifters and leaners when it comes to taking on job seekers. SMEs are definitely the lifters; big business put up a whole range of barriers to bringing on jobseekers off the jobactive network. They make it hard to bring them on. Now, all of a sudden, the biggest advocates, the biggest cheerleaders, for PaTH happen to be big business, who can see a pool of young unemployed Australians working at cut-price rates, below the national minimum wage, being deployed in a way that could potentially undercut jobs and undercut wages. It is simply unacceptable that this system might potentially be rolled out without the government providing any of the assurances necessary.

The opposition is very concerned about the potential for young job seekers to be exploited and whether this program could undermine workplace standards. Given all those concerns, the opposition will refer this legislation to a Senate committee inquiry for further consideration, and that is why we will reserve our position on this bill until the inquiry report is tabled and we will reserve our right to make further amendments in the other place. We are also moving an amendment to seek assurances in this place that we will get answers to the concerns we have continually raised—answers which have not been forthcoming—about the system design of the program that is being put forward in the legislation that we are about to debate. Frankly, can you blame us for being suspicious of the Turnbull government's motivations when you see the attractions of this program being singled out by their own backbenchers? Last month, during estimates, it was demonstrated through Senator James Paterson that you just cannot trust the government to make PaTH fair for young people. Senator Paterson showed how sidestepping unfair dismissal laws under the Fair Work Act was a 'benefit' of PaTH. In a big win to big business, Senator Paterson took the Department of Employment through a series of questions explaining how the Fair Work Act would be dodged using PaTH. Senator Paterson asked:

I guess one potential advantage for a business is that if an intern does not work out they are not going to be subject to any unfair dismissal claims or any costs in that respect?

The Secretary of the Department of Employment confirmed that, while they are PaTH intern, the young person would not be classified as an employee, meaning employers could take them on without risk of Fair Work proceedings. This creates the risk that employers will not
use this program as a pathway to work but rather as a pathway to churning through workers. It begs the question: is the Turnbull government trying to help young Australians get a job or make it easier for them to get sacked? On top of that, the sheer volume of interns is going to increase massively.

You would think the government had a report or a review to underpin their assumption that this golden ticket for youth employment would exist, but they have not even evaluated an existing program, the National Work Experience Program. That is undergoing a review right now—not before the PaTH program was drawn up. After that sort of rigorous evidence-based approach, the government has decided to take the current program, which places between 3,000 and 6,000 people a year, at best guess, and a ramp it up to the 30,000 per year Youth Jobs PaTH Program.

I touched earlier on another program with PaTH, and it relates to safety. The safety and risk processes used in the failing Work for the Dole program are apparently going to be copied across to the PaTH program. Unfortunately in April this year a young participant in the Work for the Dole program suffered a fatality while on a placement in Toowoomba. The department has since handed a finished report into the management of Work for the Dole to Minister Cash to determine whether or not people who provide the Work for the Dole program are meeting the expectations on workplace health and safety as enunciated under the deed. The government has not said what changes have been made to the Work for the Dole program, or how it monitors safety in the program, since the report was completed. We have had a fatality, and we have not had the government say what changes have been made as a result of their own internal investigation.

I have been very grateful for the two meetings that I have had with this government, its representatives and the department over this internal review. However, I have asked them repeatedly, 'When are you releasing that report?' They indicate that they are waiting for the outcome of a workplace safety regulator incident report that is being conducted in Queensland before they release their report. Frankly, given that these are looking at different matters insofar as the internal government report is looking at the deed and the way that people who are undertaking the Work for the Dole programs for the government are adhering to the expectations of the deed, this report should be released, and it should be released in consideration of what is going to happen under PaTH, given that there are going to be parallels between the workplace safety arrangements under both the Work for the Dole program and PaTH.

The government have admitted that the safety monitoring and standards in PaTH will be modelled on those in the Work for the Dole program. The government want 120,000 young people to trust that their workplace health and safety will be protected under this program. If they want that trust to be earned, they should release the report into this fatality and demonstrate what tangible differences and changes are being made to workplace health and safety under the programs they run. It goes back to the fundamental issue of workers compensation. The government will not say how interns, who will be supported under this legislation, will be covered should an accident or death occur under the PaTH program. It is not good enough for a government program to not have that spelt out. You cannot make workplace safety, in a program you devised, someone else's problem.
Ultimately, as we have had concerns about the way in which the Turnbull government is failing young Australians in finding them work through the programs that they have set up, we remain concerned about whether or not PaTH will actually deliver. Its employment policies and results show that the government does not know how to address changes in Australia’s labour market. In fact, a new report from Anglicare, *Positions vacant? When the jobs aren't there*, showed that there is only one job advertised for every six low-skilled jobseekers in Australia. The report warned that low-skilled workers are increasingly excluded from the workforce, and now, under PaTH, government subsidised interns could be competing for similar roles. A staggering figure from the report was that in May this year nearly 140,000 people competed for roughly 22,000 entry-level jobs advertised across Australia. It is proof that the Turnbull government is failing to create new jobs, and under the Turnbull government employment conditions have deteriorated to the point where they are worse than at any time since the peak of the GFC. In fact, things are worse than that. Underemployment in the August 2016 quarter was 8.7 per cent. The macro division of Treasury said that was the highest result since the series of data began way back in 1978.

Another change hindering the young people targeted by PaTH getting into work is that more people are staying in work longer than ever before. This means that the Turnbull government has to increase the pie and not just send young people off to compete for jobs that are just not available. In 1992, for instance, fewer than one in 10 people in the workforce were over 55, and today it is one in six. This is going to become a bigger issue as people live longer and stay in the workforce longer. There are fewer openings for younger people to get their foot into the workplace. The government should be focusing on creating jobs and training people for the types of jobs that are coming down the pipeline instead of erecting flawed programs that could displace jobs and depress wages.

Again, our big concerns about this program and what this legislation will enable are that it will potentially create 30,000 interns a year—interns whose role has not been defined, who could potentially displace people out of work or lead to falling wages at a time when wages growth is at its lowest on record, and whose safety has not been guaranteed; that there are some people within government ranks who have suggested that this will be an ideal way to circumvent unfair dismissal protections; and that those businesses that are doing the work of helping out in taking on more jobseekers will not be prioritised above bigger businesses who have failed to do the hard yards in providing work for the 800,000 or so that are seeking work, going through the government’s own jobactive network and not being helped out by big business. But big business, without helping the unemployed, wants to help itself to a cut-price pool of young labour to be able to, as I said before, potentially displace jobs and displace wages. These are serious concerns.

PaTH, with so many flaws at the heart of the program design, is unlikely to help young jobseekers overcome these significant employment market barriers, and it is another flawed policy from a government without a jobs plan, running from some of the failed programs it has had under its watch and trying to put up new programs with some of these barriers to them. This is why we are moving a second reading amendment: to basically get assurances out of this government for things that we have been asking for ages. Tell us whether or not you are able to define what those interns are. Tell us whether or not they are going to displace people’s jobs. Tell us whether or not they are going to lead to a cut in wages. Tell us whether
or not the people that are involved in the PaTH program will have the protection of workers compensation or like arrangements. Tell us whether, for example, you are using this as a mechanism to circumvent the Fair Work Act when it comes to unfair dismissal protections. Tell us whether or not you are going to be fair dinkum in making sure that big business finally does what a lot of us expect, which is basically to start providing jobs for those people that are currently without work and are left to be dependent on government programs like Work for the Dole where, in some cases, nearly 90 per cent of the people that go through the program are without full-time work three months after they have gone through the program, a program which the government then says, through its department, is not there to provide work for people, which is simply staggering.

We expect better, young Australians expect better, and we expect answers from the government. It has taken six months to get those answers, and we have got nowhere.

I move:

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

"Whilst not declining to give the bill a second reading, the House notes that the Turnbull Government cannot guarantee that, under Youth Jobs PaTH (Prepare, Trial, Hire):

(1) jobs will not be displaced by cheaper labour;

(2) wages will not be undercut and some participants will be paid below minimum award wages;

(3) participants' safety will not be compromised and that adequate insurance arrangements will be provided;

(4) participants won't be used to help businesses sidestep unfair dismissal protections; and

(5) it will prioritise using small to medium enterprises in PaTH because they have a demonstrated track record of employing more job seekers through the jobactive programme".

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Vasta): Is the amendment seconded?

Ms Owens: I second the amendment and reserve my right to speak.

Mr BROAD (Mallee) (16:57): It gives me pleasure to talk about the Social Security Legislation Amendment (Youth Jobs Path: Prepare, Trial, Hire) Bill 2016. I have listened for the last half an hour. I have listened to the criticisms, but I did not hear too many solutions. I guess that is the challenge we have as a country. Sadly, we have 600,000 Australians who are living in a household where no-one has ever held a job. That is staggering. That means that there are young Australians who have not seen the model of mum and dad getting up and going to work. There are young Australians who do not know the value of a work ethic. There are young Australians who do not know that, in working, you can have a sense of purpose and self-worth and an opportunity to better yourself.

So I think it is important for members on both sides of this parliament to think very creatively about how we address this major challenge. The first thing you have to do if you are going to have jobs for Australians is have something you can produce. You have to have a marketplace for those jobs. I am pleased to say that, under our leadership within this government, we have been able to develop three key free trade agreements, with China, Japan and South Korea. People ask: how do you draw the links? I am going to explain just how clear those links are in the electorate that I represent.

Last week I was in both Beijing and Tokyo. I was in Beijing launching nectarines into China. Our nectarine growers have been screwed over for a long time by the supermarkets—
that is a very descriptive parliamentary term but an accurate term. As we have found greater markets, they have then been able to get better prices. So it was really pleasing that this year, for the first time, we are going to get nectarines into China.

We have also seen this recently with table grapes, which are grown in the Mallee. Table-grape season is soon, so people in the gallery might want to look for some good, fresh table grapes soon. They have been getting great prices into Japan, into China and into Korea. The outworkings of that mean that people are planting more plantings and people are looking to hire more staff. The local Toyota dealer told me he has had the best year he has ever had. He is putting on apprentices. He is selling utes and products. So, creating the marketplace creates the opportunity.

The next challenge for us, though, is to take that opportunity and turn it into a reality of jobs for young Australians. Now, we have had a discussion in the public domain around backpackers, who are an essential part of our workforce. But we do not want to have jobs just for foreign workers. More importantly, we want to have jobs for young Australians.

If you go and talk to people who are potential employers, they will say, 'The difficulty we have with employing young Australians is that they are not job ready in an aptitude or OH&S sense.' What the measure in this bill is attempting to do is to create a pathway for those young Australians to go from being effectively unemployed to being in gainful employment. Keep in mind that, as I said, 600,000 Australians are in households where they have never seen a model of working people. We are taking young Australians who have been on unemployment benefits for six months—so they have been looking, but they have not been successful—and we are saying to them, 'We are going to invest in you by giving you some training, some basic OH&S.'

I was and still am a farmer, and I used to do a lot of youth work with the Salvos. I dealt with a lot of these kids. I would take some of these young unemployed kids out to my farm and get them on a handpiece, doing pretty hard physical work. They would say to me, 'I'm a bit disadvantaged. I've got ADHD, I've got difficulty with my concentration, I'm hyperactive.' But, after dragging sheep out and crutching them all day, they slept at night. They were very tired. I got some of these young guys out and they actually helped paint my house. They are supposed to have attention deficit disorder, but they could do the skirting and the cutting-in. It was a matter of working with these kids, getting them through the first step.

The Youth Jobs PaTH program is about that. It is about getting them job ready before they go and work in a workplace. Why this program is so much better than a work for the dole program is that you are putting a young Australian in a real workplace, not a token workplace. We are not asking a young Australian to go and pick up rubbish for the council, like in a work for the dole program. It is not a mickey mouse job. We are putting them amongst real men and women who are holding down jobs. We are putting them in the orchards, we are putting them in small manufacturing, and they are working with real Australians. It is like having a hit of tennis—I do not know what you are like at tennis, Mr Deputy Speaker Vasta, but, if you have a hit of tennis with someone like me, I can guarantee that you are not going to lift your game. However, if you have a hit of tennis with JA, John Alexander, former Australian tennis champion, you are going to lift your game. If you put young Australians in the workforce, where they are working with people who are already in the industry, they will learn the tricks of the trade.
The secret of success is very simple, and if there is something that I want people to take home from this speech today—someone said this to me once, and I have always remembered it—it is: look around at what everybody else is doing and do a little bit more. That is the secret of success. It is pretty simple: look around at what everyone else is doing and do a little bit more. If you are in a workplace and you are trying to do a little bit more than everyone else is doing, the boss notices you, and that is how you get a promotion.

So we take these young Australians and put them in an internship. You have to understand that there has to be an incentive for the employer to take on an intern, because that intern's productivity is not going to be great. If we are honest, it is not going to be great. I have had these kids on my farm. They might break something. They might set the place on fire—that is a risk on a farm. You have to understand that their productivity is not going to be great. But you are doing this because you believe in the future of our young workers.

So you take these young people on. It is up to 12 weeks that they are working in that situation, and that is a good length of time. They are learning off one another and they are getting a sense of self-worth. They are also getting a little bit of extra money. It is amazing what happens when people who are not used to getting money get a little bit of extra money. Suddenly they get a little bit of extra freedom. And I saw this when I did some youth work with these kids. You give them a little bit of extra money and, suddenly, yes, they are tired, but they get to take their girlfriend out to Maccas. They got to put a new stereo in their car. It actually starts to light the fire in the eyes of young Australians who never thought they could aspire to something—now, they think, perhaps they could aspire a little bit more. And that is what this is all about. At the end of 12 weeks we want them to be so enthusiastic about their employment that the boss says, 'Actually, this guy is really worth investing in.'

I have been out talking to potential employers across Wimmera and Mallee, and they are pretty keen to take on young Australians. They actually are. They know that it is a cost to them. And they know that even with a wage subsidy it is a cost to them. Often a tradie who is an employer will say: 'It takes more time when you have an apprentice. I am not as productive when I have an apprentice. But, you know, I'm a small-business man and I am passing on a skill.' That lights their fire. And so we in this program then give a wage subsidy for a further 12 months for that young Australian to be working in that business. Then, hopefully, at the end of that they are up and running.

Successive governments have tried many, many things to try and address the problem of the 600,000 Australians who are unemployed and how to move them into the workforce. They have tried the big stick approach—which, I have to say, was some of the 2014 budget that we tried—which was, 'You've got to get out there and look for 40 jobs a month'. I never supported that. It was not workable. They have tried the sugar approach: give you more money and more money. That has never really worked. They have tried the Work for the Dole approach but it has never led to any real employment because it has not been in a real employment setting.

So I really think this is worth breathing life into. I have heard all the criticisms from the member for Chifley and I wonder if his criticisms would be as severe if he took off his opposition hat. I think if you look at this very clearly, you will see that the idea of taking a young Australian and getting them working safely in a workplace—and the idea of immersing them with employees so they get into the work culture and they get a bit of extra money, and
the idea of subsidising that ongoing employment for that first 12 months—is perhaps the best model that has ever been put forward in this parliament.

Sure, there will be some changes that will need to be made as we roll it out. But the principle is very sound. I have seen it on my own farm when I worked with some of these young unemployed Australians. I have seen it from their perspective. I have seen it from the perspective of an employer. And I am really pleased that we are allocating some money to this.

One of the things I think is also very fair about this is that, if at the end of that 12-month period, or even less than that time, that person through no fault of their own is sacked—and that does happen at times—that person does not have to go on a waiting list to receive unemployment benefits. That young Australian will be able to go straight back on to unemployment benefits while they look for another job. I think that is very fair. If we think this through we will see that this is really about nurturing, mentoring and transitioning a young Australian—and, frankly, the longer they stay unemployed, the more unemployable they are—and moving them into the opportunities that are there before them.

This is what defines us as a country. We as a government have the macro right. We have the macro settings whereby there are now more job opportunities in my patch than there have ever been. Yet, at the same time, there is higher youth unemployment in my patch. We needed something to be that nexus, to be that transition period. This I think has the potential to do that. I am really proud to speak on it. I look forward to seeing it implemented in my patch. It makes me proud to be part of a government that can see the macro policy but is also making sure that we turn the macro policy about good financial settings into great job opportunities for young Australians. You have to say to those young Australians, 'The best thing we can do for you is get you a job, get you an opportunity, and for you to seize that opportunity, take that opportunity and make something of yourself, and you'll look back on your life and say, I started from nothing, but I'm really proud of what I've been able to achieve.'

Mr HILL (Bruce) (17:10): I would like to add my voice and make some remarks on this important bill, the Social Security Legislation Amendment (Youth Jobs Path: Prepare, Trial, Hire) Bill 2016. I will start by agreeing with about half of what I heard the member for Mallee say. I have had a couple of conversations with him. His electorate is in fact one of my favourite parts of Victoria, through family and other connections, and home to my favourite national park; long may it continue. The part of your remarks that I agree with—and I really do; I think there is a lot of common ground—is around the ends and the objectives. No-one could deny the importance of doing more to deal with entrenched youth unemployment in well-designed, well-targeted programs. Often, as I heard you say, in your part of the world—and I have different cultural issues but similar socioeconomic issues in parts of my electorate—with entrenched disadvantage and households where for both parents and intergenerationally there has been no-one as a role model who has worked, there are real problems that the government needs to pay attention to. That relates to the objectives of this bill.

Unfortunately, I do believe at the moment that the best you can say about this bill itself is that it at least provides some focus and time for members of parliament and members of this House to reflect on and debate the serious and growing problem of youth unemployment. I say that because I believe that more attention on this issue is sorely needed, given the
government's performance, particularly in the past couple of days. It beggars belief. They are falling to bits in front of our eyes. Question time today said it all. We moved at least from a plebiscite, where we are too afraid to actually stand up and do our jobs, to stunt legislation about refugees—pretty much B-grade stuntmen—and now section 18C is back on the agenda. As I said, I did some street stalls on the weekend and, funnily enough, not once did anyone come up to me and say, 'The national priority needs to be to allow me to say more racist stuff to my neighbours and that's what the parliament needs to spend its time on and devote its committee time to.'

We know that the senators, those in the other place, are sorely constrained for committee time, and I think their time would be better used in having a broader exploration of the sorts of things we could agree on across the chamber in relation to youth unemployment rather than on nonsensical debates about weakening Australia's race hate laws. Really, none of that creates a job. It is about saving one job, and we know that is the Prime Minister's job.

Nevertheless, there is a bill in front of us. It covers and implements only a small part of the government's overall program—such as it is. But the PaTH program, like the failed Work for the Dole program, right now seems, as best as we can tell, destined to fail the very people it purports to help. It is an important conversation to have. I will summarise the concerns I hold with the bill. First, are the internships genuinely voluntary? What sectors? What is the outcome? Is there any reasonable prospect of a job, given that we have learned that it is not really an objective of the Work for the Dole program? Payment of below a

Funding for the internships program should not be used to support long, unpaid internships that do not lead to permanent jobs for disadvantaged young people … The PaTH Program … is unlikely to have a major impact on reducing youth or long-term unemployment in isolation.

There are further concerns about the program undermining workforce standards, the potential for the program to undermine wages across industries, to displace jobs with cheaper labour, coverage by workers compensation schemes and to churn numbers of internships through, particularly, may I say, in industries that might otherwise attract penalty rates—another flawed ideological crusade of the government.

The ACTU—and I know members opposite would say that you would quote the ACTU, but they do have substantial policy capability and a genuine interest in this area—said:

This policy takes employment standards in this country back almost 30 years and has the potential to drag down wages and conditions for all workers …

Importantly, they say:
The Government's plan is either very badly designed and underfunded, or very well designed to exploit Australian workers and strip them of their legal rights and pay. They point out the failure of Work for the Dole and the ANU evaluation that showed a two per cent increase in the probability for paid employment. That is pathetic. Any program worth its salt must have a better outcome than a two per cent increase in the probability of paid employment. So that failed program has now resulted in this, and they have shuffled some money from left to right—sort of the 'look over here' trick.

The exploitation of young jobseekers, who will receive only $100 a week extra for up to 25 hours of work, was referred to by the National Union of Students as 'government-sponsored slave labour'. I remember my time in student politics many years ago. They are at times prone to robust language, but I understand their point. The NUS campaign also said:

The Government claims that PaTH is the way to solve welfare dependence among young people, but at the same time provides businesses incentives to churn through low-paid interns every 12 weeks, giving them $1,000 with each new intern they take on.

What's to stop employers from picking up a new intern every 12 weeks, relying on this cheap labour, and repeating the process over, and over.

I take the point that these things can be dealt with to a degree in program design. I feel as though I am repeating myself today, having spoken on the previous bill, but, yes, when I was a public servant I worked for a Liberal minister running youth employment programs in Victoria. We did our best to actually try to stop these things in some of the detail, program design, regulations and guidelines. And if they do happen to get this legislation through, or if indeed it is improved in the Senate to the point where we could support aspects of it, those matters of detail are critical to get right in the guidelines to enable the program administrators and the public servants to pick up rorting behaviour and rule it out.

There were a number of matters touched on by the member for Chifley that are worth amplifying and recording again. There is the issue about what an intern is. There is no definition. We have no clarity. Are we talking about someone who is working or are we talking about someone who is simply observing. Who knows?

The workers compensation problems and issues are incredibly serious. The possibility that a young person in a workplace—whatever the capacity the government ends up inventing as the classification for the work or activity they are undertaking; if they say it is not about work in the end, who knows?—may not be covered by workers compensation legislation and may be vulnerable and fully liable, left with accidents, is unconscionable. These are serious technical issues that have to be worked through, given the different jurisdictions of different state governments and the complexity of that area of law. There is no clarity there, despite our questions to the government. And, as I said, there is the potential for large numbers of interns to be churned through.

Lest I be criticised for quoting the ACTU, the NUS and the Australian Council of Social Services, let me also record some of the views of the government's ideological love match, that left-wing radical think tank the Institute of Public Affairs—and didn't they look like a bunch of geese last night on Q&A talking about climate change, but that is another discussion. In relation to the Victorian government's incentive program—my first point—the Institute of Public Affairs said:
... the subsidy offer provides a powerful incentive for businesses to fudge the paperwork to fit the eligibility requirements, particularly when combined with a government desperate to make its policy a success.

They would say that and use that kind of language in relation to a Labor government. But then they went on, talking about this government's program, to say:

The problem with the PaTH program is that wage subsidies have been tried, and the problem of youth unemployment has persisted ... There is no value in these programs if they displace jobseekers that would have been hired without a subsidy, or if employment ceases as soon as the subsidy ends.

The potential for rorting is a warning for the PaTH Program, as the Institute of Public Affairs briefing said. I am not in the habit of quoting them, but they do highlight important risks which the government would be well advised to pay attention to. It does point to the importance of honest program design, careful evaluation of what is working and what has not. As the member for Mallee said, perhaps with some more deliberative conversations between us we could find different mechanisms to try that we agree on. But these things have to be honestly evaluated, because they will not always work.

More broadly, in relation to youth unemployment, 12.8 per cent is the youth unemployment rate, which, as we know, is around twice that of the wider population. The data is seasonal and lumpy and the honest thing to do generally, unless you are looking at particular aspects, is to look at the annualised average. But that figure of 12.8 per cent can numb the mind. What that represents in human terms is 271,400 young people across this country aged between 15 and 24 who will be disillusioned, disenfranchised and well aware of the status accorded to them by this government. It further disenfranchises young people when we spend public money on a system that funds the payment of below-award wages and encourages rorting by business. Youth unemployment has deep and complex causes, and understanding the causes and tried and tested program responses—and there is surely enough experience from times past around what works and what does not—must inform our decisions about where we focus our energies.

In my electorate of Bruce youth unemployment remains well over 12 per cent. In fact, in the south-east of Melbourne the youth unemployment rate is pushing 20 per cent—slightly over at the moment—and there are anecdotal reports in certain migrant communities of youth unemployment approaching 30, 40 and 50 per cent. In terms of the government's failings, in our view this is a poorly designed proposal. It is a thought bubble from an election campaign, because they had to have something to say, and unfortunately it continues this government's focus on punitive, harsh responses. They are obsessed with punishment. Just recently, as we know, the social services minister announced plans that he would force some young jobseekers into poverty by forcing them to wait four weeks to be eligible for Newstart. As we have said, that is an improvement on six months waiting, but they still do not get that unemployment is not a personal choice. For most people unemployment is not their preference. For most people unemployment is a failure of the market or the economy to create the right jobs and a failure of governments to help those with entrenched disadvantage to get into those jobs.

Labor's approach is not just about readying young people for the workforce, but real employment opportunities. We floated the idea of work placements at an award-equivalent training wage, cert IIIs in the subject of their choice, looking at gap training and six-week
work readiness courses focused on essential employment skills. I feel like I am repeating myself for agreeing with the member for Mallee, but he makes a very valid point that often what the research finds, from my previous work in this area, is that it is the soft skills that many people lack. They may have finished year 12, but they need the soft skills and the ability and habits they learn from their parents of just getting out of bed and getting there on time. All the evidence shows that at times, in families where there is no role model and no-one to support them, the role of mentors and those wraparound services is what makes the difference. It is not the couple of thousand dollars to the employer that gets a disadvantaged young person there, it is having someone holding their hand, giving a hoot about whether they get there and checking on them. The research, as I recall—although I would have to refresh my memory in detail if I were doing a program design, which I am not now—showed that it was in the order of at least six months that you need someone standing there, ringing that person, being available to them every week, helping them with the soft skills and mentoring them through if you are going to break that cycle of disadvantage.

We had some of those programs and that approach. They were Labor programs, successful programs: Youth Connections, Partnership Brokers, national career development services. But of course the government, when they came to office, cut them all.

The fact that we have such a long gap between the election, when this policy was announced, and when it is apparently commencing, which is around April or May next year—who really knows when?—is nothing new. Last year, in the government's previous term—you never know whether they are a new government; sometimes they are and sometimes, as we heard from the Prime Minister today in relation to his absence of knowledge of Senator Day's matters, it is a different government, so how could he be responsible?—we went through well over a year where the government had no youth unemployment policy. They had no programs, no care—nothing.

We believe there are serious problems with this bill and serious questions that need to be answered. To date, our questions have not been answered. It is a regrettable fact that the parliament's time and the government's time is being spent on saving the Prime Minister's job and helping keep his backbench at bay instead of actually using proper committee inquiry time to have a look at the program design and the causes and what we can meaningfully do together. Nevertheless, perhaps the Senate inquiry will shed some light on this and maybe we will find some more common ground.

Mrs SUDMALIS (Gilmore) (17:25): I would like to start this discussion on the Social Security Legislation Amendment (Youth Jobs Path: Prepare, Trial, Hire) Bill 2016 with a real-life scenario that has occurred in many homes in Gilmore. In discussions with different provider services, their conversations have gone something like this when we talk about some of the problems with young unemployment: 'Hey, mum; I got a job. I work with some really cool people that don't mind my sleeve of tattoos and I'll have enough money by the end of the year to buy a car.' And then the mother says: 'Oh, whatcha want to do that for? Go down to Centrelink and get on the dole and then you can help pay the rent here, watch the games, we can get a slab of beer every two days and you can get a car in maybe a year and a half. Anyway, your dad never had a job. I never worked and neither did pa or nan.' I have never been so keen on a policy as I am with this one, PaTH—prepare for a job, trial for the job and then become hired for the job. When you have second- and third-generation unemployment in
the household, it is extremely difficult to break the cycle. There are many young people who
do not know how to even start getting work, and they too are looking forward to this program.

Our government has announced a new approach to tackling welfare dependence, with a
focus on helping people enjoy all the benefits of a stronger and growing economy. The focus
is on investing in vulnerable people to help divert them from this cycle of welfare
dependency, while giving them opportunities to find more prosperous futures. We have seen
the problems that intergenerational welfare dependence can have, particularly in relation to
the impact it has on crime, poverty, broken relationships and domestic violence. It is
something that we need to change if we are to build a more prosperous future for our residents
and for people who care about each other. That is the thinking behind PaTH, the prepare, trial
and hire program, designed to help train and mentor long-term unemployed and vulnerable
young people and get them into paid employment.

This new approach to welfare is based on unprecedented levels of data about our welfare
system. The Australian Priority Investment Approach to Welfare is about using the best
available evidence to ensure vulnerable Australians have a better future. It uses detailed
modelling to give us a sharper picture of groups of people at risk of long-term welfare
dependence who will benefit from the right policy responses at the right time. More than one-
third of Australia's population is receiving welfare payments and, of those not currently in the
welfare system, 88 per cent are expected to receive some type of welfare payment at another
point in their lifetime. The future lifetime cost of welfare payments for all Australians in the
population as at 30 June is estimated to be $4.8 trillion. We used to talk about billions and
think that was a big number and now that we are starting to think about trillions of dollars it is
almost unimaginable.

Analysis shows that there are significantly poorer outcomes for young carers, young
parents and young students who transition to long-term unemployment benefits. We have
identified that these particular groups of people are likely to be on welfare for a longer period
of time. So we are able to provide much more targeted interventions for them. We need to
place the emphasis on getting people from these groups onto a better trajectory, trying to get
them into work and make them feel better about themselves. The program's three
interconnected goals are: to improve lifetime wellbeing for all Australians by increasing
people's capacity to live independently from welfare; to reduce the risks of intergenerational
welfare receipt; and to reduce the risks of long-term social security costs.

The $96.1 million Try, Test and Learn Fund will be vital to achieving these goals, and it will
call for proposals in December. Stakeholders, academics, states, territories and anyone in the
non-government sector will be able to put forward their ideas for programs to divert
vulnerable groups away from welfare dependency. We have had many people being informed
about this in our region. The fund will foster collaboration and bold ideas. This is not a
traditional government funding round. We are looking for new, cutting-edge ideas which
might return better outcomes than existing approaches. But, as usual, there are those in the
House and in the general population who have completely misunderstood the intent of the
current policy. One such permanently outraged resident wrote to the local paper
demonstrating his lack of knowledge on this issue. He grabbed the wrong end of the issue and
used this misinformation to make claims about the youth employment program. He referred to
the program as being youth internment, which many politicians have used as a way to
encourage young uni students to see part of the real world behind the scenes and to work for free.

The PaTH program is so very different. We want to leave behind the road that leaves young people with less opportunity to learn some of the essential social skills that are so very important, such as having a positive attitude to work, being motivated and reliable, and having good personal presentation. Tackling intergenerational unemployment and welfare dependency is a huge challenge for governments all over the world. It is hard to unlock the potential and abilities of a young person when they have never learnt the basic skills associated with gaining and keeping a job. That is why the Youth Jobs PaTH Program starts with the preparation stage, focused on employability skills and training, which is industry endorsed and evidence based, to give young people under 25 a competitive edge in the jobs market. It will also give young people a better understanding of what employers expect of them in the workplace, as well as offering industry-specific training, which will teach them the skills and behaviours that they need to be successful in a job. When their family says, 'Stay home,' they will be able to say, 'Oh, it is so much better at work.'

Once the young jobseekers are offered work experience at local businesses, during which time they will receive a payment of $200 per fortnight as well as their welfare benefits—repeat, this payment is on top of their regular welfare payment—the young person will be in a better place. Indeed, if the work opportunity does not end up with an offer of employment, then the young person has not lost their safety net of income support; this will continue during their trial phase. We will also be offering incentives to the employers to offer permanent work beyond the trial period for the young people involved. This is a win-win situation that has generated plenty of interest from employers, while also providing a chance for young people to move off the welfare treadmill and create stronger, brighter futures for themselves. Our government is determined to ensure younger generations are not confined to a lifetime of welfare dependency. So I have encouraged and will continue to encourage residents, such as the one criticising the PaTH program, to bring their concerns to my office for discussion with their plans to help with youth unemployment initiatives.

We must ensure that jobseekers are not disadvantaged by taking part in the youth employment initiative, which was announced in the May budget. The participants will be paid that extra money. The bill will make sure that that extra $200 is not considered as additional income so that it does not affect their other entitlements. The bill will also make sure that it is easier for eligible young people to return to the employment services and have their income support payment restored if their wage subsidy supported job is ended due to no fault of their own.

Finally, if eligible young people employed with a youth bonus wage subsidy lose their job through no fault of their own, they will get straight back onto their support. That means that there is no waiting period, and that is very important. The most important part of the changes we are making is that the current income support provisions in social security law require job seekers to make a new claim and serve any relevant waiting periods if their income support payments previously ceased. So this really is a good part of those changes.

The bill proposes to allow job seekers with up to 26 weeks to reconnect to income support without having to make a new claim or to serve any waiting period. Previous speakers have criticised this program, saying that the path will displace people from employment positions,
but they have completely glossed over the concept that this is centrally framed around young people who have not experienced the benefit of being employed. It could be that their family is unemployed—perhaps second- or third-generation unemployed. This whole program is a method to initiate a young person into a pattern of work which will then keep them going for the rest of their lives. It certainly has potential. We really need to take care with our young people to help them thrive and to give them chances to develop their own personal drive.

There are businesses with vacancies they simply cannot fill, and these would be great locations to start work careers for some of our young job seekers. These businesses too are looking to assist people into positions, to become part of their teams. Those on the other side of the House always doubt the integrity of the businesses. While there may be some who try to twist a financial advantage, the majority have the overall desire to help young people into work they enjoy and give them a new outlook on employment altogether. I believe most people are good and I know that some local businesses in my electorate cannot fill positions. Trialling the program will certainly help them to find the right person for the job.

We believe that the Youth Jobs PaTH program will support up to 120,000 young people over four years, which will be an amazing story of social change. It will inspire young people to be the best they can be, to be welfare independent and to know that they can achieve their own dreams financially. We are, indeed, a very lucky country. Having just returned from conferences and delegations in developing nations, I know that Australia has so much to offer. Young people in developing nations often have no chance of an education, no chance of employment and no opportunity to make a difference in their own country until someone offers them some kind of pathway to change. We, in this legislation, are doing exactly that—making a pathway to change in our country. I most certainly commend the bill to the House.

Mr GEORGANAS (Hindmarsh) (17:37): I too rise to speak on the Social Security Legislation Amendment (Youth Jobs Path: Prepare, Trial, Hire) Bill 2016. Youth unemployment is an enormous problem in Australia today. We know that unemployment among youth is far higher than most other demographics; we also know that, if there are no programs or training opportunities or proper direction towards employment, then those young unemployed people are more likely than other demographics to remain long-term unemployed.

In my electorate of Hindmarsh I often talk to constituents and community groups that are constantly grappling with this problem. Recently a grandmother came into my electorate office and she was really concerned for her granddaughter's welfare. The granddaughter could simply not find work, even though she was trying very hard. She had applied for over 100 positions, had gone to the job-seeking agencies, looked at newspapers and made phone calls, but was becoming more despondent as time went by. This is the added cycle to unemployment for youth—when you are trying and trying and doing the best you can, but getting constant knock-backs. It also devastates you psychologically.

She explained to me that her granddaughter was getting very depressed to the point where she was giving up. That is the point we do not want unemployed youth to get to. We want to give them hope, and we want to do all we can to ensure that we are creating jobs and proper apprenticeships, traineeships, that will lead them on a path to full-time employment. It is our job to address this problem constructively and positively.
This bill is designed, in part, to support the introduction of the government's Prepare, Trial, Hire program or the acronym known as PaTH. PaTH is supposedly designed to prepare young people for work by providing jobseekers aged 17 to 24 with pre-employment training and placement in voluntary internships of four to 12 weeks. During that time they may work 15 to 25 hours per week. Jobseekers will receive payments of $200 per fortnight on top of the current income support payments while they are participating in the PaTH program. Businesses will be paid $1,000 to take on an intern and then receive a wage subsidy of between $6½ thousand and $10,000 if they hire them at the conclusion of their internship.

On this side of the House, like many others in the community, we have some serious concerns about whether this program represents a fair deal for Australia's young unemployed. The reality is that PaTH was a hastily cobbled together program announced at the time of the 2016 federal budget. This is nothing new for this government. We see them backflipping and flip-flopping between policies continuously—weekly—cobbling policies together for political purposes and other things.

Who can forget the 2014 budget? It included plans to punish young people who could not find jobs. It proposed changes to Newstart that would have made unemployed people under 30 forced to live for six months without any income—that is, six months without a single cent. They called this 'tough love' for young unemployed people. Too bad if you did not have mum and dad to go home to, to provide for you, too bad if you were found to be unemployed and too bad that for six months you would receive nothing. That was this government's proposal.

They completely ignored the fact that there are fewer jobs available for young people. There are young people looking for work and those numbers are growing. It appears that this government is intent on sentencing young people to a cycle of poverty by taking them off any payments for six months without any income—that is, six months without a single cent. They can find jobs. In my state of South Australia who can forget, after the 2013 election, the Treasurer's speech, which chased General Motors Holden out of South Australia? It will have a knock-on effect of nearly 30,000 jobs going. Not only did they chase GM Holden out of South Australia—they have something against blue-collar workers and we see that constantly—they also tried to renege on a promise they made on the eve of the 2013 election to build 12 submarines, in South Australia, which would have created jobs.

They came to the party screaming and kicking when their own jobs were in danger. So hopefully the submarines being built in South Australia will create some work and give youth the opportunity to go on and do apprenticeships and real traineeships that will lead to full-time work. This will give them skills to fill any shortages that we may have, instead of continuously opening up the markets for 457 visas. When we have so many young unemployed people here, it is a shame that we have nearly 1,000,000 people on different visas working in this country. What we should be doing is training people, educating them, ensuring that they are getting the skills to be able to go on and get full-time work.

And now this bill is being introduced at the same time that other government job programs, such as Work for the Dole, are hopelessly failing our young unemployed. We have seen that nearly 90 per cent of people who go through that program of Work for the Dole do not get a full-time job and are back on the unemployed lists. These were the government's own figures,
which show that nearly 90 per cent of its participants are not in full-time work three months after exiting the program.

That is the sad truth. Australia's youth are counting the costs of this government's failure to develop real jobs and a jobs plan for the nation. We hear the Prime Minister constantly talking about cutting-edge jobs—jobs of the future that we will create to employ Australia's youth and young people. But the reality is that to create those jobs of the future—these cutting-edge jobs in IT and STEMs and everything else—you have to invest at the foundation, and the foundation is our education system. But when we see the government trying to rip millions of dollars out of our education system—the primary school system, the high school system, the university system—then we cannot create those jobs. And you cannot talk about jobs of the future if you do not invest in education. I was very proud to be part of the Gonski government, I suppose I could call it, in 2013, when we announced a good plan that would ensure that all children had basic, good education to take them on to be able to get full-time jobs and to be trained properly through VET systems, apprenticeships and other design programs.

This program was designed to operate in locations of high youth unemployment to help 3,000 young people move from unemployment to work. We propose to boost training in core employment skills: reliability, communication, self-management and willingness to learn, along with basic literacy and numeracy when needed. And I go back to what I was just saying: these things could be taught through our education system if we funded it properly and ensured that every child has the same opportunities regardless of their postcode, regardless of which state they are in and regardless of what suburb they live in and what their background is. This will provide the foundation for skills for young people to find and keep a job in the future.

We propose to focus on developing strong links with local employers to provide young people with work experience and employment opportunities in their businesses. This is something that I think a lot of us do in our own electorates. We know business people, we know businesses, and I am always keeping my eyes and ears open to see what is going on. When people come to see me about issues, such as that grandmother's issue, occasionally we can link them with people. That is so important, and I have spoken to many other members of this House, on both sides, who basically do the same thing.

The opposition is concerned that under the PaTH program young people will be forced to pay an even heavier price through the program's apparent flaws. We know that the government, despite promising that it would tackle youth unemployment, has failed to deliver. According to the Department of Employment, youth unemployment was at 12.8 per cent—these are the official figures; we know it is much higher—with a total of 271,400 unemployed young people between the ages of 15 and 24. On top of that, the department acknowledges that there are another 170,900 people who have been underemployed for more than a year and who are disillusioned by the act of looking for jobs that are simply not there.

And that is the question I am asking: will this bill that is before us today address these problems? I have my doubts. The bill was designed to provide support to participants in the program. It does that, as we heard earlier, through two measures. First, a provision will be inserted into the Social Security Act and the Veterans' Entitlements Act so that the $200 payments that interns will be able to receive is not counted as income for social security and
veterans' entitlements purposes—and rightly so. Secondly, it will amend the Social Security Act to allow young people to suspend their payments if they are employed. They can then restart them, without reapplying, if they lose their jobs, through no fault of their own, within 26 weeks. Both these measures are no-brainers.

Taken in isolation, the government will claim the measures in the bill are non-controversial. I know that it is going to be referred to a Senate committee, but the reality is that they form part of a broader new program design that the opposition is concerned about. It could see young jobseekers exploited and could undermine workforce standards. Chief amongst these criticisms is the fact that, unlike with Work for the Dole, for the first time participants will be placed in the private sector and will be paid below award wages. We on this side of the House are concerned that PaTH could be used to displace jobs with cheaper labour; that participants may be working for below minimum award rates; and that this program could be used to undermine wages across industries at a time when wage growth is at its lowest rate on record.

Despite repeated questioning by this side there are few assurances that interns will be covered by appropriate workers compensation schemes in the event of an accident. That is because PaTH participants will be considered volunteers and not employees. In some jurisdictions this could affect the way workers compensation systems would treat participants in the event of an accident. While the program was announced in May, and is scheduled to start in April, the government cannot even tell us how it has defined what an intern is. The government has had trouble explaining what jobseekers will be doing in the internship phase of the program, even down to the basic level of whether they would be working just observing.

There are so many holes in this program that it cannot be taken seriously until the government shows how they will fix them. That is why we are calling for the legislation and the PaTH Program to be considered by a Senate inquiry to ensure that the concerns outlined above are meaningfully addressed.

To wave PaTH and this legislation through without demanding a better deal for young Australians would not be fair for all those young jobseekers we are talking about here. Young people are crucial to Australia's future. I visit many schools, as many others here do, and I am enthused by the next generation. However, they need the assistance, the training and the programs that will lead them to real jobs. They also need the learning abilities put in place to ensure that they do not go into long-term unemployment and therefore long-term disadvantage. The government's failed plan is a desperate attempt to divert attention away from their poor record in generating jobs for young Australians and in preparing young Australians work. Their Work for the Dole program is evidence of that failure.

Mr Pitt (Hinkler—Assistant Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment) (17:52): I rise to speak on the Social Security Legislation Amendment (Youth Jobs Path: Prepare, Trial, Hire) Bill 2016. This legislation, announced in the budget earlier this year, will make real inroads in ensuring that young Australians get the right assistance and the encouragement they need to learn new skills, to become job ready, to get a job and to stay in a job. That is why the coalition is investing $751.7 million over four years to establish the youth jobs PaTH Program for young jobseekers aged under 25 years, to improve youth employment outcomes. The coalition is committed to making sure those who are able to work have the necessary
work-life skills required to enter into and remain in the workforce. The employers I speak to say that young people need the basics before they start work. It is a common theme that I hear over and over again. They need the fundamentals. They need people who will turn up on time, who are dressed appropriately for the role and who are willing to give things a go not be glued to their smartphone for a number of hours a day. But they also need people who have a good understanding of the values and behaviours that are expected in the workplace and in the recruitment process.

The prepare part of the PaTH Program will give young jobseekers who need to boost their job readiness intensive pre-employment skills training within five months of registering with the jobactive. The first three weeks of that training will help to build practical industry skills, with a focus on concepts like working in a team, presentation and communication. A further three weeks of training will centre on advanced job-hunting skills, job applications, career development and interview skills. The employability skills training will ensure that young jobseekers can present the right attitude and the right approach to work. I have spoken with many employers—I used to be one myself. Certainly, most of the ones that I speak to are willing to take on young people and give them a go, but they need them to show up, be ready and have the right attitude to work.

Applications are open now for training organisations to apply for the Employability Skills Training Panel. Panel members will develop and deliver training aimed at ensuring all young jobseekers have the basic employability skills that Australian businesses need. They will have strong employer and industry links, and demonstrated expertise in working with young people to improve their employability. The training they deliver will be developed with industry to make young jobseekers more competitive in the labour market. Applications close on Tuesday, 29 November 2016. For those who are interested, you can find more information at www.employment.gov.au.

The next part of the program, trial, will give jobseekers a chance to gain valuable work experience in a real workplace. That is a key component: real work experience in a real workplace, with an internship of between four and 12 weeks. There will be up to 30,000 internships per year available in both profit and not-for-profit businesses for up to 25 hours per week. For jobseekers, this means $200 a fortnight on top of their income support payment. For the businesses, it means $1,000 up-front in recognition of the costs of hosting the placement and an internship outcome payment to the provider who brokered each completed placement. The data shows that of jobseekers who undertook unpaid work experience, 48.6 per cent were in employment three months later compared to 26 per cent across all activities—almost half. So from 1 April 2017, jobseekers, employers and employment service providers can work together to design work experience placements and businesses who are interested in hosting an intern can register now through the employment website.

The final part of the program, which of course is hire, provides businesses with stronger incentives and greater flexibility in hiring jobseekers under the age of 25 years. The coalition is spending $298.3 million on the Youth Bonus wage subsidy. From 1 January 2017, employers will be eligible for a Youth Bonus wage subsidy if they hire a young jobseeker under the age of 25 who is in jobactive or Transition to Work and who has been in employment services for six months or more. Employers will receive $6,500 if they hire an
eligible job ready jobseeker and $10,000 if they hire other eligible jobseekers. These wage subsidies create a strong incentive for employers to consider hiring unemployed youth.

Enhancements have also been made to wage subsides, which have been further strengthened and streamlined to make them more attractive and simpler for employers to access. Existing wage subsidies such as Restart will be retained but will now be paid over a six-month period, which is the same as the Youth Bonus, rather than 12 months, and give employers more flexibility to negotiate how often instalments are paid and over what period. The Youth Bonus will increase the young jobseeker's competitiveness in the labour market, allowing them to get their foot in the door of an employer.

The bill I am speaking on today will amend the social security law, to protect young jobseekers whose employers are eligible to receive a Youth Bonus wage subsidy in relation to them. It will allow these young people to have their income support payments suspended for a period rather than cancelled. This is an important change. These young people will be able to have their social security payments restored without having to make a new claim if they lose their job through no fault of their own with an eligible employer within 26 weeks of ceasing to receive income support because of that employment.

Youth Jobs PaTH, prepare, trial, hire program is part of the wider youth employment strategy which the coalition government has invested $840 million in. The coalition government has taken a multipronged approach to tackling youth unemployment, which is a serious issue, with programs such as Transition to Work and Engaging Early School Leavers. Transition to Work provides young jobseekers with intensive one-on-one support from community based organisations experienced in working with young people who face greater barriers to enter the workforce. The government has committed $322 million over four years to the Transition to Work service to help young people aged between 15 and 21 become work ready or find their way back to education.

Engaging Early School Leavers is an initiative which strengthens requirements for young job seekers aged between 15 and 21 who have not completed year 12 to continue their education or look for work to receive the youth allowance. Evidence shows that the longer a young person remains unemployed after leaving school the more likely it is that they risk becoming long-term unemployed. That is a very, very important fact. But early intervention can mean the difference between a young person taking their first steps into a productive and happy working life or entering a life of welfare dependency. We all know the effects of long-term unemployment on individuals, on families and on communities. It can be extremely damaging. Being unemployed for an extended period can erode people's skills and erode their confidence, sense of purpose and pride, which can lead to a cycle that makes it even harder to find work.

In my electorate we have a historically high unemployment rate. It is due to a complex mix of economic and social reasons. This is of course impossible to address overnight or in one fell swoop. Reducing unemployment takes time but we are making real progress. Two out of the 18 trial sites for Work for the Dole were located in the Hinkler electorate. An independent evaluation released in November last year showed that the program was effective in helping participants gain the confidence that they need and learn skills. An independent evaluation by the Social Research Centre and the Australian National University found that, of the participants surveyed, 83 per cent agreed that Work for the Dole is an opportunity to give
back to the community, 79 per cent agreed that the routine was good for them, 81 per cent said that they were treated like a valuable member of staff, 81 per cent said that they were satisfied with the amount of responsibility that they were given, 76 per cent said that they were satisfied with the amount of work, 74 per cent said that they were satisfied with the variety of tasks and 68 per cent agreed that their placement was a valuable experience.

Work for the Dole programs create opportunities by giving people soft skills—routines, structure and presentation skills—and, most importantly, they provide access to potential employers. Unfortunately, in many cases those skills are not taught to the children of intergenerational welfare parents. Punctuality, teamwork and commitment are things that a person typically learns at a young age. This government is committed to ensuring that those young jobseekers are on a positive pathway into the workforce, not a life of dependency. The people of this great nation should be able to depend on their elected representatives for assistance when they need it, but that does not mean that we should be building a nation of dependants.

The coalition government's youth employment package also includes measures to encourage young Australians to start a business and create their own job. The New Enterprise Incentive Scheme will be expanded by the coalition government. Over the next four years we are investing $77.6 million to provide an additional 2,300 places for NEIS each year, bringing the total number of places to 8,600. Eligibility for NEIS will enable those jobseekers not in receipt of income support, including youth and redundant workers, to access the scheme for the first time. NEIS is delivered by a network of providers who give individualised help for jobseekers to become self-employed business owners. Business mentoring support is an essential component of NEIS. Participants will receive business mentoring during the first year of operation of their business. As I am sure you know, Mr Deputy Speaker, the first year is the most dangerous time for any new business. NEIS business mentors are people with proven business acumen and experience. They will provide assistance and advice about organisational, financial and marketing initiatives to help participants to develop their business.

Also part of the youth employment package is the establishment of the two-week 'Exploring being my own boss' workshop. It will give up to 1,000 young people per year a taste of what is involved in self-employment and entrepreneurship. This will include internship opportunities of up to 12 weeks for those participants to gain firsthand experience of what it takes to run a small business. As you know, Mr Deputy Speaker Goodenough, that can be incredibly difficult, but there is certainly nothing more fulfilling than running your own show. The 'Exploring being my own boss' workshop will run over a two-week period and give young jobseekers aged between 18 and 24 a better understanding of what self-employment entails.

The coalition is on track to deliver a range of programs to support young jobseekers. Since the government's jobactive service began on 1 July 2015 it has improved the quality of services for jobseekers and employers. From 1 July 2015 till March 2016 jobactive has placed more than 64,000 young jobseekers into jobs. Through the job commitment bonus the government is already rewarding long-term unemployed young people who find and keep a job, with eligible jobseekers able to receive a payment of up to $6,500 if employed for two
years. Between 1 July 2015 and 1 March 2016, 2,632 claims were lodged for that bonus. Of these, 1,867 have been granted, totalling some $4.67 million.

As well as these programs targeted at young jobseekers, the coalition is creating opportunities in my own electorate with the Wide Bay-Burnett Jobs Package. This is a $20 million commitment and it will create a community-driven government investment. It will be a genuine partnership between the coalition and the local community. The jobs package will provide business innovation grants on a competitive basis to help businesses invest in new technology, diversify operations, create new export opportunities and deliver new, sustainable jobs. It will also allow upgrading of existing local infrastructure or investing in new infrastructure to boost productivity and generate more local investment. It will deliver targeted skills and training programs to address regional skills shortages, and support workers impacted by structural change to retrain and upskill.

This job package will give local business the confidence to invest and grow. As I have said all along, it is not government that creates jobs; it is businesses that create jobs, and we need to provide the structures for them to be successful. It will attract matching funding from participating businesses, resulting in a total package of at least $40 million for the region. This is a much and desperately needed economic boost for the electorates of Hinkler and Wide Bay. These grants will assist existing local businesses to grow, and also offer incentives for metropolitan based companies to expand their businesses into the Wide Bay-Burnett region, creating new, sustainable jobs.

If you are looking for cheap housing, you need only look into regional Australia. It is far more affordable than it is in the major cities. What we need to ensure that we can drive that population shift is work, because work will draw them to the regions. I want my community of Hinkler to be one in which my children want to stay or come back to; I do not want the talents of our young people to leave for the city. To avoid that, they need good job prospects in their home town. The coalition has a plan to improve regional economies, to attract more investment and more jobs, and improve employment outcomes for jobseekers. We are delivering for the people of regional Australia, and this bill demonstrates that commitment. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms SWANSON (Paterson) (18:06): I rise to speak on the Social Security Legislation Amendment (Youth Jobs PaTH: Prepare, Trial, Hire) Bill 2016 and urge that it be referred to a Senate inquiry. As it stands, for young people the Youth Jobs PaTH is not a pathway to employment; potentially, it is a road to nowhere, an expressway to exploitation. The Youth Jobs PaTH (Prepare, Trial, Hire) Program was announced by the Turnbull government in the 2016-17 budget, and it is expected to take effect from April next year. The program, as we have heard, will provide jobseekers aged 17 to 24 with pre-employment training and placement in voluntary internships of four to 12 weeks, where they may work for 15 to 24 hours a week. Jobseekers will receive payments of $200 a fortnight on top of their current income support payments while they are participating in the Youth Jobs PaTH program. Businesses will be paid $1,000 to take on an intern, and then will receive a wage subsidy of between $6,500 and $10,000 if they hire them at the conclusion of their internship.

But the opposition, like many others in our community, have very real concerns about whether this program does in fact present a genuine opportunity for young people to gain meaningful employment, or whether it is just an opportunity for them to be exploited and
again disappointed. We are now hearing this PaTH Program touted to be a success, much like Work for the Dole, but, as we have heard the member for Mallee say just a few speakers ago, that program in and of itself has not been the success it was touted to be, and unlike Work for the Dole, for the first time interns will be placed in the private sector, and they could be paid below award wages.

This bill implements a small part of the Youth Jobs PaTH Program; however, other legislation will be needed to establish the program in full. It is understood that the bulk of the Youth Jobs PaTH Program can be established by departmental direction and regulation, and this is something that Labor is seeking to clarify. In fact, there is much about this bill that needs clarification, and it really does warrant Senate scrutiny. This is such a vital and important part of our economy, of our culture. We are talking about the future of our young people. We should stop creating programs that just do not work, and do something meaningful instead. The bill contains the following measures: schedule 1 inserts a provision into the Social Security Act and the Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986 so that the fortnightly incentive payment is not counted as 'income' for social security or veterans' entitlements purposes; and schedule 2 amends the Social Security (Administration) Act to allow young people to suspend their payments if they are employed. They can restart them without reapplying if they lose their job through no fault of their own within 26 weeks.

Taken in isolation, these two measures in the bill are not controversial. However, the reality is that they form part of a broader new philosophy which could see young jobseekers exploited and really could undermine workforce standards. Labor would want make sure that participants were protected by health and safety measures and that no participant could be paid below award wages or the award wage equivalent, pursuant to the Fair Work Act. Labor welcomes additional resources being invested in youth employment, but the Youth Jobs Path program is not the best way to support young jobseekers or invest Commonwealth funds.

There are specific concerns with the program that I would like to raise. There is no firm definition of what an intern is under the program and what sectors they could be asked to work in. Large numbers of participants could be used within a company at one time with little sanction for employers that might churn through participants after the engagement concludes. Large numbers of interns could completely negate the need for existing employees in certain sectors, such as hospitality, to work at certain times, for instance on the weekends, reducing access to penalty rates for those people who are already employed. Youth Jobs PaTH participants are considered to be volunteers in some jurisdictions, affecting the way workers compensation systems would treat participants in the event of a workplace accident or incident.

This government has put little planning into the broader policy and there are many deficiencies in this Youth Jobs PaTH program. It is nothing but a response to a failing Work for the Dole program in which nearly 90 per cent of participants are unable to secure work after they finish the program—90 per cent! The Youth Jobs PaTH program has the potential for worker exploitation and undercutting of standards.

Youth unemployment is truly a scourge in our society. According to the Department of Employment youth unemployment is running at 12.8 per cent, with a total of 271,400 unemployed young people between the ages of 15 and 25. In my electorate of Paterson in the Hunter Valley it is even higher. In my first speech in this place I highlighted youth
unemployment as one of my main policy areas of concern and one of the biggest concerns to
our community in the Hunter region, particularly in the Port Stephens area. In July, youth
unemployment in the Hunter region was 15.3 per cent, well above the national average of
12.8 per cent, but it has been as high as 21 per cent. Twenty-one per cent of our young people
not being able to get a job—if that was the general rate across the population people would be
up in arms. They would be protesting in the streets. Yet that is what our young people have
faced at times.

That figure I have quoted is double what it was three years ago. One in five people who
want to work cannot get a job. Well might we ask, what has happened to our youth
workforce? I can give you some answers to that. What has happened to the opportunities for
our young people? In the Hunter we have been hit hard by a downturn in mining and
manufacturing and we have lost thousands of apprenticeships. Why have we lost
apprenticeships? I can tell you exactly why—it was the horror budget of 2014. The Abbott-
Turnbull government cut off vocational education and training and excellent partnership
programs that were helping people into work—helping them create real linkages into real
jobs, not just pretend jobs. We are seeing the fallout and the horror of the 2014 budget, as so
many people predicted. I still remember, the day after that budget, going to work at a local
organisation that helps young people. They were wringing their hands and saying, 'What
happened last night? What a horror night and what a terrible time for our young people into
the future.'

Those people saw the future. They knew that young people would miss out, and now we
are feeling the fallout from that disastrous budget. As I said in my first speech, and as I truly
believe, every young person deserves the right to get out of bed with a purpose and fulfil their
potential. It is not just a romantic notion. We need people, especially our young, to be
participating and working, to be continuing to grow our skills base and, believe it or not, to be
contributing to the tax base. We need that. It is so important. But it requires excellence in
education, skills-based training, real experience and the genuine opportunity to work.

The Youth Jobs PaTH program does not give young people a genuine opportunity to work;
it gives them the genuine opportunity to be disappointed and, potentially, exploited. There are
very real concerns that this path could be used to displace jobs with cheaper labour also, and
there are very real concerns that participants may be working for below minimum wages. This
program could very well see young Australians stacking supermarket shelves for less than the
minimum wage. At a time when wages growth is at its lowest on record, there are very real
concerns that the Youth Jobs PaTH program could be used to undermine wages across many
industries. So it will be not just young would-be workers who suffer but all workers in lower-
paying jobs.

And what protections would these interns, these young people who are so desperate to gain
work, be afforded? Despite repeated questions, the government has not assured us that these
interns will be covered by appropriate workers compensation schemes in the event of an
accident. That is because the Youth Jobs PaTH scheme will treat these young people not as
workers but, again, as volunteers.

Herein lies the problem: the Youth Jobs PaTH program does not specify real job areas in
which job seekers will acquire skills. All we have been told is that these programs will give
young people the skills that employers tell us those young people do not have. What are those
skills, Minister Cash? Labor would like to know, young people would like to know and, I am sure, their hardworking and angsty parents would like to know. What is the definition of 'intern'? We are yet to understand who will be considered an intern and under what circumstances. Again, this is something that young people and their parents rightfully deserve to know. What will these interns be doing exactly during this intern phase? Will they be working or just observing? Will their experience be meaningful and their skill set used? Again, this is something that young people and their parents desperately want to know.

And just how many interns will be able to be employed by a particular company at any one time? Large numbers could be used at any given time, with little sanction applied to employers that might churn through all of these participants after they finish their engagement. One lot of interns finishes and another lot starts, without the need to ever employ anyone full-time or anyone with more experience who demands and deserves to be paid more money. Large numbers of interns could in fact completely remove the need for existing employees. There lies another problem.

We really just do not have enough detail, and that is why this bill should be referred to a Senate committee inquiry. Imagine the appeal of using large numbers of interns over the weekends, removing the need for regular employees at those times and removing the need to pay those penalty rates that the coalition would so happily do away with anyway. Labor is calling for this legislation and the entire Youth Jobs PaTH program to be referred to a Senate committee inquiry where it can be scrutinised and these concerns can be meaningfully addressed. To just pass this legislation without demanding a better deal for young Australians is not fair to those young people, their hardworking parents or, indeed, others in the workforce who might well be considered dispensable when a whole new intern market is developed.

This program is not an attempt to give young people a fair go at getting meaningful skills that lead to meaningful work. It is a desperate attempt by a desperate government to divert attention away from its poor record on generating jobs for young Australians and its poor record on preparing young Australians for work. The Work for the Dole program is evidence of that failure. Remember that, on the government's own figures, 90 per cent of Work for the Dole participants are not in full-time work three months after exiting the program. What is the point? When Work for the Dole was introduced, we were told that it would be the great panacea. The Youth Jobs PaTH appears to be just as destined to fail. It is poorly planned, full of holes and ripe for exploitation. More than that, it is potentially damaging to the prospects of young people and to other workers who may well become redundant with a new generation of interns.

The Senate needs to inquire into this legislation, because the government cannot seem to give us answers. How will this Youth Jobs PaTH program work? What is the definition of 'intern'? What work will interns be doing? What skills will interns be learning? How can the government guarantee the Youth Jobs PaTH will not depress wages? How can the government guarantee the Youth Jobs PaTH will not displace jobs? How can the government guarantee the Youth Jobs PaTH will provide vital access to workers compensation? How can the government guarantee the Youth Jobs PaTH will not sidestep unfair dismissal laws?

This is a thought bubble backed up by a 'just trust us, everything will be fine' mentality. Well, Labor does not trust this government to look out for our young people, to look out for
its young workers and for those who would work and could work, if only they had the skills, the training, the experience and, most importantly, the opportunity. We need to do everything possible to ensure our young people can get a good education, can get a good job and can keep that job. This government has an appalling record when it comes to helping young people.

Again, I think back to horror night in 2014. Apprentice numbers have been in freefall under the Abbott-Turnbull government. When Labor left office there were 415,000 apprentices in training; in March this year that figure was down to 286,500. We have had the whole Work for the Dole debacle; we have had that VET FEE HELP debacle and savage cuts to TAFE; and now we have this Youth Jobs PaTH debacle. As one organisation described it, this has been one of the heaviest betrayals of Australian workers since Work Choices. Far from being the path to secure work the Youth Jobs PaTH is a road to nowhere. We demand that this government give the young people of Australia the opportunity that they so rightfully deserve.


I recommit to this House that I am here to represent hardworking, aspirational Australians who want to apply their own efforts to succeed. I am here to create an Australia where young people, regardless of their financial and social situation, can work hard to reach their full potential—whatever that might be. I am here to make sure people, particularly young people, find meaningful employment and fulfilment.

The government has drawn together feedback from business and the preliminary findings of the Investment Approach analysis to design the innovative Prepare Trial Hire program that will make a difference to people's lives. Youth Jobs PaTH intervenes with early investment and training to get people into work and off lifelong welfare dependency. The program will increase young people's employability and provide them with real work experience to get the start they need in the workforce. It will focus on making sure young job seekers know what to expect when they get into the workplace, but also what is expected of them. They will know when to turn up, how to dress, how to behave. They will know the usual routines that go on in a workplace—something that young job seekers who have not had that experience do not know. Missing out on these essential skills does affect their employability.

Employability Skills Training will make sure young people have the right attitude and approach to work—making them reliable and well-presented employees. Young job seekers will participate in intensive pre-employment skills training within five months of registering with jobactive, training that will help build practical industry skills, like working in a team, presentations, effective communications, IT skills and job-hunting skills.

Training is great, but practice and practical application let you learn new skills and refine your skills much faster. Voluntary internships of four to 12 weeks will give young job seekers time in real businesses. Up to 120,000 placements over four years will help young job seekers gain valuable work experience. Businesses and young job seekers will be able to co-design internship placements. Giving job seekers and the businesses the flexibility to co-design training placements that work pragmatically is a great step forward and is so important.

Young job seekers have an opportunity to learn how to arrive at work on time, in the correct dress standard and with the relevant tools for the job; to learn how to take instructions
and complete tasks; and to negotiate and compromise with the people they work with; to interact with customers and represent their work place. These are skills that are transferable and relevant in all sorts of life situations; these are skills that make job seekers so much more employable. In addition to gaining valuable hands-on experience in the workplace, young people will receive $200 per fortnight on top of their regular income support payment as an incentive to participate in work experience. This bill will ensure these payments are not considered as income for social security purposes. Employers will also receive an up-front payment of $1,000 and will benefit from the opportunity to see what a young worker can bring to their business.

So, jobseekers have had training and have refined their skills with their workplace experience—now they need a job. From 1 January 2017, Australian employers will be eligible for a youth bonus wage subsidy of between $6,500 and $10,000 if they hire a young jobseeker under 25 who has been in employment services for six months or more—a much smarter way of leveraging what the community would otherwise spend on welfare payments. Taxpayers expect their taxes to be invested in making Australia even better; they do not expect them to be simply redistributed to those who do not use that investment in them to improve their employability. This bill will also make sure it is easier for eligible young people to return to employment services and have their income support payment restored if their wage subsidy supported job is ended due to no fault of their own.

We cannot underestimate the empowerment of having a job—the personal value of contributing to our community as a taxpayer and the boost to self-esteem and physical and mental health. Prepare-Trial-Hire helps to instil confidence in young people. It is all about helping young Australians by getting them ready, giving them a go and getting a job. This government is improving lives with pragmatic solutions to get more people into work. I have the same determination as the chair of the government’s social policy committee: early intervention can mean the difference between a young person stepping out into a productive working life and entering a cycle of long-term welfare dependency.

Australia cannot afford to leave thousands of young people rotting away on welfare. There is a big difference between my colleagues and I who sit on this side of the chamber and those who sit opposite. The difference is that a great majority of the members on this side of the House have employed people. Those opposite have not had the experience, have not taken the risk and reaped the rewards and the satisfaction, of giving someone a job. They do not know what it is like. If a young person came to me having applied their effort, having completed training and refined their skills, I would be much more inclined to offer them a job than if they had not. What a contrast with those who sit back and feel it is their right to get a handout without any personal obligation or responsibility to improve their situation. I was disappointed to hear the member for Hindmarsh, who spoke just before me, mention that he was not sure if there would be a fair deal for young people. A fair deal? There is $200 a fortnight for someone in addition to their income support to go out there and experience a job, to experience what it is like being employed and to learn skills. That is more than a fair deal.

A mother contacted me in the lead-up to my election to this place. Her son was struggling to find a job and hoped that I could help with government support. I agreed to meet her son, but I took a very different approach. I asked him, ’What have you done to help yourself?’ I wanted to know whether he had a good work ethic before I would be able to put my name
towards supporting him into a job. I helped him to line up a week's work experience with a hardworking small-business owner operating not far from my electorate. I said I would happily help him find a job and give a reference if he was a hard worker and applied his own efforts to succeed. And he did. He turned up on time for work experience. He worked hard. He tried his hand at a whole range of new tasks, including putting his forklift ticket to good use. Do you know what? He enjoyed it. He enjoyed getting up every morning, and even texted me one morning saying that he was quite sick, but he was going to push through because of the opportunity that we had given to him to prove that through the application of his effort he could improve his own circumstance in life. He enjoyed the satisfaction of getting the work done. Through the application of his effort, with the work experience opportunity given to him, he has avoided taking the first steps into our welfare system.

This government is committed to ensuring that young jobseekers find work as quickly as possible. The Australian community rightly expect that young people should participate in the workforce to their full capacity. This is what the government is committed to. It may mean we invest more now to get people out of the welfare trap and on a real path to work, but we will save billions otherwise spent on lifelong dependent welfare recipients and their lost opportunities. We are about making lives better. The Youth Jobs PaTH Program seeks to meet these expectations by helping job ready young people to maximise their chances of finding work and avoid moving onto long-term welfare.

Ms TEMPLEMAN (Macquarie) (18:29): My eldest child first entered the workforce at the height of Work Choices. It was a shock to me and to her grandfather, who had run his own small business for decades, employing many people, including me, as young people, to see some of the conditions that were built into a 16-year-old's agreement. She worked from 5.30 or 6 am at a shop which was open to the street—all good. It was the middle of winter, and she had to wear the company's own new woollen jumper, not very fashionable, but all good—except that she had to pay for that jumper out of her own pay, out of her meagre casual hourly earnings. Well, even that might be understandable, except that her contract specified that she did not get to keep the jumper if she left. Essentially she was renting a jumper that the company would eventually retain ownership of after she had paid it off.

This was more than a decade ago, but it epitomised the unfairness detailed by a dozen little clauses and rules in that contract. It represented my daughter's first experience of being in the workforce. Even now, the demands on young staff can be an exercise in power: if you are sick and you cannot come to work, you have to find your own replacement; if it is not busy, we can send you home only an hour or two into your shift; if it is not busy when you arrive at work, you cannot clock on until we tell you to; if you cannot come in and work at short notice because you have an essay due or an exam on, we will punish you by not giving you many shifts the following week. Young people have told me all of these things about how they can be treated in a workplace—very different to the workplace I grew up with.

Of course, not every employer is like this. But when they are, how on earth can an employee feel loyalty or even respect for their employer when so little is shown to them? Of course, teenagers and young adults refuse to let their parents advocate for them around their working conditions, but they rarely have the power or negotiating ability themselves with an employer when they are desperately trying to enter the workforce, learn some skills and earn some cash.
I tell these stories because the damage that was done to the relationship between many employers and their staff in the years of Work Choices—which I think fundamentally changed the way a whole generation of workers feels about their job and their boss—has parallels for me in what the government is proposing in these legislative changes in the Social Security Legislation Amendment (Youth Jobs Path: Prepare, Trial, Hire) Bill 2016. Not only are we debating stripping away the rights of the average worker, but the coalition is today proposing that we strip away the workplace rights of the members of our workforce who are most in need of protection: young people.

Those sitting opposite, those proposing this bill, are the same people who tried to remove the rights of workers young and old with Work Choices. They are the same people who have slashed welfare, slashed education and slashed training budgets. And then they wonder why youth unemployment is so high. Youth unemployment currently sits at 12.8 per cent, and since the coalition took office in 2013 it has been consistently higher than it was even through the years of the global financial crisis. This is a government that has consistently promoted itself as the superior economic manager but is consistently failing our country's young people. You are not managing the economy if you are not providing people with decent and secure work.

I will give the Treasurer and Senator Cash some credit for realising, finally, that youth unemployment is unacceptably high and that we must address it. However, the PaTH scheme is not the way to rectify unacceptably high youth unemployment. PaTH is an initiative designed, I think, to exploit young people. I do not understand how it makes any reasonable or moral sense to pay an individual $200 a week for 25 hours of work and give businesses $1,000 per intern for the privilege of employing this free labour.

I am greatly concerned about the implications of this program for the more than 14,000 young people in my electorate of Macquarie. Of main concern is the internship component of the PaTH Program. This legislation removes the final barriers for the government's so-called 'intern army'. Unlike other government job programs, this, for the first time places participants in the private sector, being paid below-award wages. The government is proposing voluntary internships of four to 12 weeks. You might think that this bill is on a highly successful intern program running somewhere in some sector. But, at present, fewer than 20 per cent of unpaid internships result in paid employment. Given that this culture of internships has failed so seriously and widely in the past, I think we need more than a five-page piece of administrative legislation to fix youth unemployment.

In this bill, despite using the word 'internship' multiple times, not once does the government define an internship. How can we expected to debate fully a motion regarding a system of internships when the government has not even fleshed out its own plan enough to actually tell us what that system would look like. Not defining internship at all is probably an easier sell than stating that it is a system that deprives you of the ability to protect yourself under the National Employment Standards, which Labor has always stood for and the Liberals have also sought to destroy.

I ask Senator Cash, the Treasurer and those opposite where the references are to the rights of the interns under this system? Where is the guarantee that volunteer interns will have their workplace health and safety protected, along with access to workers compensation processes? Where is the guarantee that volunteer interns will not be used to displace jobs from other
employees? Where is the guarantee that volunteer interns will actually get a job or concrete qualifications? This bill does not ensure that young workers will be protected under the PaTH Program and nor does it provide any clarity.

In its submission to the government about this program, the peak body from interns, Interns Australia, states that it has significant concerns that the PaTH Program will accelerate an internships culture where unpaid entry-level workers are left unprotected by law, especially if businesses are given a $1,000 incentive to do so. I want to add here my congratulations for the work that Interns Australia does. They are a group of highly motivated people with a strong sense of justice. They recognise the problems and the opportunities that legitimate internships offer young professionals, and they want to work with all parties to ensure it is a fair and beneficial experience. Of course, we do not see that here.

Under the PaTH Program there may well be many great employers who genuinely want to mentor and develop a young worker and after some weeks take them into their organisation on a permanent basis. But the danger is that this program attracts unscrupulous employers who see a ready supply of free labour to do unpaid, low-skilled work. This program target sectors—we think—where there has not previously been a demand from internships. We do not know exactly, because the detail is so thin. But sectors like hospitality, retail and motor trades have been named. For years kids have been asked to do a trial shift for free to test their coffee-making skills, but this embeds the four-hour or eight-hour trial into a three month thing. Realistically, it is hard to see how under this program the majority of PaTH interns will progress onto substantive employment.

I have studied this policy from a couple of perspectives. I was a small business operator for 25 years prior to coming to this place. I certainly do not begrudge incentives being given to small businesses to help them take on new staff. It actually takes time and reduces your productivity to have a new untrained worker in your small business. Often, we are talking about micro businesses, where it is the owner who gives up their time to train up the newcomer. But a fundamental flaw in the government's jobs PaTH Program is that there is no support for employers or for the interns. I have heard of the hours of unpaid time that supervisors of Green Army participants had put into the scheme to ensure that there were good outcomes for the participants. Small business does not have that capacity—they are already stretched. So, after one or two interns, small businesses will get weary of having to retrain over and over. And without any formal training or support being on offer, the transition to permanent staff seems pretty unlikely.

Big business will not do more than they have to. They will just churn through an endless stream of virtually free labour and avoid employing people on a permanent basis. I guess that is what we call built-in flexibility for the market. There is obviously a need for support, for employers, for interns who are working with dangerous equipment. How will an employer be required to provide that and, if training is required, does that come out of the $1,000? Who pays the workers' compensation? Does that also come out of the $1,000? Remember, under the legislation, these people are defined as volunteers not employees. We know that in some states that could affect the way workers' compensation systems treat the participants if, God forbid, there is an accident.

I also worry about the skill set that employers will be required to develop in their interns. There is no responsibility or support for employers to develop a clear set of training and skills
outcomes. As an adult educator for many years I want to remind people that there is a bit more to it than just letting employers come up with their own training program over the weekend—that is, if they even have the time to do that. Will there be a different set of skills if you have an intern for four weeks than for 12 weeks? Many industries require some sort of formal training, even if it is just in safe workplace practices, so what is the requirement for supervision of the intern?

All those questions really go to the heart of it: is this work experience, is this a training program or is this a Work for the Dole scheme? Who knows? There are just not answers in this ill-thought-through program. If the Turnbull government cannot be bothered to work through the detail, then the Senate certainly needs to. Fundamentally, my concern is that this is a further attack on work conditions and decent wages in this country dressed up as some sort of jobs scheme. You effectively lower the costs of entry-level staff, with people working well below minimum wages. That in itself undermines the entire wages system.

As a mum I do not want to see that; I want to see young people fairly paid for a fair day's work. As a former small-business owner I do not want to see that either; I want to know that I am paying a fair pay for a fair day's work. As a union member I do not want to see that; a fair day's work deserves a fair day's pay. Unfortunately, nothing in this legislation gives us any confidence that any of that criteria will be met. As far as I can see, this scheme offers little more than the churn effect, where young PaTH interns are trapped in a cycle where they are hired—for their thousand dollar bonus—kept on for three months—because they are free labour—and spat out at the end without a job or qualifications to show for it.

The government could fix this. They could set bonus payments or maximum hours. They could put restrictions on and provide additional incentives for employers to provide good training. All of this would limit the exploitation of young people. As it stands, this government is no friend of young people and this program is a rehash of the government's failed Work for the Dole and Green Army schemes. It is a lazy scheme from a lazy government.

This government has continually shifted the blame onto young people for not having jobs, and that is in the context of high youth unemployment. Young people do not necessarily lack the skills and experience to attain employment but there are a limited number of jobs that they are competing for. This program does nothing to increase the number of real jobs for young people, and that is where our focus should be. My fear is that there will be fewer paid jobs once this program gets underway, because there will be so much free intern labour available. It seems to seek only to remove the basic workplace protections that any parent should expect their young child, teenager or early 20-year-old to have.

Before this Youth Jobs PaTH begins, it needs deep scrutiny by the Senate so that many of the questions about its operation can be explored. I sincerely hope we see that, or the consequences could in fact be more than just changing the relationship between young people and their employers for another generation. It could absolutely undermine the fairly well-tested and well-supported system of employment that this side of the House has been trying to promote for many, many years.

Ms MARINO (Forrest—Chief Government Whip) (18:45): I listened to speakers opposite, and it really does disappointment me that Labor members are totally resistant to trying new processes and new opportunities for young people. Listening to those opposite, it
is clear they believe that all employers take advantage of their workers in some way. Those of us who are in business or who have a lot to do with small, medium and large businesses know that we cannot function without really great employees. Our businesses are dependent on great employees.

The Social Security Legislation Amendment (Youth Jobs Path: Prepare, Trial, Hire) Bill 2016 is required to ensure that jobseekers are not disadvantaged by taking part in the Youth Jobs PaTH measures announced in the budget as part of the youth employment package. Early intervention can actually mean the difference between a young person taking their first steps—and it is first steps—into a productive working life and a young person entering a cycle of long-term welfare dependency. Australia, and young people themselves, cannot afford to see thousands of young Australians condemned to a lifetime of welfare dependency. We know that once a young person is long-term unemployed their chances of successfully finding employment actually decline drastically. In addition to the financial cost that goes with this, the social and human cost is far too great for our country to ignore—that is why we have to try different ways of doing things, like we are with this bill. We are committed to ensuring that young jobseekers find work as quickly as possible and avoid moving onto income support and into the welfare trap.

I looked at a program that is running in one of my senior schools, Bunbury senior high school, an independent public school in Western Australia. Their Shed Works program—a very good program—is a unique opportunity for students to engage in practical work outside the traditional classroom, which often does not actually suit every young person, particularly a group of young men. The shed is actually located in a light industrial area. It provides students with valuable trade and life skills, along with courses in English and maths. I went to their graduation recently, and these are the very young people for whom the traditional formal classroom is not a suitable or a preferred learning environment. But they do have talent and skills.

The Shed Works program involves families directly. The Shed Works team that works with these young people made sure that, in 2015, these young people helped out at a local primary school, the Cooinda Primary School. They were building, measuring, cutting and welding playground equipment together. They levelled sand and they positioned a series of pallets into place and secured them. They painted what was then a climbing pyramid. It was installed, and a seesaw was installed at St Josephs. They have built outdoor furniture for Koombana Bay and worked at Milligan House. I am referring to some of the great work that can be done by these young people. Several students, following their practical Shed Works experience, have found employment. Some actually go on to the South Regional TAFE to further their skills. However, should some of these students be unable to secure employment, they would be ideal for the Youth Jobs PaTH Program, as part of our youth employment package. The three-stage PaTH program would certainly assist them further into employment.

Students in the Shed Works program actually increased their employability during the young drivers education and training courses as well. They do road safety, driver training and basic mechanics. It is in a very supportive environment, which is what I hope they find through the youth program that is in this bill. They have far more confidence and actually are determined to learn, which is what we see. It is practical learning. It is hands-on and, for some
students, it actually re-engages them in learning, which I think is what we will see through the youth program that is contained in the bill.

The PaTH program will, I am sure, offer a similar process to what is happening in the Shed Works program. They have even got down to the marketing side this year, and we have seen young people on Saturdays up early and going along to the local markets to sell what they are actually building. This is of course a non-school day and they front up because they are actively engaged. There are some of the skills I believe young people who have not had the opportunity to go through the Shed Works program will be able to access through our PaTH program.

We know that many young people are simply not suited to academic or university pathways, but they still have great skills—generally, very manually talented. I commend the Bunbury Senior High School for such a great initiative. It has been operating for some years very, very successfully, and I commend the very dedicated staff at Shed Works. It is literally changing young people's lives, particularly those who do not fit in to the traditional school environment. I also commend those great young people for making the most of the opportunity, for grasping it and going on to employment, further training or into apprenticeships. This is what I am hoping will come out of the PaTH program as well. These young people just want the opportunity to have a go.

When I spoke to a number of employers, I asked them what they were seeking from their potential new employees. I asked a local supermarket owner, 'What are the attributes and attitudes you would seek from a young person you were considering employing?' He said that he needed them to be polite in his environment, to display maturity, to have people skills, to be honest, to be on time and to have a learning attitude and want to work. That is what I hope that the PaTH program instils in our young people. He also said that simple things like maths, counting and basic writing skills were a problem. He said that you can tell whether they are keen very, very quickly.

One of the other employers I spoke to was in earthmoving, mining and logistics. I asked him what they would need out of their employee. He said energy and attitude, a commitment and work ethic and, again, basic maths and communication skills both oral and written to be able to deal with the compliance issues facing clients. I asked the local retail store what they would need, and they said confidence, capability and courage and, of course, writing skills and maths and to be able to do mental arithmetic and handle money—some very basic skills that are needed as a potential employer.

The Prepare-Trial-Hire Program will increase young people's employability—a bit like what I saw with the Shed Works program. It will give young people an opportunity to actually find out what it is like to be in real work experience in real time and to get the start they need in the workforce. These are generally great young people who just need an opportunity. They need an opportunity to prove to those employers that they are keen, that they will work hard, that they will learn and that they are prepared to have a go. This is a path into employment for them.

To encourage eligible young jobseekers to take up a PaTH internship, participants will be paid a $200 fortnightly incentive in addition to their social security payments. I suspect that many of these young people will really grasp this opportunity. For some it may be the opportunity they have been waiting for for a long time and, depending on their background
and their circumstances, they will see this as a great opportunity. When I spoke to the young Shed Works people, I was told that all they were looking for was the opportunity. That is what Shed Works gave them, and I am hoping that, through the PaTH internship, more young people will get a similar experience and opportunity to that experienced by the young people at Shed Works.

The bill will ensure that the fortnightly incentive payments to young jobseekers undertaking these internships under the Youth Jobs Path are not deemed as income for social security and veterans' entitlements purposes. This of course means that the incentive payments will not affect those participants' other social security payments or veterans' entitlements. The bill also ensures that it is easier for young people to return to employment services and have their income support payments restored, without them having to make a new claim or serve relevant waiting periods, if their wage-subsidy-supported job is ended due to no fault of their own.

When I get back to the opportunity that young people are looking for, often in rural and regional areas, they face additional challenges. What I want to see out of this program is that more young people in rural and regional communities, especially the smaller communities, have an opportunity and a pathway. I am looking forward to this PaTH program providing the first step and a great opportunity for many more young people, both in my electorate and around Australia.

Ms CHESTERS (Bendigo) (18:55): I rise to speak in favour of the amendment moved and to raise my concerns about the bill that is before the House, the Social Security Legislation Amendment (Youth Jobs Path: Prepare, Trial, Hire) Bill 2016, and the plan that the government is trying to roll out. Let us be clear from the beginning that this is not a jobs plan. This is not going to create jobs for young people. A common complaint that we have out in our electorates is that there are simply not enough jobs. This does not create jobs for young people. What this does is create an internship, which is likely, without proper safeguards, to be another exploitation program. What people on this side of the House have sought to do, whether it be in this place or through Senate estimates, is ask questions of the government about whether they have introduced the proper safeguards to ensure that young people engaged in this program will not be exploited.

The other point that I wish to highlight is how the government is simply handing out wage subsidies to companies who already have jobs to offer. The clearest example of how we talk about this is what some have nicknamed in the media 'the four-dollar-an-hour-supermarket internships'. Let's talk through what we mean by that. We are talking about a government who will see that jobseekers will receive a payment of $200 per fortnight on top of their income support payment—so about $4 an hour. The business will be paid $1,000 on taking on an intern, then receive a wage subsidy of between $6½ thousand and $10,000 if they hire them at the conclusion of the internship.

What it means for Coles and Safeway is that they were already going to hire young people, but they can now enter into this situation. They can now have interns and get a wage subsidy. So we are essentially handing taxpayers' dollars over to companies like Coles and Safeway, who were already going to hire young people. The government has not denied this at all. In fact, during the Senate estimates process the government needed to show that the PaTH program was not just a thought bubble. It was an opportunity for them, through that process,
to answer and outline how they are going to provide vital safeguards for young jobseekers who are engaged in this program. They should have shown how PaTH will not depress wages or displace jobs. But they could not answer the senators' questions. They also should have shown how PaTH would have provided vital access to workers compensation and workplace health and safety, but they could not. They also should have provided a definition of what an intern is and what sort of activity they will doing on worksites, but they could not do that either.

So serious questions are being asked of this bill and this program. 'Trust us' is not good enough. Given this government's track record, given what is happening in our employment and labour market at the moment, we cannot leave it up to the market. We cannot leave it up to employers. We cannot leave it up to this government with simply 'trust us'. This bill and this program do need proper scrutiny.

This program, as demonstrated by one of the government's own senators in his questions at estimates, highlights that the people employed under this program will not be treated the same as other workers in a workplace. You cannot go past that. These young people are being set up. They will not be treated like the rest of the workers in their workplace; they will be treated differently. They will be seen as volunteers. There is no definition of what an intern is, under the Fair Work Act. The government senator asked at estimates:

… I guess one potential advantage for a business is that if an intern does not work out, they are not going to be subject to any unfair dismissal claims or any costs in that respect.

I cannot think of a more arrogant statement for a member of the Liberal Party to make. What they are essentially saying is, 'Well, the good news is, if the young person does not work out, the company will not be subject to any unfair dismissal claims or any costs in that respect.' They are always thinking of the company, the bosses and the bottom line. They are not thinking about the health and wellbeing of that young worker. They are not going to ask what happened that saw that young person dismissed. It is just trial, use, send out the door—treat our workers like they are Kleenex: 'Let's just use them and throw them away.' These young people looking for work are our future. Essentially, this government is creating another program which will churn through workers. Where are the safeguards to stop employers from churning through workers? There are none.

The government already has its own problems with the Work for the Dole program, as we on this side of the House have also tried to highlight. We have seen the death of somebody on the Work for the Dole program, and there has been a stunning and spectacular silence from this government about doing anything to address those issues. It is tragic that one person lost their life, but I have to say I am surprised there have not been others, from the reports that I have heard in relation to the Work for the Dole program in my own electorate. Organisations that have taken on Work for the Dole participants have complained that they have not received occupational health and safety guidelines. They have complained, when they have tried to get support from the department, that it is completely lacking in support for supervisors. I have spoken to young people engaged in the Work for the Dole program who have had their payments suspended through no fault of their own. The supervisor did not turn up, so they got marked as not being there and then they had their payments suspended.

Right now, Centrelink, because of this government's cuts to staffing and the way it has restructured the Department of Human Services, cannot cope with another program currently.
While the government want to lump another ill-thought-out program onto our Centrelink team, onto the hardworking people at Centrelink, they have not committed to employing more public servants to administer this program. They are not talking about that. They are just looking to add more work onto a department that is already stressed and already struggling with its workload.

The idea that all young jobseekers have barriers to work is also not fair. Yes, there are some people in our community who are caught in the intergenerational unemployment cycle, and, yes, there are complex barriers to them entering the workforce. But that is not every young person, and I meet lots and lots of young people, and their parents, who simply want a start. They just want a job. But at the moment there is no focus from this government on creating good, secure jobs that these people can count on—people like Leigh. Leigh is 25, unemployed and a jobseeker. He has had very little paid work since he left school. He has been receiving Centrelink payments since finishing his diploma in interactive media about 18 months ago. Leigh volunteers at the Red Cross Blood Service in Bendigo, and he is keen to get paid work in his career of choice. However, he would be happy to take any job. He is currently living at home with his parents and he does not want to be at home. He wants to get out and start the rest of his life.

In Bendigo we do lack job opportunities for young people. Bendigo's youth unemployment rate is high, but it is not as high as it is in areas like Townsville and Cairns, where it is in the double digits—there is 20 per cent youth unemployment in Cairns—and in areas to the north of Bendigo, like Shepparton and Mildura. Lots of areas have high youth unemployment.

But this program is not going to help all of those young people. This program seeks to exploit a small group of young people. It does not have safeguards in place to make sure that young people involved in this program do not have a horrible, bad, exploitative experience but have a good experience of work.

Leigh is not alone. He is not the only one in my electorate who is looking for work. Amanda, who is a mum, contacted me about her son being out of work for years. She says that he applies for everything he can. He drops his resume into industrial sites and simply cannot get work. No Centrelink will mean that he will be homeless again. Lots of places insist that people have a drivers licence and their own car, but they can barely afford to pay rent, utilities and food. There is nothing left to be able to afford a vehicle to drive to and from work or to and from interviews. This is the reality for young people who are trying to break into the job market. This program does little to help change that situation. The $200 on top of Newstart will not help resolve the issues Amanda's son will be facing. Not to mention that, if Amanda's son were to get a job under this program, he will have displaced another young worker who would have had that job anyway.

Finally I want to highlight another area. We have had a lot of talk in here about backpackers and the backpacker tax, yet we have not talked about the fact that backpackers are also young workers. They are workers from overseas coming to this country. There are genuine workforce shortages in ag and in the regions, but there is not a workforce shortage in hospitality in places like Bendigo, Thomastown, Eltham or other major regional cities where youth unemployment is in double digits.

The government are not telling the Australian people that, aside from the changes to the tax, they have expanded where backpackers can work. Young backpackers on the 462 visa
can now work in hospitality to get their second year visa. They have expanded the age up to 35. So at a time when youth unemployment is really high in this country the government are encouraging in more backpackers, who will not go out to the farms where there are labour shortages. In fact, only one in five backpackers work on a farm. That means that four out of five backpackers do not ever step foot on a farm. Where are they? They are competing against young Australians who are trying to get a job.

The government do not understand the youth unemployment crisis we have in this country. They are ranting and raving over a backpacker tax. They have put forward a program that does not have the necessary safeguards to protect young people if they engage in this program. They are not dealing with the really obvious factor—most young backpackers from overseas work in industries in Australia that young Australians want to work in. They work in the cities. They work in construction, hospitality, mining and beauty. They even work as social workers. They are the people Leigh is competing with. We also know through the Fair Work Ombudsman's report that about one-third of those backpackers are being underpaid and mistreated. That is putting downward pressure on wages.

As I and other speakers on this side have said, Labor are calling on the government to support the amendment. Help us save you from another disastrous program that will put pressure on wages and that will displace jobs that already exist. Labor want to help the government avoid another death in a workplace as a result of this program. If a young worker is employed, they should be recognised as an employee. They should not be treated as an intern or a volunteer; they should be recognised as an employee. The government's idea about changing a job into an internship is disastrous for young people and our local job community.

This government is completely devoid of any job creation program. They are not working with industry to create good secure jobs that people can count on. They are coming up with programs that are thought bubbles they think will distract the community and suggest they are creating real job opportunities when they are not.

People in regional Australia and people in areas like Bendigo have had enough with a government that talks a lot of talk about jobs and growth but only puts forth programs that will see people in our community be exploited. Unless there are safeguards in place, we will see young people's first experience of work be a horrible experience. It is time the government got serious about youth unemployment and looked at the expansion of the backpacker visa.

Mr HARTSUYKER (Cowper—Assistant Minister to the Deputy Prime Minister) (19:10): I welcome the opportunity to speak on these bills relating to the PaTH program, which is a very important program and one that I am very passionate about. I am very passionate about giving young people the opportunity to get a job. In the Abbott government I had the privilege of being responsible for the implementation of jobactive, and an important part of jobactive was getting young people off welfare and into work.

It was interesting to note the comment by the member for Bendigo when she said that we should be looking at more apprenticeships for young people. In the development of jobactive
I talked to a lot of employers and employment service providers. In fact, when I was in Melbourne I went into one particular employment service provider and there was a list of apprenticeships on the board. There were positions for plumbers, there were positions for electricians and there were positions for carpenters. I said to the CEO of that particular organisation, 'Why is it that these apprenticeships have not been snapped up? Why is it that they are on a board and in significant numbers when youth unemployment is so relatively high?' The answer he gave was quite simple. It was that the young people who were presenting to that office did not have the skills and did not have the capability to take up an apprenticeship.

That is a very disappointing situation. I think it is indicative of the challenges that we are trying to overcome with the PaTH program because, if I put to one side the issue of higher skilled apprenticeships and look at even basic entry-level jobs, employers were saying to me, as I got around the country as the minister responsible for developing the jobactive program, that young people were presenting at the gates of their businesses without the necessary basic skills to hold down a job. They are skills that I would hold for granted and you, Deputy Speaker Georganas, would hold for granted, as people who have been in the workplace for a long time would, but they lacked the necessary basic skills—turning up on time, how you deal with your workmates and how you deal with customers. These are skills which are absolutely elementary but are skills which many young people, who perhaps have been in a household where they have seen intergenerational unemployment and have never seen anyone go to work each day, simply do not have.

The gem of the PaTH program is that it addresses the key barriers to those young people moving off welfare and those young people getting that all important start. Maybe it is not the job that they wanted as their dream job, but maybe it is the job that gets them off the welfare train onto the work train and the benefits that come with work—the financial benefits and the non-financial benefits. PaTH works in a number of ways. It addresses the issues of employability skills that I mentioned previously—those basic skills that are lacking. It also addresses the fact that many young people who have been on welfare for a long time have a fear of their own capability and have a fear of moving away from the welfare safety net. So a young person can stay within their welfare system, can have an exposure to the workforce, can learn new skills and, hopefully, if all goes well, move into a long-term sustainable job. That is a really exciting outcome.

The PaTH program firstly addresses basic employability skills. Young people will learn those basic skills that they need to hold down a job—turning up on time, how you dress and all those things. The next element is an internship of four to 12 weeks with an employer. Regrettably, many employers are reluctant to take on a young person who does not have the sort of experience they need. The internship will assist in breaking that barrier by giving employers a $1,000 payment to encourage them to take on a young person, and then we are giving the young person a financial incentive of $200 every fortnight to give them a financial reward, give them a return for their effort, give them a return for investing in themselves. The internship is an important part of this program—it allows a young person to fit into a workplace on a no obligation basis for that young person and a no obligation basis for the employer and hopefully if there is a favourable outcome the young person can progress further through the system. But we are overcoming that employer reluctance to take on a
young person. One of the challenges I had in framing jobactive was that employers unfortunately had had unhappy experiences with putting on young people—young people who repeatedly did not work in their business. PaTH helps overcome that by providing the opportunity for an employer to have a look at a young person and for the young person to have a look at the employment landscape in that business and see if the mix is right for them, see if they are going to get on. I think that is a very important element.

The third important element of PaTH addresses another barrier to taking on someone that we hear about repeatedly from employers—the fact that a new employee, young or old, is not as productive in the early weeks and months as they may be when they have been in the job for a long time. Under PaTH we have wage subsidies of up to $10,000 to encourage employers to put on an eligible job seeker. So we have the basic employability skills, we have got the internship, where the employer and the young person can see how they work together, and then we have the third element which is the wage subsidy, which defrays the high costs in the initial weeks and months of putting on a new employee.

Members opposite have made some negative comments, but I hope they will give PaTH a chance. I hope they will support the thought that we want to give those kids who do not believe in themselves an opportunity; we want to give those kids a chance. There are many ways we can approach this and there will always be a range of views as to how things should be done, but I think the elements in PaTH address the key barriers effectively. It is a massive financial commitment, of some $750 million, but when you look at that in terms of the some 120,000 young people this program could help and the cost of them staying on benefits for an extended period, it is an incredibly good investment—a great investment in our youth, a great economic investment and a great community investment. The longitudinal studies that have been carried out on other nationalities are clear—if you are long-term unemployed at a young age you are about 70 per cent likely to be long-term unemployed when you are around 40. The imperative is huge. We need to get our young people off the couch. We need to get them believing in themselves. We need to give them the skills they need to be competitive in the workforce because, whilst in this country unemployment is relatively low in many areas, there are still some problematic areas, and youth unemployment is intractably high. Why is that? Because employers are choosing not to employ young people. We have to overcome the barriers. I believe PaTH does this. I believe it is an appropriate suite of measures. Is that the only solution? Clearly not, and members opposite have articulated a range of views on what this government should be doing instead, but certainly in the context of I think good policy the PaTH program ticks the boxes—the PaTH program has the capacity to get a great number of young people up off the couch into work, believing in themselves, setting up a financial future for themselves and allowing them to walk down the street with their head held high because they have a job and they do not have to depend on benefits.

I will draw my conclusion to a close. I believe in this program. I think that members opposite should carefully consider the elements proposed in this legislation. This is not about cutting entitlements; this is not about displacing other workers. This is about giving kids a chance. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms LAMB (Longman) (19:20): It was about six months ago now that I was sitting at home, on budget night, tuning in and listening to the Treasurer and, like so many others, I expected the Treasurer to deliver for more Australians. The fact is, instead of there being lots
of winners on budget night it became apparent, really quickly, that there were many losers from that budget.

Of those groups were young people looking for a job, because while this piece of legislation is pitched—in a bit of a glossy flyer—as giving young people a pathway to a career, it risks giving big business cheap labour to exploit. We know this because when it comes to creating jobs and growing the economy you just have to look at the coalition's track record of delivering. From goading our car manufacturers to leave our shores, to their underhanded attempts to cut penalty rates, the coalition has never had the interests of working Australians at heart. But what can we expect when there is no doubt that the Treasurer goes to sleep every night dreaming about his endless pursuit of workplace flexibility, which, for the Liberals, has always been code for stripping away the rights of hardworking Australians.

This proposal highlights the reality that those opposite continually fail to do their due diligence when it comes to developing a social policy. Labor has always supported meaningful investment and initiatives that give young people a pathway towards long-term sustainable and fulfilling employment. We understand that there is dignity in work and that young people should be given every opportunity to find a job. In my electorate of Longman, making sure young people have a job was the crucial message I heard on the doorsteps, on the telephones or at the school gates.

The point I would like to make about this proposal is that while the bill appears to be noncontroversial and well-intentioned there are several elements of the government's broader program that have the potential to undermine our country's hard-fought workforce standards.

The first issue is that we all should be alarmed by any proposal that allows a business to pay workers below the award rate. I am sure many of you will remember Gina Rinehart's vision for the Australian workforce—an agile, flexible workforce, with workers being paid $2 an hour. While this proposal is not as extreme, it has the same irreversible effects of stripping away our social safety net for low paid and vulnerable Australians.

Under this proposal 17 to 24-year-olds will participate in internships of four to 12 weeks, working up to 25 hours a week, while receiving $200 a fortnight. Theoretically, an intern under this scheme could be paid as little as $4 an hour, no matter what work they were performing. To me, this is wrong. I have always believed in the idea of a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. We have minimum wage and award rates in this country because as a society we believe that low-paid workers should have economic security and be protected from exploitation. This proposal contradicts that.

It is not just Labor that sees the risks of worker exploitation under this proposal. We have Dr Amanda Elliot, an academic at the University of Sydney's Department of Sociology and Social Policy, who said this program was 'unlikely to be a good introduction to work for young people'. We have the head of Interns Australia, Dimity Mannering, who said the program would create 'huge opportunities for exploitation'.

As a parent it is concerning to think that my own sons could be working in any industry, no matter how dangerous, for as little as $4 an hour. I know those opposite will say that this scheme is voluntary but, regardless of that, we should not punish hardworking young Australians by allowing them to be exploited and paid wages that are below the standard of even a third-world nation. This is at a time when vigilance for ensuring that we protect the interests of young Australians going to work should be paramount.
We have all heard stories of worker exploitation within 7-Eleven, a company that thousands of Australians have probably visited at some time in their lives. It is a company that is marketed as a 'good call'. Today we know that many 7-Eleven franchise owners systematically exploited desperate young workers who were just trying to survive, and many of them had young families. They were underpaid, forced to perform weeks of so-called training and some were bullied and harassed. Yet, against this background, we have a government that wants to allow private sector internships that, in the 7-Eleven style, rob workers of the dignity of getting paid a fair wage equal to other workers performing the same work. I speak in such strong terms about the risks of worker exploitation under this proposal because I believe that it could potentially have the reverse of the outcome that is sought by the government. Instead of creating job opportunities, I can envisage that this scheme, were it to come into operation with no regulation, could potentially turn young vulnerable Australians away from work for life.

My second concern about this proposal is the very real risk of companies cycling through young workers and simply using them as cheap labour. Under this proposal, businesses will be paid $1,000 to take on an intern before receiving a wage subsidy of up to $10,000 if they hire the intern when the internship concludes. Those opposite consistently talk about business acumen and the need to keep government out of the way of business and individual enterprise. Yet you have to wonder whether any of them have any life experience actually running a business. When I look at this policy, I see the potential for rorting of dodgy employers out of cheap labour. What is stop a large company from simply employing an intern, using the wage subsidy until it is exhausted and then sacking the intern to replace them with another intern and attract more government subsidies? The fact is that, when you introduce schemes such as this, it creates a power imbalance between the employee and the employer. It takes way basic workplace rights and workplace conditions and you run the risk of companies and businesses exploiting young Australians in pursuit of profit.

I know better than most that there are many very good businesses around Australia. My family owns one of them—a small cafe at Brendale, which is just south of my electorate. Labor understands the challenges that businesses and business owners face. But, equally, we understand that, to run a small business, you have to invest in your staff, you have to give your staff appropriate training. That is what being a good employer is all about. Ronald Reagan said that nine of the most terrifying words in the English language were 'I'm from the government and I'm here to help.' The reality is that, for businesses in Australia, the 10 most terrifying words are 'I'm from the Turnbull government and I'm here to help.'

If those opposite really believed in the virtues of individual enterprise and entrepreneurship, they would recognise that training and paying for staff wages is fundamentally the responsibility of every business, because, ultimately, it is the business that will prosper from the skills and the hard work of their staff. But, instead, this proposal takes away the responsibility of businesses investing in their staff and moves that impost onto the Australian taxpayer, which can only be regarded as another example of Turnbullism corporate welfare.

My fear is that, while many good and honest businesses might use this program to hire a young employee who they may intend to keep for the long term, there is nothing to stop many other companies and businesses from churning through interns at the taxpayers' expense. This
in turn risks placing young jobseekers in a continuous cycle of uncertainty, exploitation and poverty. If an Australian business wants to hire more staff, it should be encouraged to do so, but not through a thought-bubble scheme that creates a two-tier system of employment. Labor and I want to see more businesses hiring young people but we believe these positions need to be real jobs, and we will work with the business community and unions to make sure that our kids are given real jobs, real training and real security.

Another concern that I have with this proposal is that, while it is designed to give young people a job, it could in fact negate the need for existing employees to work at certain times in industry, like retail, hospitality or construction. In 2013 the Fair Work Ombudsman presented a report entitled Experience or exploitation.

Debate interrupted.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The SPEAKER (19:30): Order. It being 7:30 pm, I propose the question:

That the House do now adjourn.

**Calwell Electorate: Aged Care**

Ms VAMVAKINOU (Calwell) (19:30): It is my great pleasure to rise and talk this evening about a new residential aged care facility, whose sod-turning ceremony I recently attended, situated in Valley Park in Westmeadows in my electorate of Calwell. It promises to be a wonderful mix of aged-care and community facilities.

This state of the art aged-care complex is the result of a vision held and promoted by former Labor Premier and former state member for Broadmeadows, John Brumby, for the development and revitalisation of the old Mews housing estate. The Mews Estate, as it was known to our locals, was poorly designed and in a bad state of disrepair. The vision for Valley Park, by contrast, is for an integrated, harmonious community facility.

The $160 million broader development of the Westmeadows site is a partnership between the state government of Victoria, residential developers Frasers, and Baptcare. The project will deliver: a new 90-bed residential aged-care facility; 110 new social housing homes; 34 independent living units for older residents, co-located within the aged-care facility; more than 200 new private homes for sale; new landscaped parks, bike and pedestrian paths; and improved community facilities. I believe the Valley Park Project will set new standards in quality housing, with beautiful wide open spaces and a vibrant, diverse community, with excellent integrated services. Of course, part of the vision from the start was that the community include appropriate housing and support for ageing residents. And this it does.

The best communities are ones that encompass people of all ages, life stages, interests, lifestyles, incomes and cultural backgrounds. We are coming to understand that separating people on the basis of their age or other life differences is artificial and damaging to the health of individuals and communities. In many ways the traditional family values did get it right, making sure that old and young mixed and took care of each other. In that sense, it is great to see Baptcare working with the other Valley Park partners to build this aged-care residence right here in the middle of a vibrant and growing new community in my electorate.

It is often noted these days that, while we were once a young country, our population is predicted to become an ageing one. With these changes, new needs and challenges will arise.
We, therefore, have a duty to prepare for the future and ensure that we have the infrastructure ready to provide a positive and stable future for all members of our community. These demographic changes are already particularly being felt in Westmeadows. According to the 2011 census, the percentage of people over the retiring age in Westmeadows was three points above both the Victorian and Australian averages, and 10 points above the Calwell average. On current predictions, this figure is likely to increase in the coming decades, in line with the rest of the country.

Additionally, I note that Westmeadows is one of the most diverse and multicultural suburbs in my electorate. The local community includes a large number of first-generation migrants who are now ageing and require strong government assistance and support to live their lives fully and as independently as possible. It is well known that as we age many people tend to revert back to, and feel more comfortable in, their first languages, and I am reminded of the importance of culturally and linguistically appropriate services. This, too, adds a layer of complexity to dealing with our ageing population. I am absolutely confident that we are addressing these issues with this new facility.

On another positive note, this project creates opportunities for our locals. The construction will provide new jobs, and the increased demand in the aged-care sector will hopefully provide more jobs for a growing service industry. This will require both training and resources from all levels of government and the private sector. We should be quick to encourage compassionate and dedicated individuals to provide the much needed and well-deserved support to our elder Australians. I commend all the partners involved in the project, including of course Baptcare, who have committed to this state-of-the-art facility. I acknowledge the contribution to this facility—as well as to the whole Valley Park project—of the Victorian government, the City of Hume and the developers. This building and the mix of housing that is built around it will set the benchmark for future developments of this area. I certainly look forward to its opening sometime next year.

Building and Construction Industry

Mr TED O'BRIEN (Fairfax) (19:34): As a Queenslander, I am ashamed to say that my state has overtaken Victoria as the epicentre of CFMEU thuggery. In this year alone, 40 per cent of the issues detailed on the Fair Work Building and Construction website relates to CFMEU in Queensland. As a new member to this chamber, I have had the displeasure of witnessing how submissive the Labor Party is to the union movement, as evidenced by the debate over the Australian Building and Construction Commission, the ABCC.

Once upon a time, the people pulling the strings in Labor were labelled 'faceless'. There is that famous image from 1963, just outside the Kingston Hotel, which is just down the road from here. The photo is of Arthur Calwell with his deputy, Gough Whitlam, standing forlornly outside the pub, as 36 faceless men, mostly union members, decided the policies the Labor Party were to take to that year's election. They met behind closed doors in secret back in 1963, because they wanted to keep it a secret. How things have changed, Mr Speaker. Not nowadays—nowadays the union movement signals its control over the Australian Labor Party as openly as the ALP bows to it.

Established by the Howard government in 2005, the ABCC was killed off by Prime Minister Julia Gillard in 2012. For reasons revealed the following year by The Sydney Morning Herald's Peter Hartcher, who wrote:
In November 2011 Gillard hosted a meeting with the secretary of the ACTU, Dave Oliver, and the heads of the major unions. It was held over lunch at Kirribilli House. Its purpose was to forge a strategic alliance between Gillard and the union movement.

Basically, it was a dirty deal. Or, as Martin Ferguson told Hartcher, it was 'another Kirribilli agreement' in reference to that infamous Hawke-Keating deal. One last quote from that article:

She gave the unions everything they wanted. On top of the list of their demands, of course, was the disbandment of the ABCC, and Prime Minister Gillard dutifully complied.

Fast forward a few years and, unfortunately, that is precisely what we see today: the current Leader of the Opposition—who admits he has battled to retain the leadership of the ALP against the member for Grayndler—has committed to the CFMEU that he would oppose the ABCC's reinstatement—its reintroduction. That is the sole and the crude reason for the Labor Party continuing to oppose this bill.

However, my state can no longer afford these dirty deals. We need the ABCC reinstated. We need to stop recriminations against employers who employ non-union labour. We need to reverse Labor's cuts to the maximum penalties for breaching the law. We need Fair Work Building and Construction to have the right to continue court proceedings, regardless of private settlements. We need evidence-gathering powers to be retained; we need to introduce an effective building code; and we need to take away the opportunity for big employers and big unions to collude locking out smaller players and discriminating against subcontractors.

A few days ago I looked at the website of the Queensland branch of the CFMEU and learnt how proud they are of their most recent merger with the BLF, the Builders Labourers Federation—a union that was deregistered for corruption and poor behaviour. Guess who announced that merger? The former CFMEU president no less, Dave Hanna, who, we learned only last week, will be going to court for—wait for it—threatening to stuff a phone down a worksite manager's throat! This is who is running the Labor Party nowadays. It makes one wonder if the CFMEU will go the same way as the BLF. The ABCC bill needs to be passed.

**Tasmania: Salmon Industry**

Mr WILKIE (Denison) (19:40): I was somewhat amused yesterday to read a letter in the *Mercury* newspaper from Labor senator Carol Brown in which she claims that my boycott of Tasmanian salmon will single-handedly destroy the entire industry. I can only assume that she thinks I eat an awful lot of salmon. Writing about the explosive claims on last Monday's ABC TV *Four Corners* program, Senator Brown made more sense when she wrote that 'it is vital that the salmon industry is properly and sustainably managed to ensure it continues to provide jobs for Tasmanians.' That comment is fair enough, I suggest, but it is the height of hypocrisy because if the Liberal and Labor parties really cared about jobs they would stop slinging mud at me and instead act decisively to ensure the Tasmanian aquaculture industry is put on a genuinely sustainable footing. That means meeting the strictest environmental, social and economic criteria. The fact is that there is deep concern in the Tasmanian community right now about salmon farming, and that concern is not going to go away by the Liberal and Labor parties sticking their fingers in their ears and ignoring it. Nor will they make it go away by calling me churlish and claiming I am not 'supporting an industry with an international reputation nor standing up for Tasmanian jobs.' The point here is that the Tasmanian salmon
industry is now on notice to improve its practices, and the government is on notice to improve the regulatory framework. That is the only thing that will keep the jobs that we have now, and that is the only thing that will allow the industry to grow in the future.

When I read Senator Brown's letter in the *Mercury* it took me a while to realise that I was not reading a letter from Senator Eric Abetz, because it was almost identical to the sorts of ridiculous and alarmist claims that he made in a press release last week, including that I was single-handedly putting 5,200 jobs at risk by expressing my concern about the salmon industry. He said, 'Our salmon industry is one of the best in the world,' but if there were no problems in the Tasmanian salmon industry then there would not be the groundswell of community concern both before and after *Four Corners*. If everything was fine and there was nothing to worry about, then we would not even be having this discussion in this place tonight.

The problem is that the Liberal and Labor parties like to talk about jobs but they do not follow through with the policies that create them. In other words, it is just a buzzword. What these parties obviously do not understand is that if you really want to create jobs you have to look beyond the next election and beyond cynical politics and cheap point-scoring. That is something the two major parties are terribly bad at. We are seeing it with salmon farming, but there are many other examples where the Liberal and Labor parties are destroying jobs in Tasmania. There are the savage cuts to universities and science which are putting at risk Hobart's reputation as a centre of excellence for science and research, and there is the refusal to send defence work to Tasmania even though we have a world-class defence manufacturing precinct at Prince of Wales Bay.

The salmon farming situation is deja vu in Tasmania because it is the same debate that we have been having for years about the forestry industry, where instead of forcing change and putting the industry on a sustainable footing the Liberal and Labor parties have simply kowtowed to big business and refused to acknowledge that there is a problem. We keep making the same mistakes. Here is the problem: the Liberal and Labor parties might like to claim that they are different but at the end of the day they are like peas in a pod—Pinky and Perky. Senators Brown and Abetz in particular are singing from the same songbook. But this is not just one example of a pair of alarmingly strange bedfellows. Despite all their confected differences, the Liberal and Labor parties in Tasmania are pretty much identical. They both have no understanding of the public interest and not a clue about what policies will genuinely create jobs. The only jobs they are interested in are their own—and then they wonder why the community holds them in contempt. For my part, I look forward to resuming my eating of Tassie salmon—after the industry has cleaned up its act and has demonstrated that it has cleaned up its act.

Bruce Highway

Mr LLEW O'BRIEN (Wide Bay) (19:45): There are a lot of reasons why I am very proud to be a member of a coalition government. It is not just because we are the government that balances the books of the nation and fixes Labor's mess, and it is not just because we are the government that understands families and how to protect those families. It is also about the fact that we are the government that knows how to build infrastructure—and don't we do that well?
Tonight I would like to focus mostly on one particular point of infrastructure, a project that the coalition has made great achievements with, and that is the Cooroy to Curra upgrade of the Bruce Highway. It is a 62-kilometre project that runs right through the federal division of Wide Bay. It is a four-lane upgrade and realignment that runs, obviously, from Cooroy to Curra, and it bypasses Gympie.

The Cooroy to Curra section of the Bruce Highway has been rated as one of the most dangerous sections of the Bruce Highway in the past, and unfortunately I have seen that firsthand. As a police officer and trained forensic accident investigator, I had the task of attending many tragic fatalities on that section of highway. Quite often I would get a call in the middle of the night and I would be called out to some of the most horrific and tragic scenes that you could possibly imagine. So you would understand why I am passionate about this project. From 2002 to 2014, more than 50 people were killed on that stretch of highway, and that is a real tragedy.

At the 2013 election, my predecessor, Warren Truss, announced that he would be committing some $2 billion, including towards this project to upgrade, particularly, section C and section A, because section B had already been completed, partly because it needed to go around a dam that the Labor Party wanted to build called the Traveston dam—and what a fiasco that was. Indeed, I think that was the last time they paid any attention to building a dam in Queensland, and they certainly are not interested in it right now. We now need to maintain the momentum that Warren Truss set, particularly in his last term, and get section D up and running. Section C is being constructed now and is likely to be fixed, weather permitting, in 2018. I did a tour of section C only last week and was very impressed with what I saw. There are not too many things more impressive, in terms of building roads, than travelling along a brand-new four-lane highway that is a completely new corridor for transport, and that is what they are doing there now.

Section C is an 80-20 funding split between the Commonwealth and the states, and it comprises some 12 kilometres and is priced at $388 million. It will provide about 400 jobs. But it is more than the jobs in construction that the coalition understands; it is the jobs that a project like this creates in the regional area that it services. My area of Wide Bay is in great need of a highway like this, and that is what we are delivering. People such as the Nolans, a big employer in our area—a meat-processing plant—tell me that this upgrade of the highway will be a great improvement to their business. Tim Jensen, one of the operators of BLU Logistics, another great company—a logistics company based in Gympie—tells me that this will make a big difference to his company. Richers Transport in Maryborough are another company that have told me that section C and section D of the Bruce Highway are much-needed pieces of infrastructure. It is vitally important that we fund section D. We have recently committed $50 million to detailed spending. Once again, we are the party of building infrastructure. We are building this new corridor and we need to continue to make sure that the seat of Wide Bay is well serviced.

Advice, Like Youth, Probably Just Wasted On the Young

Mr KEOGH (Burt) (19:50): As many schools are in, or have recently finished, their final exams, I address my remarks to the ladies and gentlemen of the class of 2016: wear sunscreen. If I could offer you only one tip for the future, sunscreen would be it. The long-term benefits of sunscreen have been proven by scientists, whereas the rest of my advice has
no basis and is no more reliable than my own meandering experience. I will dispense this advice now.

Enjoy the power and beauty of your youth. Oh, never mind. You will not understand the power and beauty of your youth until they have faded. But trust me, in 20 years, you will look back at photos of yourself and recall, in a way you can't grasp now, how much possibility lay before you and how fabulous you really looked. You are not as fat as you imagine.

Don't worry about the future. Or worry, but know that worrying is as effective as trying to solve an algebra equation by chewing bubble gum. The real troubles in your life are apt to be things that never crossed your worried mind, the kind that blindside you at 4 p.m. on some idle Tuesday.

Do one thing every day that scares you. Dance. Don't be reckless with other people's hearts; Don't put up with people who are reckless with yours. Floss. Don't waste your time on jealousy. Sometimes you're ahead, sometimes you're behind. The race is long and, in the end, it is only with yourself. Remember compliments you receive, forget the insults. If you succeed in doing this, tell me how. Keep your old love letters and throw away your old bank statements. Stretch.

Don't feel guilty if you don't know what you want to do with your life. The most interesting people I know didn't know at 18 what they wanted to do with their lives. Some of the most interesting 40 year olds I know still don't.

Get plenty of calcium. Be kind to your knees; You will miss them when they have gone. Maybe you'll marry, maybe you won't; maybe you'll have children, maybe you won't; maybe you'll divorce at 40, maybe you'll dance the funky chicken on your 75th wedding anniversary.

Whatever you do, don't congratulate yourself too much or berate yourself either. Your choices are half chance, and so are everybody else's.

Use your body and enjoy it. Use it every way you can. Don't be afraid of it or of what other people think of it—it is the greatest instrument you will ever own. Dance, even if you have nowhere to do it but your own living room. Read the directions, even if you don't follow them. Do not read beauty magazines. They will only make you feel ugly.

Get to know your parents. You never know when they will be gone for good. Be nice to your siblings—they are the best link to your past and the people most likely to stick with you in the future. Understand that friends come and go, but a precious few you should hold on to. Work hard to bridge the gaps in geography and lifestyle, because the older you get, the more you need the people who knew you when you were young.

Live in a big city once, but leave before it makes you hard. Live on the beach once, but leave before it makes you soft. Travel.

Accept certain inalienable truths: prices will rise; politicians will argue; you, too, will get old. And when you do, you will fantasise that, when you were young, prices were reasonable, politicians agreed and children respected their elders. Respect your elders.

Don't expect anyone else to support you. Maybe you have a trust fund, maybe you will have a wealthy spouse, but you never know when either one might run out.

Don't mess too much with your hair or, by the time you are 40, you will look 85.
Be careful whose advice you buy, but be patient with those who supply it. Advice is a form of nostalgia; dispensing it is a way of fishing the past from the disposal, wiping it off, painting over the ugly parts and recycling it for more than it's worth. But trust me on the sunscreen.

Energy Security

Mr PASIN (Barker) (19:54): I rise to speak on the cost of electricity and the need for energy security in my home state of South Australia. South Australia's recent blackout was a wake-up call that underlines the importance of energy security to all Australians. It is clear that we need a harmonised, national approach to energy policy across state and territory borders to achieve the three main objectives for energy policy: security, affordability and a lower emissions future. September's blackout in South Australia has reiterated that, above all, we need an energy supply that will avoid damaging disruptions. Aside from putting lives at risk, this disruption cost hundreds of millions of dollars across the state—costs that an already struggling South Australian economy can ill afford. Some of the state's largest employers, such as BHP, Nyrstar and OZ Minerals were without power for almost two weeks.

With the highest taxes, charges and electricity prices in the nation, South Australia now also has the most unreliable energy supplies in the nation. It is no wonder we have the nation's highest unemployment rate. The South Australian government are poor economic managers, but they are also poor managers of the state's electricity system. Former South Australian Premier Mike Rann had a vision in 2009 to see a 'state-wide green grid of renewable energy feeding into the national grid out of South Australia—in wind, solar, geothermal and wave' and, in doing so, assist eastern states reaching their own targets. Seven years on and we have overwhelmingly the highest electricity prices in the nation and reliability is also in question.

This is because the South Australian Labor government has an aspirational, overly ambitious, irresponsible energy policy. Forty-one per cent of South Australia's power comes from wind and solar. That has not only driven up the cost of electricity but it has also caused major issues with the security and stability of supply. The South Australian Labor government has ignored warnings that, by driving base load generators out of business too soon before we had the technology to effectively store wind and solar power, we cruelled our ability to ensure security of supply. I have no issue with reducing emissions; in fact, I am proud that our federal government exceeded our Kyoto target and now has a realistic target of 23.5 per cent emissions reduction by 2020, because that target is achievable and it will not come at the cost of consumers. I am not dismissing the valuable contribution that renewable energies, such as wind and solar, in particular, make to our energy mix. What concerns me is overly ambitious state-based renewable energy targets that have the effect of distorting the national market.

Every constituent in my electorate is living with the reality of Labor's poor economic management and bad energy policy. I had a phone call the other day from a concerned business owner in my electorate. He informed me that his current electricity purchase agreement was coming to an end and, under the new agreement, his business would pay a whopping $120,000 in additional costs in 2017. This is a small business operating two restaurants in regional South Australia. A $120,000 increase to his electricity bill will be difficult to absorb. I am also concerned about irrigators in my electorate. They are bracing themselves for a possible 30 per cent increase in the cost of transmitting water. Indeed, in its October newsletter the Central Irrigation Trust noted that it recently renewed its pumping stations energy contract for the coming 12 months. This contract is $1.3 million higher than was paid last financial year. The newsletter concludes:

If electricity prices remain at the current historically high levels into 2017/18 there would be no option but to increase water consumption prices between 15-30% to recover the increased costs.
Representing an electorate that borders the great state of Victoria, it is blatantly clear to me and to my constituents just what a bad deal South Australians are getting. We are paying over double what our neighbours across the border in Victoria pay for their electricity—and for a supply that is so fragile that caused us to suffer a state-wide blackout.

Our state and territory governments must come together to agree on a national approach to energy policy that is sensible and does not sacrifice affordability on the altar of ideology. The blackout was a wake-up call for South Australia, but the position that South Australia finds itself in should serve as a warning to all government across the nation.

**Goldmining**

Ms PRICE (Durack) (19:59): In the short amount of time I have, I would like to talk about the gold industry, which is an industry that has existed in this country for some 165 years and had a profound impact on my upbringing growing up as a child in Western Australia's goldfields. The industry I speak of is the goldmining industry. It is an industry that was responsible for the birth of my hometown of Kalgoorlie. It is an industry that employed many of my family members and an industry that I had the pleasure of being involved with since I was a child. I feel that the minerals and resources industry has been getting a bad rap of late, and I do not understand the attacks and vitriol that has been directed to this industry. Generally speaking, the mining industry is still seeing high returns on their investments in Western Australia, but this should not be cause for attack or, indeed, for a campaign against such an important industry in the north-west of Australia.

House adjourned at 20:00

**NOTICES**

The following notices were given:

Ms Bishop: to present a Bill for an Act to make certain provision in relation to the export of nuclear material and nuclear-related items, and for related purposes.

Mr Tehan: to present a Bill for an Act to amend the law relating to the rehabilitation and treatment of, and compensation for, members of the Defence Force, and for related purposes.

Mr Ciobo: to present a Bill for an Act to amend the Export Finance and Insurance Corporation Act 1991, and for related purposes.

Mr Morrison: to present a Bill for an Act relating to the primary objective of the superannuation system and the subsidiary objectives of the superannuation system, and for related purposes.

Mr Giles: to move:

That this House:

(1) notes with deep concern that:

(a) income inequality in Australia is growing such that currently the top 20 per cent of households receive half of Australia’s income while the bottom 20 per cent receive just four per cent; and

(b) in 2013 the top 1 per cent of Australian earners received 9 per cent of Australia’s income, and the top 0.1 per cent received 2.5 per cent, in both cases representing the highest proportion since the 1950s, and a proportion which continues to increase;

---

CHAMBER
notes rapidly increasing executive and, in particular, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) remuneration, for example between 1971 and 2008, real CEO pay grew by nearly five times, while the real average weekly earnings grew just over one and a half times despite:

(a) research showing that executive pay increases are not closely related to company performance;

(b) the belief that large disparities between executive pay and average earnings might actually demotivate a company’s employees and adversely affect priorities, as reported in the 2009 Productivity Commission inquiry into executive remuneration in Australia; and

(c) the belief that poor remuneration arrangements can promote inappropriate, risky short term decision making, carrying wider economic ramifications including a negative impact on productivity growth;

notes the positive effect of past legislative efforts on ensuring corporate executive remuneration is transparent, particularly the ‘two strikes’ legislation which came into effect in 2011, acknowledging that mandatory disclosure of CEO pay ratios, as required in the United Kingdom and more recently in the United States, would:

(a) provide:
   (i) important information to shareholders voting on executive remuneration; and
   (ii) a more accurate measure of an important aspect of income inequality in Australia; and

(b) improve the health of our democracy by making important information more accessible to the public; and

calls on the Government to consider following the lead of the United States in its Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act in mandating that public companies disclose the ratio of a CEO’s annual total remuneration to the average annual total of all company employees.

Mr Watts: to move:

That this House:

(1) acknowledges that White Ribbon:
   (a) is a male led campaign to end male violence against women;
   (b) is now active in over 60 countries around the world; and
   (c) has ambassadors around Australia who are working to engage men and encourage them to take a leadership role in ending violence against women;

(2) notes that:
   (a) in 2016 in Australia, each week approximately one woman is murdered by a partner or former partner;
   (b) one in four Australian women has experienced physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner;
   (c) men’s violence against women is a symptom of gender inequality in our society; and
   (d) social policy initiatives and law reform addressing gender inequality are central to reducing attitudes that support violence against women;

(3) recognises that:
   (a) 25 November is White Ribbon Day; and
   (b) the white ribbon is the symbol of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women; and

(4) supports White Ribbon and other organisations to eliminate violence against women.

Ms C. F. King: to present a Bill for an Act to amend the law in relation to logos used by political parties, and for related purposes.
Mr Wilkie: to move:

That this House:

(1) acknowledges the widespread concern from cattle producers about the current arrangements for the grass-fed levy on cattle and the concern about how the levy is collected and spent by Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA);

(2) notes that in September 2014 the Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport released seven recommendations in its report on the inquiry into the industry structures and systems governing levies on grass-fed cattle;

(3) further notes that there has been virtually no response from the Government to the Committee’s report; and

(4) calls on the Government to act swiftly to implement the Committee’s recommendations, including by:

(a) establishing an accountable and transparent producer-owned body to receive and disperse the research and development and marketing component of the transaction levy funds;

(b) conducting an audit of the cattle transaction levy system tracing levies and focusing on revenue from an expenditure of the respective components of levies by the Australian National Audit Office;

(c) dissolving the Red Meat Advisory Council; and

(d) revoking the status of the MLA Donor Company as an approved donor under the Australian Meat and Live-stock Industry Act 1997.

Mr Jones: to move:

That this House:

(1) notes that:

(a) building a fairer and more equal society where all Australians can share in our national prosperity should be the first priority of a national government;

(b) despite achievements in public education, Medicare, the National Disability Insurance Scheme and the nbn tm network, inequality is growing in Australia, particularly between regional Australia and the capital cities;

(c) neither the Liberal Party of Australia, nor The Nationals, is representing the best interests of regional communities because the Government:

(i) has repeatedly voted to cut the social safety net that so many living in regional Australia rely on;

(ii) has undermined Medicare and cut hospital funding;

(iii) has cut school funding;

(iv) has cut ABC funding;

(v) has cut regional council funding;

(vi) is rolling out second-rate broadband telecommunications; and

(vii) is not delivering much needed nation building infrastructure projects;

(d) by doing nothing about growing regional inequality, the Government is failing to represent the needs of people living in regional, rural and remote Australia in the Parliament; and

(2) calls on the Government to deliver a better deal for regional Australia.

Mr Bandt: to present a Bill for an Act to establish Renew Australia, and for related purposes.
Mr Bandt: to present a Bill for an Act to amend the law in relation to workplace relations, and for related purposes.

Dr Freelander: to move:

That this House:

(1) notes:

(a) that the unemployment rate in Australia has barely fallen from immediate post Global Financial Crisis levels;

(b) Treasury projections that the unemployment in Australia is unlikely to improve in the next three years under current policy settings; and

(c) significant labour market indicators such as rate of under-employment and levels of long term and youth unemployment, are continuing concerns within the community and amongst economic commentators, as is the comparative decline in the availability of full time jobs;

(2) further notes that:

(a) rates on unemployment in many OECD counties have fallen significantly since 2012 while Australia’s unemployment rate has remained stagnant; and

(b) Reserve Bank of Australia observations about the likely limited effect on economic activity of further interest rate cuts;

(3) recognises:

(a) the negative impact on the federal budget in continuing high levels of unemployment;

(b) the cost to individuals, the community and the economy in people not being able to find work; and

(c) the Government’s failure to grow full-time employment opportunities; and

(4) urges the Government to give higher priority to addressing labour market stagnation and take whatever steps it can through fiscal policy and selective initiatives to address this ongoing blight on Australian society.

Mr Zimmerman: to move:

That this House:

(1) acknowledges that the Government won the election and has been getting on with the job of governing; and

(2) congratulates the Government for the following achievements:

(a) securing Australia’s 25 consecutive year of economic growth;

(b) protecting our borders and making our nation more secure with over 800 days having passed without a successful people smuggling venture;

(c) delivering:

(i) a personal tax cut to 500,000 middle income Australians;

(ii) a fairer and more flexible superannuation system; and

(iii) $11 billion of budget repair;

(d) establishing a process which makes bank Chief Executive Officers answerable to the public through appearances before Parliament;

(e) legislating to protect volunteer firefighters from union takeovers;

(f) reintroducing bills to restore the rule of law on the nation’s construction sites;

(g) securing the naval shipbuilding industry and jobs for the future;
(h) strengthening trade and defence ties with Singapore, creating thousands of new jobs;
(i) strengthening the United States alliance in defence, counter-terrorism and cyber security;
(j) reintroducing legislation to crack down on illegal firearms trafficking;
(k) increasing protection for women and children against domestic violence;
(l) growing our industries with record commodity prices and a $2.5 billion water infrastructure rollout to support farmers and the resource sector;
(m) fixing the problems in Vocational Education and Training and cracking down on dodgy providers;
(n) increasing digital literacy and improved school resourcing;
(o) supporting more Indigenous Australians through skills, jobs and language;
(p) signing new City Deals to improve housing and expand public transport;
(q) accelerating the broadband build and connecting rural Australia;
(r) securing an agreement with the states and territories on energy security and reforms for affordable, reliable power;
(s) protecting Medicare, improving primary health care, making over 2,000 medicines cheaper and simplifying private health care;
(t) saving lives through a National Cancer Screening Register;
(u) supporting the South Australian steel sector and jobs by providing a $49.2 million loan to Arrium;
(v) addressing long term welfare dependence;
(w) delivering better:
   (i) tax arrangements for working holiday makers and backpackers; and
   (ii) child care for 1 million Australians and lifting immunisation rates;
(x) showing a commitment to new resettlement programs for genuine refugees as a result of strong border policies; and
(y) boosting Australia’s place in the workforce with access to new markets and stronger ties including with East Asia, Europe, and the United Kingdom.

**Mrs Sudmalis:** to move:

That this House:

(1) recognises the important work being done in Australia to support people with disability;
(2) celebrates the winners of the Tenth National Disability Awards 2016; and
(3) notes that International Day of People with Disability is on Saturday 3 December 2016.

**Mr Wallace:** to move:

That this House:

(1) notes that:
   (a) the ‘EU-Australia Leadership Forum’ was launched by Minister Bishop at Parliament House on 18 October 2016 following the European Union in Brussels, presented by Minister Bishop and European Union High Representative Federica Mogherini on 8 September 2016;
   (b) the Forum will bring together a broad representation of talented individuals in government, business, academic and civil society from both Australia and the European Union to discuss common challenges and opportunities;
(c) Australia and the European Union are liberal democracies that share unwavering commitment to the rule of law and open markets to secure peace and prosperity for their citizens; and
(d) the Australian Government intends to encourage closer economic cooperation with the European Union through the negotiation of a European Union-Australia Free Trade Agreement; and
(2) welcomes these positive developments in the European Union-Australia relationship.

Mr Littleproud: to move:
That this House:
(1) notes that:
(a) on 8 November at Government House the Governor-General awarded ten soldiers with military awards for actions at the Battle of Long Tan;
(b) these soldiers received these awards 50 years after the Battle of Long Tan:
   (i) which was the most costly single battle fought by Australian soldiers in the Vietnam War, involving 105 Australians and three New Zealanders from D Company 6RAR and more than 2,000 enemy troops; and
   (ii) where a total of 17 Australians were killed in action and 25 were wounded, one of whom later died from his wounds; and
(2) acknowledges:
(a) the ten soldiers who received an award, some posthumously, including Lieutenant Adrian Roberts, Sergeant Frank Alcorta, Lance Corporal Barry Magnussen (deceased), Second Lieutenant Gordon Sharp (deceased), Privates Neil Bextrum, Ron Brett (deceased), Ian Campbell, William Roche, Geoffrey Peters and Noel Grimes;
(b) the service and sacrifice of all those who served their country in Vietnam; and
(c) all of Australia’s service men and women who display courage, bravery and mateship above and beyond the call of duty.

Mr Hastie: to move:
That this House:
(1) notes that as the terrorist group, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant comes under increasing pressure in Iraq and Syria, coming with the risk that more foreign fighters will seek to leave, with some trying to return to their home countries, including Australia;
(2) acknowledges that the Government:
   (a) has given greater support, funding and legislative powers to law enforcement and security agencies; and
   (b) continues to work in close partnership with international partners to counter the terrorism risk; and
(3) notes that the national security challenges facing Australia continue to evolve.

Ms Henderson: to move:
That this House:
(1) notes that:
(a) UNICEF celebrates its 70th anniversary on 11 December 2016; and
(b) it is mandated by the United Nations General Assembly to advocate for the protection of children’s rights, to help meet their basic needs and expand opportunities to reach their full potential;
(2) acknowledges the work of UNICEF which now operates in over 190 countries and territories and provides a range of important services including child protection, education and child survival needs (such as nutrition and sanitation);

(3) notes that the Government provides $21 million a year in core funding to UNICEF’s regular resources as set out in the Strategic Partnership Framework 2016-2020 signed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs on 27 April 2016;

(4) acknowledges the Minister for Foreign Affairs’ October 2016 announcement of $1.5 million in funding for UNICEF following Hurricane Matthew in Haiti; and

(5) congratulates UNICEF and its staff around the world for all the good work they do and wishes them well into the future.

Mr Ramsey: to move:

That this House:

(1) acknowledges that reducing social harm caused by welfare-fuelled alcohol, drug and gambling abuse is a key priority nationally and for local communities;

(2) recognises that the Government is currently trialling the cashless debit card in two communities—Ceduna in South Australia, and the East Kimberley in Western Australia—in partnership with local community leaders in those communities; and

(3) acknowledges the:

(a) hard work, dedication and commitment of community leaders in Ceduna and the East Kimberley in co-designing the trials with Government, and their leadership in its implementation and delivery in their communities; and

(b) positive initial results of the cashless debit card model in the two trial communities, including the strong positive feedback from the community on the ground.

Ms McGowan: to move:

That this House:

(1) notes that:

(a) Australian dairy farming businesses, including those in the Kiewa, Upper Murray, Mitta, Ovens and King valleys, welcomed the emergency dairy support package announced by the Government on 25 May 2016;

(b) the dairy support package includes a commitment to fast-track the Farm Household Allowance applications to ensure farmers experiencing financial hardship get much needed support, however, the promise of a fast-track process remains unfulfilled;

(c) many farmers are reporting issues with the complexity of forms and the time it takes to receive support once those forms are lodged, with constituents waiting up to 20 weeks for action with no income; and

(d) farmers in the electoral division of Indi report there are issues with Centrelink:
  (e) forms go missing;
  (f) the dysfunctional and outdated information technology system creates delays; and
  (g) farmers are encouraged to complete forms online in areas where there is limited internet access;

(2) calls on the Government to:

(a) take a proactive approach to:
  (i) reviewing the process;
  (ii) directing appropriate resources to Centrelink; and
(iii) increasing staff on the ground working with local service providers and farmers, where they live; and

(b) coordinate the Mobile Service Centres schedule, targeting areas with high numbers of at-risk farmers and working with farmers to complete the application process in a timely manner.
The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Wicks) took the chair at 16:00.

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Chifley Electorate: Broadband

Mr HUSIC (Chifley) (16:01): I just want to start by congratulating the member for Deakin on his basketball skills—the best player never to actually go on a court!

One of the issues that have affected constituents in the Chifley electorate has been a long-running concern about access to broadband service and quality broadband service. I have previously spoken up for residents living in the suburb of Woodcroft, and we have worked for a number of years to improve their service. While in many cases we have made some headway, there is still a way to go. We are still pushing for them to be connected to the NBN, and that battle continues unabated.

However, I have been surprised over the course of the last 12 months to receive an increasing number of complaints from residents in Glendenning, just down the road. They have started to inform me about some of the problems that they have been experiencing.

I recently, at the tail end of October, held a forum to bring together residents to hear firsthand the types of problems that they were experiencing. To be quite frank and direct about it, I was staggered by what I was hearing. In some cases residents were telling me that their home line in Glendenning would maybe get a speed of one megabit per second download, but that was then beaten by another resident who piped up and said, 'I'd be lucky to get half a megabit per second download speed,' which is just astounding. They have basically called for us to stand up, to speak up, to put a spotlight on their concerns—and rightly so.

They have complained about a number of different things. Not only do they feel that they have been treated indifferently by telecommunications providers but in one case, for example, someone was offered a video-streaming service by one telecommunications provider, in an area where you could not even get one megabit per second download speed, so it seemed redundant and they had to withdraw from the service as result.

They have also rightly asked: when are they getting the NBN? From their point of view, they cannot put up with that slow service. They are forced to rely in some cases on the mobile network, which admittedly is 30 times faster—on speed tests I conducted on the night—in that area, but it costs more, and the data is limited. They should not be forced to rely upon that network if, in particular, they are working from home.

That is a big issue. More and more people choose to work from home and stagger their work times, particularly in Sydney, where congestion means that people do prefer not to get on packed roads at certain points in time. They want to be able to work from home. They require a modern broadband network. They are not getting it. They need to have their service fixed now, and they need answers from the Turnbull government. When is the NBN going to roll out to them? At the moment, there is absolutely no indication of when that is going to happen.
**Bonner Electorate: Broadband**

Mr VASTA (Bonner) (16:04): I am pleased today to provide a positive update on NBN roll out in Bonner. Under the coalition's rollout plan, thousands of people are being connected to the NBN each month. More people can access the NBN every month than Labor managed to connect in their entire time in office. The NBN has hit every rollout target the coalition has set since coming to government; this includes Bonner.

Construction of the coalition's NBN using a multi-mix technology is now under way in two of the five exchanges in Bonner. Right now, 1,100 premises in Eight Mile Plains are connected to fibre-to-the-node. By Christmas it is expected construction will begin to around 14,000 premises in the area. Work is planned to progress south of Eight Mile Plains over the next few months. It is also expected to extend west of Capalaba with NBN construction expected to begin in Chandler, Ransome and Gumdale before the end of the year. I have fought hard to bring the NBN to Bonner and now it is well on its way.

There is also good news for the Mount Gravatt region. NBN network construction is planned to start in the Mount Gravatt area in the first half of 2017, mainly in the areas of upper Mount Gravatt stretching towards Mackenzie. I am thrilled for the locals in these areas who have been sharing with me for years their frustrations with their internet connection. Over the past few years I have lobbied the then minister for communications, Malcolm Turnbull, regarding the slow internet speeds for my local residents.

Living locally, I know how frustrating slow internet speeds can be. That is why I have been fighting tirelessly to get Bonner on the NBN rollout maps sooner. I have been committed to ensuring that my residents have access to fast and affordable broadband sooner. The coalition is taking a fully transparent approach so that the public will have a clear and accurate idea of when they will receive fast broadband.

The vast majority of residents and businesses in Bonner will have access to the NBN in the next few years. Today nearly two-thirds of all premises are in design, under construction or ready for service. This is a remarkable achievement and I thank my colleagues, especially Mitch Fifield, the Minister for Communications, and the NBN for working so hard to make this a reality.

**Bass Electorate: Marriage**

Mr HART (Bass) (16:07): I rise today to celebrate a fantastic event in my electorate of Bass that was held this past week and also to observe what I see as a mood for change in my electorate. The Diversity street festival's Into the Night festival was held in Civic Square last weekend hosted by TasPride celebrating the LGBTI community in Launceston. This event brought together a stunning array of local talent including kids' entertainment, street performers, interactive art, flash mobs and fantastic local bands and DJs such as Electric Boogaloo, the Dead Magpies and the Vedders. By all accounts the night was a huge success. Attendees were rugged up against the cold and warmed themselves by dancing the night away and sampling some of the delights from the city's best food vans. Rainbow Labor and members of the state parliamentary Labor Party also joined in the fun and frivolity of the night. It was clear that there is enormous support for the LGBTI community and indeed for marriage equality in Northern Tasmania.
I also recently attended the Royal Launceston Show, a local institution that brings families from around the region together for three days of food, fun rides and agricultural demonstrations. As a new federal member, it was heartening to meet so many of my constituents and speak to them directly about some of the issues that they are concerned about. Faraway more than any other matter brought to my attention, it was marriage equality that people wanted to speak to me about given that I stand at the Royal Launceston Show invited constituents to sign a petition in support of marriage equality and to share their stories of why that issue mattered so deeply to them. Literally hundreds of show goers took a few minutes out of their day to stop and sign the petition telling Prime Minister Turnbull that they support marriage equality and that an expensive, damaging and divisive plebiscite was just not necessary.

Certainly same sex marriage was on the agenda during the election campaign but not, as is often portrayed in the media, as a negative issue. This response of my Bass constituency was so evident on show day and at the diversity event is an extension of the overwhelming rejection of the extreme neoliberalism and negativity of the current government. This community understands fairness and respect for diversity. This community understands that many families with sons or daughters and brothers or sisters struggling with their sexuality and identity need to hear the positive message of support, respect and love that underpins the work of organisations like TasPride. Diversity Into the Night was the final event of the 2016 TasPride festival.

**Safe Schools Coalition Australia**

**Mr SUKKAR (Deakin) (16:10):** Since the election of Daniel Andrews as Premier of Victoria at the end of 2014 as part of a very hard-left, ideologically-driven Labor government, I have received a great deal of feedback from concerned parents about the growing incursions of the state in the teaching of their children. Nothing is more crucial for parents than their right to share their values with their children and to be able to trust that the state will not try and usurp their parental responsibilities. But thanks to a trend towards radical indoctrination in the school classroom under Labor, this is here in full force.

The first example is what we have seen described by the Andrews government as the safe schools program. The program is nothing more than twisted, ideological indoctrination promoting gender fluidity and a warped and highly troubling view of sexuality. Arguing that schools should not have separate boys and girls toilets and that male students should work girls uniforms, and vice versa, is just a small taste of that program.

In Victoria, the Andrews government has refused to accept any of the changes proposed by the Commonwealth program to curtail these disgraceful messages. Labor is instead pushing forward with the full rollout of the program to all public schools, including highly sexualised gender role-playing which many adults would be uncomfortable participating in, let alone young children. In Daniel Andrews and Labor's Victoria, school counsellors are not welcome in schools, but radical feminists have the red carpet rolled out for them.

**Ms Ryan:** Absolute rubbish!

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Wicks):** Order! Member for Lalor.

**Mr SUKKAR:** To make matters worse, Labor is now pushing yet another ideologically-driven program along similar lines. The Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships
program, like all these programs with a lovely title, seeks to teach children under 10 about male privilege and how masculinity encourages control and dominance. I am not kidding; this is taught to children under 10.

At the cost of $21.8 million, Labor is pushing ahead with the rollout of this program despite a report into its trial that said it risks alienating men by suggesting that all men are bad and all women are victims.

Ms Ryan interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr SUKKAR: Proposed lessons introduced students to the concept of privilege—described as:

... 'automatic, unearned benefits bestowed upon dominant groups' based on 'gender, sexuality, race or socio-economic class'.

Some of the interjections opposite highlight how scary it is that some of these people were teaching our children just a few years ago. Thank God the cloak is off and you are here and your disgraceful views can be seen for what they are (Time expired)

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Before I call the next speaker—

Ms Ryan interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Lalor, you are warned. I have asked several times for you to cease interjecting. I will not hesitate, under standing order 187, if I have to call you one more time, to ask you to remove yourself from the chamber.

Ms SWANSON (Paterson): I rise today to speak about vocational education, in particular one registered training organisation servicing my electorate, Novaskill, who have seized a new opportunity for training in the aged-care sector in China.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Paterson, resume your seat. Point of order.

Ms Ryan: I would ask that the member opposite not refer to you in that manner, through the chair, thank you.

Mr Sukkar interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Deakin. I am sorry, I did not hear what the member for Deakin or any other member said. I just ask, in the spirit of the three-minute statements, member for Deakin, the reason I did not deal with the conduct in this chamber was to allow you to finish that speech. I think we ought to extend that same courtesy to other members present. I ask all members to allow the courtesy for all members to be able to continue their three-minute speeches uninterrupted.

Ms SWANSON: I rise today to speak about vocational education, in particular one registered training organisation servicing my electorate, Novaskill, who have seized a new opportunity in the aged-care sector in China. By 2020, China's population will reach 1.4 billion, of which an incredible 248 million will be aged 60 or over. In preparation, the country has embarked on fundamental health and aged-care reforms, expanding the number of aged-care facilities to house the elderly and increasing the number of workers trained to look after them. By 2020, China aims to have 35 to 40 aged-care beds per 1,000 residents over 60 and
an aged-care workforce of 10 million people. That is an ambitious task and one in which Hunter Valley based training provider Novaskill, known in the China context as HGT Australia, will play a role. The company which has been in business in Australia for 36 years has found success in China by developing tailored training programs that respect the local culture and meet the specific needs of students and aged-care providers. As general manager John Liddicoat says, putting the programs through a Chinese filter has worked so well for them.

In China, the care of the elderly would traditionally have fallen to families, but China's one-child policy together with its modernisation have challenged traditional care models and created a need for a support industry around aged care. The company entered China in 2014 in response to the demand for high-quality aged-care training and last year signed a deal with Shanghai Pharmaceutical School to provide a training program for assistant nurses. As many as 2,000 students a year can be trained using their curriculum. HGT Australia also developed strategic partnerships with hospitals, schools, public and private aged-care providers in Beijing, Chengdu, Guangzhou, Nanjing and Shanghai.

The process of building trust and strong relationships with Chinese partners has deepened the company's understanding of the diversity of China's regions and how important it is to take into account these differences when doing business in China. This registered training organisation is doing great work, but they have potentially suffered because of the dodgy providers who have been in the media spotlight, and I would like to congratulate Novaskill on being one of the exemplars. (Time expired)

Queensland: Liquor Licensing

Mr EVANS (Brisbane) (16:17): I wish to add to previous comments that I have made in this place on the damaging effects of the Queensland Labor government's lockout laws on Brisbane locals. Blanket bans are often a knee-jerk policy response with unintended consequences. Usually there are more sophisticated policy options that can help us to avoid punishing the majority for the sins of the few. The next tranche of Queensland's lockout laws will begin by February. Many young people who work in our pubs, clubs and night economy have already found their hours and shifts reduced. Many will suffer further cuts to their hours and take-home pay when the next tranche takes effect. The lockouts are costing Queensland the equivalent of 6,000 jobs, mainly for younger workers and at a time when the Queensland economy has a problem with high youth unemployment. The cost to the Queensland economy is estimated to be around $150 million a year. For the LGBTI community, Labor's lockouts have the effect of shutting LGBTI community members out of some of their traditional safe spaces.

I implore our colleagues in the Queensland parliament, politely and constructively at this stage, to urgently review their lockout laws in light of all of the recent evidence in Queensland and other jurisdictions. I note in passing that the state MP who represents the Brisbane CBD and the valley is supposed to be the Queensland Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations but instead is overseeing these cuts in staff hours, jobs and pay. To date, the frequency of alcohol-related hospital presentations in Queensland has not dropped. In fact, the early data suggests that the rate appears to have slightly increased. Speaking to The Courier-Mail, an emergency specialist from the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital with
over 20 years experience said that anyone who thought these laws would have a major impact on emergency departments was 'naive and ignorant'. He said:

The legislation was never going to have a major impact on the number of people that we see turn up in our emergency departments, the workload or the patterns of behaviour.

I am naturally very conscious of the cases and the reasons why these laws were rushed into creation. That is why I worked hard as a candidate to secure commitments for funding for community safety and crime prevention initiatives in the CBD and the valley, and I am looking forward to working hard to deliver on those commitments in government. I will remain a strong supporter of Brisbane residents, both younger and older, deserving a nightlife, especially in a new world city, where we rely on tourist and visitor spending.

In closing, I pay tribute to Lance and the team at ChaplainWatch for their tireless on-the-ground efforts in our local community. I also pay tribute to everyone involved in the safe night precinct, the safety committee and Our Nightlife Queensland. We must keep supporting our live music and arts industry, aspiring musicians and DJs, the local small businesses and all of those young people employed in the Brisbane CBD and the valley. These are some of Queensland's most vibrant, creative, iconic and dynamic spaces.

**Tasmania: Turnbull Government**

Ms COLLINS (Franklin) (16:21): Last weekend, we had Malcolm Turnbull in Tasmania, and I mention it because it is rare for him to come to our state. I can count on one hand the number of times he has been to our state since the election of the Abbott and Turnbull governments. In three-plus years, he has been to our state no more than five times. But it was interesting because he came to Hobart, and he very rarely comes south. Of course, a lot of our people were there to greet the Prime Minister, and they were talking to him about a whole range of issues. Then he went up to the Liberal conference, where he basically said that they have learnt from the election campaign—in fact, that they have learnt plenty from the election campaign and they are going to focus on issues that matter to the people of Tasmania and to the people of Australia.

An honourable member: What did Richard Colbeck say?

Ms COLLINS: Yes, the self-styled three Amigos were there, and Richard Colbeck was there. And they did not seem to quite agree with the Prime Minister; nor did they seem to agree with Eric Abetz.

At their conference, instead of discussing important issues like health and waiting lists and access to Medicare, and education funding and Gonski, and instead of talking about the 5,000 jobs that have been lost in Tasmania since Malcolm Turnbull became Prime Minister and job opportunities for Tasmania, they discussed a whole range of things: things like removing fluoride from the water supply, getting rid of Hare-Clark, getting rid of 18C, getting rid of the 5c piece, and—this is my favourite—changing the colour of the House of Reps ballot paper because it subliminally favours the Greens. So they were talking about really important issues at their conference! Eric Abetz went out and did his media stunt afterwards, saying that he was delighted that the Tasmanian Liberal state council unanimously called for section 18C to be amended, and I notice that Eric Abetz has put out a statement today about the review into 18C and the parliamentary review. So no doubt he is thrilled.
But I think what it shows is: clearly, the Liberal Party has not listened to the message in Tasmania. Clearly they still are not talking to Tasmanians about issues of importance to Tasmania. I mean, to come down to Hobart and talk about a cities deal—when Malcolm hardly ever comes to Hobart, and when Labor had a better plan for Tasmania that was very clear—and talk about a business case for light rail when we actually talked about doing a proper business case for light rail and his government cancelled it; when he talked about leaving Tasmania off the map for the Smart Cities consultations and only gave us a hearing after we had it on the front page of the local media; to reject projects in southern Tasmania that were actually put forward for funding for the stronger regions fund; to announce a $25 million regional growth package about jobs during the campaign, which, finally, they have got around to actually talking to us about; to leave Hobart, Clarence, Brighton and all of the area in southern Tasmania or greater Hobart out of eligibility for funding for this package shows that they are clearly not listening to Tasmanians.

Papua New Guinea

Mr ABBOTT (Warringah) (16:24): The people of Warringah are broadminded and they have wide-ranging interests, and so this afternoon, with your indulgence, I want to talk just for a little about PNG, our nearest neighbour; our only former colony; home to 10,000 dual citizens; our largest foreign aid recipient by far; and, along with New Zealand, one of only two countries in the world that have Australia as their largest trading partner and their largest source of foreign investment. Like Australia, New Zealand is passionately interested in the great sport of rugby league. It is a Melanesian superpower. It has close to 10 million people and in some years recently it has been growing at some nine per cent per annum.

Australia and PNG have geography and history in common, but we also have a future to work on as well as a past to honour and respect. Here in Canberra, we tend to have our horizons fixed on countries like Indonesia, China, Japan, India, the United States and Europe, and because of the difficulties in the Middle East often we are focused there. These places are, perhaps, more important to us than PNG. But we are more important to PNG than those far-flung places are to them. We should focus on the places where we can do good, as well as the places where we hope good might be done to us. We should focus on the places where we can help, as well as on the places where we might be helped.

PNG certainly has helped us. I am very conscious of the fact that but for PNG's help with the Manus boat people processing centre, we would have been in great trouble in 2013. It is funded by Australia but it is run by PNG, and the more obvious it is that this is a PNG centre then the more likely it is that people will go home.

We have helped PNG, particularly with the 70 Australian Federal Police officers who we have had there since 2013 acting as advisers. The more operational responsibility that those AFP people can have, the better. It would be very wrong for funding not to be continued beyond the middle of next year, particularly with PNG hosting the APEC summit in 2018. To give them a more operational focus, I hope it might be possible for these officers to take leave from the AFP to join the Royal PNG Constabulary, and then, when their term expires, to go back to the AFP without loss of seniority.

I hope PNG will look at Australia not as a big brother, but as a best friend. We will never let them down. (Time expired)
Mental Health

Mr DICK (Oxley) (16:27): As a nation, we are starting to talk a lot more about mental health and mental health wellbeing. Over time, I want to play my part as a member of the House of Representatives to reduce the stigma associated with mental health issues. Around 3.6 million Australians are living with a mental illness, 600,000 children have been affected by a significant mental health problem, and, sadly, 3,027 Australians died by suicide in 2015, including dozens in my electorate of Oxley and with a 20 per cent increase in my electorate in the year before.

On this side of the chamber, Labor knows mental health needs to be a national priority. Two weeks ago today, I was pleased to host Labor’s shadow assistant minister for mental health, Senator Deborah O’Neill, at a community mental health forum in my electorate of Oxley, at the Goodna Salvation Army. I acknowledge the work of Senator O’Neill and our hardworking shadow minister Julie Collins, who is doing a great job advocating in a policy space where we need to see more from the government.

The forum was attended by local community service providers in my electorate, and I pay tribute to John Williams and his team at the Goodna Salvos for their hospitality, and to Michael Anglin, who took Senator O’Neill and me on a tour of the Salvos’ legal centre. I am told that on an annual basis they look after 1,000 clients a year and provide free legal advice to them.

But one of the things that struck me about the forum was how collegiate our local community service providers are in Oxley. People like Cassie from the Gailes Community House spoke about the possibility of local service providers sharing space. We then met with the directors of headspace—I met with Amy, Courtney and Katherine. Of course, it is great to see the good work of headspace being undertaken not just in my electorate but right across the nation. Then we visited the Inala Community Health Centre, where I met with some of the most dedicated people involved with providing quality health care to those people who need it the most.

Prior to the election, we heard a lot from the Prime Minister about mental health in Australia, but we know there has been no mental health plan for the past three years. Now the fourth one is expiring and the fifth is still in draft form.

The government cut $140 million from mental health programs in the last Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook, cut funding to headspace’s early psychosis centre by 25 per cent on 1 July this year—and will cut a further 70 per cent next year—and failed to adopt a suicide prevention target as recommended by the National Mental Health Commission. I say this is not good enough. We need to do more, and we need to tackle the issue of mental health. The Prime Minister says he is passionate about mental health and suicide prevention, but, Prime Minister, my words are very clear: actions speak louder than words.

Page Electorate: Sport

Page Electorate: Kyogle

Mr HOGAN (Page) (16:30): Today, I would like to congratulate the eight hockey players from my community who have been selected as part of Australian teams after representing New South Wales at the women’s masters national hockey championship in Hobart last month. Of the 14 far-North Coast players who pulled on the blue shirts to play in Hobart, four
players were in the winning inaugural over-65s team, which was coach by Lismore hockey stalwart Wendy Trudgeon. The 14 selected to represent Australia next May in New Zealand are Renee Dunstan and manager Marlene Turvey in the over-35s, Sam Peiti and Tracey Makings in the over-40s, Helen Rankin Jarvie and Jennifer Gibbons in the over-45s, Karen Flynn and Tracy Bradford in the over-50s, Sue Miller in the over-60s, and Jan Hutton—who can also play a mean tennis game—Chris Eather, Gloria McPherson, Janet Tancred and coach Wendy Trudgeon in the over-65s. I congratulate all these ladies on a great effort.

I would like to commend the students of Kyogle High School, teacher Rebecca O'Meara and the whole community for the pride they have in their town. Kyogle has a history of winning Tidy Town awards. It also has a history of getting in there and having a go. The latest project is the brainchild of teacher Rebecca, who, with students from years 7 to 10, are painting many of the town's power poles with their own designs reflecting native flora and fauna of the Kyogle area. A supportive chamber of commerce and businesses like Kyogle Country Store have provided the students with paint and other materials, while the council organised approvals with Essential Energy. It has been an incredible effort, and I would like to congratulate the students: Nuttaine Sirising, Emily McCormick, Lilly Miles, Grace Endres, Ella Levis, Ayla Hausen, Alex Pryde, Oak Landers, Olivia Flower, Hayley Buttler, Taylor Wicks, Joshua Parkin, Summer Blake and Lilly Feakes.

Four power poles at the intersection of Summerland Way and Stratheden Street were the first to be adorned with the original artwork, which included a lomandra, an echidna, gum blossoms, a koala, wattles, a king parrot, a sandpaper fig and a bush turkey. I look forward to seeing the work soon.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Wicks): Unless any member present objects, three-minute constituency statements will continue for a total of 60 minutes.

Pensions and Benefits: Pension Assets Test

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler) (16:32): I rise to inform the House of the story of a 72-year-old constituent of mine which reflects the shameful consequences on many older Australians that have come from the narrow-sighted changes surrounding pension assets. This constituent has been a hard-working tertiary educator and devoted single mother to four children. Instead of being now able to look forward to a comfortable and well-earned retirement, she is now faced with an uncertain economic future. She is also unsure of whether she will be able to continue to live in the inner-west community she calls home.

This uncertainty is the result of the rule changes that were supported by the coalition government and members of the Greens political party. This change has meant that my constituent's pension has been reduced by over $300 a fortnight, simply due to her downsizing her home two years ago. The issue involves the so-called regifting of an asset: the difference between the sale price of her former family home and the purchase price of her new home. This money was used by her son, who continues to face particular living needs as he deals with and recovers from addiction. Of course, these changes also have an impact on housing policy and housing affordability in a city like Sydney.

Retiring in her 71st year due to ailing health, her new pension has now been cut to only $125 a week. With only a very modest superannuation balance, like a lot of women, she is facing the general cost-of-living pressures that are affecting Australians of all ages, and, on
top of this, a range of specific medical costs, as well as an unexpected levy in her apartment complex. She is therefore now facing the dilemma of how to continue to get by financially. I find it appalling that this 72-year-old, who has contributed so much to the local and broader community, is receiving advice from Centrelink to either return to work or ask her son for money.

In the lead-up to the 2014 budget, I warned publicly of the dangers that changes to the pension asset test would have on Australians. While little can now be done to repair the damage that the Liberals and Greens political parties have done, I remain committed to standing up for what is right and fair. I hope that those who supported the changes will realise the impact of their ill-considered actions and consider the best interests of retired Australians in the future.

Boothby Electorate: Bushfire Season Awareness

Ms FLINT (Boothby) (16:35): The electorate of Boothby is a particularly beautiful one. I know all members of parliament say this about their electorates but, in the case of my electorate, it is true. Boothby takes in Adelaide's best stretch of coastline from Marino through to Somerton Park and, quite uniquely, Boothby also contains some of our most beautiful and historic parks, such as Belair National Park, Australia's second-oldest national park, and the scenic Mitcham hills.

These beautiful woodlands are a large part of the reason why people choose to live in the Mitcham, Belair and Blackwood areas. However, as we Boothby locals know, our leafy lifestyle comes with risks during bushfire season. I urge residents in the Hills zone area—and, in particular, suburbs like Brown Hill Creek, Belair, Blackwood, Upper Sturt, Craigburn Farm, Hawthorndene, Glenalta, Coromandel Valley, Lynton, Eden Hills and Bellevue Heights—to make sure they have their bushfire survival plan in place now. There is nothing more important than having a plan in place and I will do all I can to remind people of this during the bushfire season ahead.

To this end, I recently held a meeting with the Mayor of the City of Mitcham, Glenn Spear, the member for Davenport, Sam Duluk and our wonderful CFS volunteers from the Sturt Group, Group Captain Dale Thompson and Deputy Group Captain David Simms. I commend council and the CFS for the work they do in prevention, training, advice and protection.

The City of Mitcham and the CFS provide a wealth of information about planning and prevention, and I encourage all residents to get a copy of South Australia's Your Guide to Bushfire Safety booklet or to visit cfs.sa.gov.au to inform their bushfire plan. Being bushfire-ready could well save lives. I encourage all those in fire prone areas to prepare their bushfire survival plan if they have not done so already. We must all know the risks, prepare ourselves, our family, homes, businesses and stay alert to our surroundings. As the CFS says, 'Prepare, act, survive.'

I must praise the continuing work of the Sturt CFS Group, covering the brigades at Blackwood, Belair, Eden Hills, Coromandel Valley and Cherry Gardens, and the brigades at Happy Valley and Upper Sturt, who also help to keep Boothby residents safe.

To show our support for the CFS and raise awareness of the vital need to prepare, act and survive, the Mayor of the City of Mitcham, Glenn Spear, member for Davenport, Sam Duluk, and myself will be holding a bushfire awareness barbecue and fundraiser for the Sturt CFS
Group at the Waite Reserve in Blackwood on Saturday, 17 December. I encourage everyone in the area to come down to discuss bushfire awareness and planning. All the proceeds from our sausage sizzle will go to supporting the Sturt Country Fire Service.

**Perth Electorate: Greek Glendi Festival**

Mr HAMMOND (Perth) (16:38): I rise to draw the attention of the House to the Greek Glendi Festival that was recently held in my electorate by the Hellenic Community and that I was fortunate enough to attend. Russell Square in Northbridge was filled to the brim with market stalls, entertainment and food vendors. For those who are not aware, 'glendi' is the Greek word for 'party'. I was very pleased to be there with my family, attending the festival at the invitation of the Hellenic Community president, Mr Savvas Papasavvas. Thank you, Savvas, and your team for putting on such an impressive party.

I was joined at Glendi by some local Labor heroes, including Western Australian Labor leader, Mark McGowan; Labor candidate for the state seat of Perth, John Carey; Labor candidate for the state seat of Mount Lawley, Simon Millman; a swathe of volunteers; and also Margaret Quirk, our shadow minister for citizenship and multicultural interests and the member for Girrawheen.

A stand-out treat of the Glendi Festival was a world record attempt of the number of people actually dancing the Zorba dance at one time. I am not sure if the record was broken, but I can tell you from experience that the Zorba circle captured the entire park. I was only marginally successful in dancing it myself as, you will be aware, it requires two hands and I had a four-year-old on my hip at the time—but I gave it a go.

As I enjoyed my lunch—a souvlaki indeed—I spoke to members of the Greek community enjoying Glendi and was struck by the depth of the sense of history and patriotism associated with the Greek culture, a culture that stretches back literally millennia, to the start of history itself. It is appropriate to reflect on the human condition in the context of some ancient Greek myths. How compelling is the wisdom from antiquity that we still tell our children in Aesop's fables? Our democracy itself can trace its lineage directly to the Athenian city-state.

Among the world's most precious artefacts of Greek antiquity are the so-called Elgin marbles, taken from the Acropolis and other sites in Athens at the opening of the 19th century by the seventh Earl of Elgin. Due to a costly divorce, Lord Elgin was obliged to sell the Elgin marbles to the British government, and they are now housed in the British Museum. Despite continuing requests from the Greek government, Britain has consistently declined to repatriate the artefacts to their homeland.

Australia, of course, has had its own run-ins with the British Museum over repatriation, principally regarding the remains of Aboriginal men and women that had been taken to Britain during the era when eugenics was considered real science. We won the key battle in that fight when an act of British parliament was passed in 2005, although there is some way to go. It is high time the UK government did the right thing regarding the Elgin marbles—and that would be something to hold a Glendi about!
Calare Electorate: Daroo Business Awards

Mr GEE (Calare) (16:41): I wish to inform the House that last Friday night Cabonne Council held its annual Cabonne Daroo Business Awards. The Daroo awards showcase the diversity and quality of businesses in the Cabonne Council local government area and have become a blueprint for regional business awards. This year marked the 17th year of the awards, with a record number of nominations. It was a glittering event, held at the Cumnock Showground, and in attendance were a number of special guests, including Cabonne Shire Mayor Ian Gosper, known as 'Gossie' to his many friends, and New South Wales Small Business Commissioner Robyn Hobbs OAM.

The Best Business in Cabonne went to Yeates Baker McLean of Molong. Yeates Baker McLean is an all-female accountancy and business advice firm and won the major award of the evening. I congratulate Branch Manager Cally Woodhouse. I also congratulate Lisa Fraser, Karen Bollinger, Tracy Milne, Nicola Brazier, Belinda Thurtell, Abby Sands and Elise Heath. Employee of the Year went to Audrey Meehan of Cabonne Council. Congratulations, Audrey. Apprentice/Trainee of the Year went to Danielle Dugmore of Molong Early Learning Centre. The director there is Emma Thomas. Congratulations to you. Best New Business went to Coco Harvest of Canowindra. It is an artisan chocolate shop owned and operated by Matt Brewster and Ross Hipwell, who opened their store in November 2015.


Macquarie Electorate: St Albans Community

Ms TEMPLEMAN (Macquarie) (16:44): At the northern end of my electorate, where you cross the river on the ferry at Wisemans, lies the little hamlet of St Albans. This is a community of historic buildings, farms and wilderness. It is surrounded by Yengo National Park, part of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage area. Maureen makes the best pecan
pie and you can share your breakfast at Ian and Gabrielle's Settlers Arms with the resident ghost. It is in the Macdonald Valley, but it is better known as the 'forgotten valley'.

One of the special things about St Albans, aside from its tiny public school, the oldest in New South Wales, is its common. The St Albans Common has existed since at least 1824. The common, a large piece of grazing land that runs along the Mogo Creek, originally provided pasture and water for stock and has continuously operated. It is now under the stewardship of trustees who succeeded the original commoners and plays an important part in the connectivity of this community. The commons lake is also a well-managed and significant habitat for bird and marine life. In fact, from 11 to 13 November, the annual carp fishing competition will be held. I am looking forward to catching up with the fishers as they help to reduce carp numbers in this stretch of water.

This land is privately owned, reserved for the use of the commoners. The whole area is now listed as a conservation area, ensuring its preservation for future generations of St Albans commoners, but it has been under threat thanks to a New South Wales government Crown land management bill this week in parliament. The bill would mean that the common cannot operate as it always has, and who knows what consequences that would bring? I wrote to the New South Wales Minister for Lands and Water urging him to ensure the commons remains firmly in the hands of the community, which has acted so responsibly for 161 years in managing this important land. I am pleased to say that today we heard that St Albans will be exempted for the time being from that bill. This is a win for a community that has fought very hard, and I hope a permanent resolution is soon found.

The other issue for this area is mobile phone reception. Tourists come to St Albans for a lot of events. It hosts one of the country's most famous endurance horse rides, the Shahzada Memorial Endurance Test, the annual folk music festival, held in autumn, and the annual writers festival, which I am proud to be a sponsor of, held in spring. Even lunch at the pub is a good enough reason to make the round trip. But, once you cross at the Webbs Creek ferry or Wisemans, the mobile signal goes. In good times, who cares? But, when accidents or, as is regularly the case in this part of the world, bushfires or floods occur, you need to be able to communicate fast. I want to make sure that the government promise to deliver mobile phone reception is carried out. (Time expired)

**Banks Electorate: Community Organisations**

**Mr COLEMAN** (Banks) (16:47): Last week, on Thursday, 3 November, I visited the East Hills district Men's Shed. It was good to visit the shed, which is under development at the moment and is expected to open during December. Of course, the southern Bankstown region has not had a Men's Shed until now, and so it is particularly good news that this is getting underway. It is a terrific facility, formally operated by the National Parks and Wildlife Service. It is on a large site with great potential, situated in the beautiful Georges River National Park. I would like to thank Bob Bishop for his hospitality in showing me around the shed and talking about the plans for the development of it. When fully operational, the shed will provide a safe, friendly and fun environment for men to come together to work on meaningful community projects. To Bob Bishop and everyone at East Hills Men's Shed, thank you again for having me and I look forward to working with you on the future activities of the shed.
Recently, I attended the Bankstown City Netball Association annual presentation. It was a
great event—it has been running for many decades—and it was good to be there at the
Revesby Workers' Club and present some awards on the evening. Awards went to a number
of people, particularly for lengthy service to the association. Fiona Hobbs, Kate McKendrick
and Mary Di Pasqua were all awarded trophies for 20 years of service to the association;
Jenny Avramides was awarded an award for 35 years of service; and Lisa Saunders from
Condell Park Wattles received an award for 40 years of player service to the association. It
was a great night and I would like to thank Wayne Chesterton, the club president, for having
me on the evening and for our discussions about the association. I would also like to thank
Leah Lewis, the administration officer, for the great work that she does for the netball
community in our area.

I recently visited the Nexgen Foodcare service located on Coleridge Street in Riverwood,
and it was good to meet the many volunteers who contribute to this program, which originally
arose from a local church community. I would like to thank Susie Atkins, the director, for all
the work that she does and also the groups that support the mission of Nexgen Foodcare,
including Foodbank, Aldi and Bakers Delight, all of whom provide food to the food bank for
distribution to the local community in Riverwood. It is a great service that is provided there. It
was a very good visit, and I do look forward to continuing to work with Nexgen Foodcare.

**Frankish, Mrs Peggy**

Mr NEUMANN (Blair) (16:50): Today I honour a valued member of the Australian
Labor Party in Ipswich, a tireless community volunteer, a loving mother, sister, grandmother
and a true friend and comrade. Peggy Frankish passed away on 11 October 2016, aged 78,
after a four-year battle with a form of leukaemia which affects bone marrow.

Peggy's passing has left a hole in the hearts of many people in Ipswich. Peggy was loved
and she loved many. She was passionate and compassionate; she was witty
and sardonic; she was strong in her opinions, but not stubborn. She was hardworking and
committed; she was a servant, but never servile; and she was informed and informative.

Peggy became involved in the Australian Labor Party in Ipswich over 15 years ago. She
was a member of my branch, the Raceview Flinders branch, and a familiar sight on the
campaign trail right until the end—in fact, she attended a branch meeting just a week or so
before her passing, even though she had had chemotherapy earlier that day. It took a lot to
keep her down, although much was thrown at her. She ran TABs in Ipswich and Brisbane and
she enjoyed being surrounded by people. She was twice robbed at gunpoint, but she bravely
went back to work after the first time. After the second she did not, because she wanted to
keep things in perspective.

Peggy and the love of her life, Peter, had three children—Greg, John and Karen. They had
seven grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. Sadly, in 1993 Peggy lost her daughter
Karen, who died suddenly and unexpectedly. Three years later Peter, her husband, suffered a
massive stroke. Peggy went on to form a relationship with the Ipswich Hospital stroke unit
and became the spokesperson for, and indeed the heart, of the Ipswich Stroke Support Group,
even after Peter's death in 2014. Each year I hold a Blair Disability Links expo. This year, for
the first time in six years, Peggy will not be the face of the Ipswich Stroke Support Group.
The members of that group are devastated, and it will be a difficult time for them.
She was a great Labor loyalist. She supported my campaigns and worked tirelessly to the end. She recruited members—her dear sister, Yvonne, and her close friend, Noela, are all part of the Ipswich Labor family. Peggy and my mum, Joy Butler, shared the same passions and became dear friends. They were very caring women who used to bake for the Raceview Flinders branch, which grew to be the biggest branch of the Labor Party in Ipswich. We had the best suppers ever, and people would bring Tupperware to take home the leftovers. Once we grew too large, we moved to the Brothers Leagues Club and, while my mum and Peggy could not bake any longer, they would gather the members beforehand to have dinner at the club. Peggy always talked politics, and loved fighting Tories. She was a true believer. I will miss Peggy terribly, the party will miss Peggy and Ipswich will miss Peggy. May she rest in peace.

Moncrieff Electorate: Stronger Communities Program

Mr CIOBO (Moncrieff—Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment) (16:53): The Gold Coast's many community organisations make an invaluable contribution to our city. Staffed predominantly by volunteers, they make up the fabric of our community, and they bring together Gold Coasters from all walks of life.

I was so pleased, therefore, to be able to support a number of these groups under the coalition government's Stronger Communities program and, through this program, to be able to deliver essential funding to help boost their capabilities and to support the invaluable activities they undertake across the Gold Coast.

I particularly want to take this opportunity to thank Nick Scott and Lucy Cole, who joined with me on the Moncrieff Stronger Communities program committee. Alongside me, they helped to identify and assess the various applications that came through from the community groups and, of course, the all-important volunteers that comprise these community groups. Both Nick and Lucy are incredibly busy people, and I was very grateful that they were so generous with their time in relation to this committee.

The Moncrieff Stronger Communities Program has supported surf clubs, P&Cs, sporting clubs and community groups. If we take one example, the Southport Surf Life Saving Club—one of the oldest surf clubs in my electorate—was successful in receiving a Stronger Communities grant of some $16,624. It means the club can now finally renovate the old toilet and amenities block and provide better facilities for the nippers. It was great to visit the club and hear first hand from the club's president, Bill Gordon-Thomson, about how important this facility is going to be for the club.

I also took the chance to drop in to the Gold Coast Bridge Club during one of their very busy sessions and present club president Di Hodges with a cheque for $5,114 to upgrade their IT and educational resources. The club has been teaching people to play bridge and has been bringing locals together for over 50 years. I am proud the funding will help them to engage in the next generation of bridge players. At the other end of my electorate, the Carrara Community Centre received $8,666 to refurbish the fantastic local facility. I was pleased recently to hold my annual Moncrieff Community Awards at the centre. I would encourage anyone looking for a great venue to consider those facilities.

Speaking of great facilities, I was pleased that we were also able to support the Gold Coast's fantastic Police-Citizens Youth Club. That was the Gold Coast PCYC at Broadbeach.
Waters. I met with Sergeant Linda Baade about how the Turnbull coalition government's $20,000 grant will help them. It is a great job. I was pleased as well that we were able to support Surfers Paradise, Northcliffe and Broadbeach clubs with projects including the purchase of an all-terrain vehicle and new equipment for a storage facility at Broadbeach. These are great examples of local clubs succeeding because of this program.

**Publishing Industry**

**Mr KHALIL** (Wills) (16:56): Australia's publishing industry produces some 7,000 titles a year, generates $2 billion in revenue, invests $120 million in Australian literature and employs 20,000 people across the industry. Upon the release of the Productivity Commission's draft report into intellectual property arrangements, droves of my constituents in Wills—many of them authors, illustrators and industry stakeholders—contacted my office to voice concern over the commission's recommendation to lift Australia's parallel importation rules for books.

While the publishing industry does not rely on tariffs or subsidies, the rules around parallel importation, sometimes referred to as territorial copyright, provides a shield against the flood of cheap books produced overseas from drowning Australia's local publishing operations. The existing territorial copyright rules contained in the Copyright Act 1968 provide that Australian retailers can only buy bulk copies of books from the publisher that holds the Australian rights to the title. However, if a title is not made available by a domestic publisher within 90 days of its publication overseas, it can be freely imported from an overseas publisher to service any consumer demand. Consumers and booksellers are free to purchase small quantities of books from overseas at any point. The restrictions only apply to commercial importation of books.

With these protections in place, the Australian publishing industry has become a strong contributor to our economy and has enabled the publication of acclaimed Australian literature which may have been overlooked in an otherwise overcrowded global market. The dismantling of Australia's territorial copyright rules would certainly reduce the practice of Australian publishing houses purchasing international rights. The profits generated by that side of the publishing business is often invested in titles written by Australian authors. The lack of such revenue would certainly jeopardise the ongoing opportunity for Australian publishers to invest in local titles.

I think the most compelling argument here is that a removal of parallel importation rules would put Australia out of step with the rest of the world. Surely our authors, Australian authors, deserve the same level of copyright benefits enjoyed by their counterparts in the United States and the United Kingdom—protections that ensure that an author in Australia can muster a living for themselves by retaining the capability to licence their creative endeavours in both Australia and throughout the world. It is important that we are able to tell Australian stories. It is important that we have a fair go for our Aussie authors and illustrators.

**Ryan Electorate: Men's Shed**

**Mrs PRENTICE** (Ryan—Assistant Minister for Social Services and Disability Services) (16:59): I take this opportunity to acknowledge the many men's sheds based in my electorate of Ryan. There are more than 930 sheds in Australia. They are places of cohesion and inclusion for men, particularly retired men, to get together. The sheds—and I use the term
'shed' loosely—are vital to ensuring the wellbeing of members. They prevent social isolation by providing a safe and welcoming place for men to participate in meaningful projects and to contribute to the wider community.

Like the member for Banks earlier, I encourage members to take the time to visit their local shed if they have not done so already. Once thought of as places humming with the sound of bandsaws and sanders and the sparks of welders, these organisations cater for a much wider range of interests. Recently I had the privilege of visiting the Kenmore-Bellbowrie men's shed. Located in the former caretaker's cottage of the Queensland government's department of environment site, the once white-ant-riddled, dilapidated house has now been meticulously restored by the shed members into a welcoming meeting place. Their brand-new, fully insulated shed is the envy of many people, including me, and is testament to the pride its members take in keeping the place spick and span.

But it is not just the new shed where a number of activities take place, including wood-turning, welding and sanding. The restored caretaker's cottage has its own library and leatherwork room, catering to just some of the many interests of their members. In varying ways, members volunteer their time to the Kenmore-Bellbowrie men's shed to support their operations. Without their hard work and effort the group would not be the success it is today.

During my visit I presented Mr Grahame Browne and Mr Graham Barnard with Ryan community service awards for their selfless dedication to the shed and their fellow members. To these gentlemen and their colleagues the men's shed is more than just woodwork. It represents a place of welcome with old friends and provides an escape from the sometime monotony of their daily lives. One member went as far as to say that the men's shed clears his mind, giving him something to look forward to each week. If he were not a member of the men's shed, he would be burdened with the black dog of depression, which would inhibit his quality of life.

We often forget that those who have retired from the workforce still have a lot to contribute and require stimulus and motivation in their lives. Some people might just want to give back to their community and some might just want to enjoy a coffee with friends. Either way, men's sheds have something to offer every member. Becoming a member provides a safe environment supported by men from all walks of life. Good health promoted by the organisation encourages men to feel good about themselves, be productive, contribute to the community, connect with friends and maintain an active body and mind. Whether it is refurbishing pews for local churches or making and refurbishing school desks, men's sheds do make a significant contribution to the wider community.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Buchholz): The time for members' constituency statements has now concluded.

COMMITTEES
Economics Committee
Report

Consideration resumed of the motion:
That the House take note of the report.
Mr CRAIG KELLY (Hughes) (17:02): I would like to make a few comments on the Reserve Bank or Australia's annual report and the committee's review of that report. I note, Mr Deputy Speaker Buchholz, you are also a member of that committee, and I believe that we do good work on that committee. I think there are a couple of things that need noting. Firstly, the RBA provided a handout of a graph, which the RBA are very good at. It was graph 6, and it showed the variable interest rates over time for small business, housing and the standard variable loan rate. If we go from the year 2001 on the graph back to what looks like 1994, there was a very small gap between the rate that the banks were loaning for small business and the rate that they were loaning for housing. That would be self-evident because my understanding of most of those loans is that they were residentially guaranteed by the small business owner. For the bank, whether the loan is for housing or for a small business, as long as it is residentially guaranteed the bank has security and there should be very little difference.

But since 2001 something very strange has been happening. We have seen that gap in the margin between small business rates and housing rates increase substantially. In fact, at the moment, the rate being charged to a small business is over 200 basis points higher than that being charged for housing loans, even though the loan is residentially secured. We put the question to the Reserve Bank: what was the cause of this? The Reserve Bank replied: The spread between the average interest rate paid by small businesses and the cash rate has increased by more than the spread on housing rates, reflecting a repricing of credit risk.

What the banks were effectively saying was 'we did not have our pricing right before'. I am not aware of many markets in the country that would say 'we did not price our goods properly before'. Surely the price of something is the price. It reflects the supply, the demand and the competition in the marketplace. Certainly a banana farmer would not say 'my bananas were under priced before'. Maybe he would think they were but that would depend on the competition, the demand and the supply. The real question is: is this increasing amount that small business are paying funding the banks, giving more profit to the banks? Has it actually come about by an increased credit risk or has it come about simply because of the decline in the competition in lending to small business?

We saw during that period, coincidentally when the margin was tending to increase, St George Bank taken out of the marketplace. St George Bank was actively in the marketplace putting pressure on the other banks looking for loans for small business then it was taken by Westpac. We then saw the gap of what small business were paying increase. We asked the banks in the banking inquiry to provide some evidence that the problem actually was a repricing of credit risk. We asked them in questions on notice to show us where the actual risk has increased and what empirical evidence they have to show that. This is a very important issue.

If we are going to continue to grow our economy and if we going to create the wealth that we need to help our schools, our hospitals, our kids with disabilities, our aged care and everything else we need to pay for then we need people in small business out there having a go, taking risks, trying to come up with new products, new ideas, new ways of distributing goods. But we have the banks slugging them for several percentage points in interest rates because of lack of competition. It may be very well for short-term profits for the banks but long term the concern is the example of the parasite eating its host. It should be the banks that survive off the growth of those businesses not the other way around. That is the concern that
we really should have. So we are waiting with great interest to see what the banks' responses are to those questions to truly establish whether that is correct.

The other points that came up were measurements of GDP and also measurements of inflation. We may have to look at how our GDP is measured. The questions about how GDP is measured are of the utmost importance. If we do not grow the economy, if we do not grow the wealth and if we do not make the pie bigger, we simply will not have the money to pay for everything we need. Thankfully we have seen growth in Australia of over three per cent, one of the highest in the developed world and the highest amongst all the OECD and G7 nations. It is something that we should be proud of. But there is an argument that GDP growth is not being measured correctly because there are many things today that we get for free that we previously paid a price for. And because they are for free—so inherently have no value that can be recorded—then they cannot be recorded in the GDP figures.

One example is photography. We have seen the technological developments of photography. We remember years ago when we would buy a separate camera, we would buy the film, we would take photos, we would take that role of film back to somewhere to be developed, and they would print those photographs on paper, which all had costs along the way which would show up in expenditure and in GDP. Now we are able to take the photos on a phone and store them. We do not print them but we email them to each other. Those photographs have no cost. I could take a photo effectively for free. In the measurement of GDP, that would show as a reduction in GDP, when, in fact, the value that I get from that is far, far greater than previously when I was taking photographs and had to pay for all the costs of the film, printing and developing.

The other issue raised in the RBA's report was how the official Reserve Bank of Australia's interest rates are not something that our Reserve Bank can set in isolation from other central banks around the world. The real concern is that we have now seen other central banks pushing their interest rates to zero and below. We have something that many economists thought was impossible: negative interest rates. The RBA deputy chairman said that it has now come to a stage where it is cheaper to hide your money under the mattress for 10 years—and get no interest rate—than to buy a bond in many countries in Europe, where you actually get back less than what you put in.

The point we need to look at is that these economies have continued to lower interest rates time after time in an attempt to stimulate their economies, and it does not appear to be working. It should be clear that trying to grow the economy from the demand side fails time after time. History has shown that what actually works is growing the economy from the supply side. That is why we have to have policies in this country that encourage entrepreneurs to get out there, start new business and create new wealth. That is what will drive the growth in the economy.

That is why we need to look at our taxation rates in this country. In this country, we now have a corporate rate of tax that is internationally uncompetitive. We are at 30 per cent. We see places like Hong Kong and Singapore at 15 per cent and 17 per cent, and we see the UK are lowering their corporate tax rate to 20 per cent. If we keep that rate at 30 per cent, we risk becoming internationally uncompetitive again. We should not be overly concerned about reducing our corporate tax rate. When we go to some of the official figures, they show that every time over the last 30 years when we have reduced the corporate tax rate—we have
reduced it from close to 50 per cent down to the current rate of 30 per cent—almost without exception, we have not actually lost revenue; we have actually gained revenue, and, as a measurement, we have actually gained GDP.

There is a lot in the RBA report. I believe our committee has done good work during this report and we look forward to the rest of the work of the committee through the year.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The debate is adjourned and the resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

Joint Standing Committee on Treaties
Report

Consideration resumed of the motion:
That the House take note of the report.

Ms TEMPLEMAN (Macquarie) (17:13): As nations start to gather in Marrakesh to decide the global rules towards achieving net zero emissions, it is timely that Australia is set to ratify the Paris Agreement. There are some positives in the fact that, while we are lagging the world, we will be one of nearly 200 countries to do so. Either way, the agreement comes into force from Friday. But I am concerned that we think that that fact means Australia's work is done. In fact, our work as a nation will only just begin because, while the agreement sets new targets for us—and even though they are not particularly ambitious targets—the conclusion I have reached after listening to many experts as part of the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties hearings is that we do not actually have a way of achieving even those targets that we have set ourselves.

Let us first talk about the new targets. Australia has set an emissions reduction target of 26 per cent to 28 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030. According to the national interest assessment, this will halve Australia's per capita emissions compared with 2005 levels and stacks up well against other developed countries. However, evidence heard by the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties indicates those targets were set without analysis of what our highest possible ambition could be. Essentially, the targets are not consistent with a necessary, proportional and reasonable contribution by Australia to keeping global warming below two degrees.

The original Climate Change Authority report recommended a 46 to 65 per cent reduction. This government has gone for about half that. Our target is weaker than many other countries, including the US, the EU, Canada and New Zealand. The UK has agreed to reduce emissions by 57 per cent by 2030 and the Canadian government is introducing a national carbon price floor. Dr Luke Kemp, a lecturer in international relations and environmental policy at the ANU, explained to the committee that, if most other countries followed the Australian approach, global warming would exceed three to four per cent. So I do think that some question remains about whether we are doing our fair share. There is a bigger question: does Australia have the policies and legislation in place to deliver on the Paris Agreement commitments—unambitious as they are? Overwhelmingly, the credible experts say 'not yet'. Even the Department of the Environment and Energy indicates that there is no specific modelling to analyse or give confidence that the existing policies will meet the targets.

Too often this government uses our achievement of the Kyoto protocol targets as proof that Australia will meet future targets. Former environment minister Greg Hunt routinely said
things like, 'We are one of the few countries in the world to have met and beaten our first round of Kyoto targets and we will do the same with our second round of targets.' However, what that statement conveniently ignores is that the overachievement of Kyoto targets was thanks to clever and, some would say, manipulative negotiating at the start of the Kyoto discussions. The then environment minister Robert Hill insisted that Australia be given special treatment, which meant that our target would be based on 1990 emissions, which was an extraordinarily high base.

The Howard government knew that because the land-clearing practice in Queensland was in full swing in the lead-up to 1990 and had already sharply declined between 1990 and 1970, Australia could profitably achieve the Kyoto target on the back of a reduction in land clearing alone. Australia actually achieved the target at the same time as we increased fossil fuel emissions by 25 to 30 per cent. So forgive me for not believing that just because we achieved our Kyoto targets that in any way indicates that a pathway is in place for achieving our Paris targets.

The reality is the policy work is still to be done in the review of climate policies next year. I certainly urge the government to listen to Professor Tim Stephens from the University of Sydney who said: 'With the repeal of the clean energy future legislation, we currently do not have any overarching legislation that says Australia is aiming for these cuts by a certain time. So we have no legal apparatus to give effect to our Paris commitments.' Those words are concerning. So far, the indications from the minister for the environment are that there will not be a major overhaul of policies or of targets. There is no doubt that a long-term, stable and predictable policy framework is required to ensure the investment in emissions reduction measures occurs.

I think the message that has resonated very strongly for me is that the whole approach that we need to take would be better if it were bipartisan, as was the case in the United Kingdom. For Australia, that seems a novel idea. Imagine a country where all of the major parties are committed to the same targets and, essentially, to the same policies to achieve them. The repeal of the previous Labor policy of a price on carbon does not give a lot of hope to the idea of bipartisanship. I think the process the government uses as it reviews its energy policy next year will be a test—a test of just how genuine it is to bring about a change in Australia's long-term energy policy.

It is worth noting that among the 36 members of the OECD only five countries—Australia, Canada, Israel, Mexico and Turkey—do not have carbon taxes, emission trading schemes or binding emission standards for power plants. There is little time to catch up, and Australia's domestic action has us a long way behind.

The preamble to the agreement for Australia focuses on a just transition for the workforce involved in this sector, so that there are quality jobs and decent work. One of the questions I had when I heard this term is, 'What do we mean by "quality jobs" and "decent work"?' ACTU president Ged Kearney sums it up well when she describes the fears workers have, that they are going from fairly stable, predictable, well-paid work that offers opportunities for lifelong education into a world they know is insecure and unstable, where they do not have predictable pay or wages, and where they worry about a dignified retirement.

When I think of a just transition and any failure to fulfil that commitment, I think of Lithgow, just outside my electorate in the seat of Calare. Coal has been the driver of that
economy, and there is a clear and pressing need to establish manufacturing around the renewable energy sector and look at the development of alternative industries as the economy transitions to clean sources of energy, so that there is a smooth transition for Lithgow workers and the entire community. The story for assisting workers, particularly under the coalition, is one of ad hoc policy decisions. There is no national policy in place to ensure a just transition for workers in affected industries to obtain new, secure jobs.

Case studies presented to the committee by the ACTU illustrate that efforts to respond to large firm closures have been largely unsuccessful. A case study cited on Adelaide's Mitsubishi closure is stark. Professor Andrew Beer found that only a third of workers had found full-time equivalent work, a third left the workforce, and a third were either unemployed or underemployed. It is hard to draw a conclusion other than to hope that the government learn some lessons, that there needs to be genuine engagement with people working in these areas and their local communities, and specific measures that protect and create jobs and also help people find jobs. At the very least, we need to see things like job placement and information services; retraining while people are still working; financial and personal support and relocation assistance; a long-term plan, an early plan developed in consultation with the workforce and their communities. Given this government's current approach to jobs and growth, it is difficult to feel a huge amount of optimism about this. We have stagnant wage growth, a reduction in full-time employment, and a growth in the proportion of casual employment. We are already vulnerable, and without a plan. I live in hope, and so do the workers in every regional community.

Let us be clear about the Paris Agreement: it is an important step that so many countries can come to agreement on taking action on climate change. I want to thank my parliamentary colleagues on the joint standing committee, and the secretariat. But let us be in no doubt that the government's energy review next year is critical to determining whether the targets are achievable or not. Having said that, there is one aspect of the Paris Agreement that is a bit of a 'get out of jail free' card for this government, and that is that the agreement only locks us into trying to achieve our targets. We do not have to actually achieve them; we just have to demonstrate we tried. While I welcome the ratifying of the Paris Agreement for its symbolism and hope, it is more of a tiny step than a giant leap.

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler) (17:23): Labor support the ratification of the Paris Agreement and the Doha amendment to the Kyoto protocol. That is because we believe that it is imperative that we act to avoid dangerous climate change. But we do have a range of concerns: firstly, the target that Australia committed to under the agreement is quite inadequate. It lacks ambition that is required in order for us to advance and play our part. Secondly, the government has not outlined any mechanism to ensure that these modest targets can be achieved. Thirdly, we do want to ensure that communities that are impacted by the shift to a carbon-constrained economy—such as the community in the Latrobe Valley around the Hazelwood power station, that we have seen the closure of announced—are provided with appropriate support for economic restructuring. That has to happen in advance; we should not wait until announcements such as the one of a couple of weeks ago. Indeed, when we were in government we established economic transition plans, including for the Latrobe Valley. It is a pity that the current government cut $9.6 million from that plan when they came to office after the 2013 election.
Tuesday, 8 November 2016

Labor comes to this debate with a very strong record of commitment to international agreements aimed at addressing climate change. Australia, of course, signed the Kyoto protocol on 24 April 1998, but it took the election of a Labor government to actually get that agreement ratified. I am very proud of the fact that we did that, on 12 December 2007, as the very first act of the Rudd Labor government. Our predecessors had done nothing about the issue and, indeed, continued to be dominated by climate change sceptics and argue against the science of climate change, as well as against taking action to avoid dangerous climate change. As a result, as Labor’s environment spokesperson, I introduced the Avoiding Dangerous Climate Change (Kyoto Protocol Ratification) Bill to the parliament on 14 February 2005. At that time, I said:

This is not a debate about Right or Left. This is a debate about right and wrong. It is a debate about old ways or new paths. It is not a debate about blame; it is a debate about real solutions to problems that are real now, but potentially catastrophic if not addressed.

In spite of the fact that there was a global movement, including here in Australia, the government of the day was very unmoved. We took action not just to ratify the Kyoto protocol but to put in place a pathway to a carbon constrained economy. We put a price on carbon as a prelude to the creation of an emissions trading scheme. Indeed, we saw the coalition become not just climate change sceptics but market sceptics in opposing the emissions trading scheme. We put in place, as part of the climate change blueprint, announced by Kim Beazley with me as the shadow environment minister, the 20 per cent by 2020 renewable energy target. At the time of that announcement, the target was two per cent. We essentially would not have had an effective renewable energy industry without that increase of the target. We provided significant support for the development of alternative power sources. We provided compensation to help low-income earners cope with the effects of change. We invested more in public transport than all previous governments combined, thereby lowering emissions in the transport sector. We understood that it needed a whole-of-government approach.

That was followed, it must be said, by a period in which there was an attempt to have a consensus among sensible people across the parliament. Indeed, the member for Wentworth, in 2010, said this as the member for Wentworth:

It truly requires us to think as a species, not just to think as individuals.

… … …

… in order to do that … we must make a dramatic reduction in the world’s greenhouse gas emissions. Now you can look at the targets, 50 per cent the common sort of rubric rule of thumb is to cut emissions by 2050 … I promise you, you cannot achieve that cut … without getting to a point by mid-century where all or almost all of our stationary energy, that is to say energy from power stations and big factories and so forth comes from zero emission sources.

Such a strong and a principled view, but that, of course, was Malcolm Turnbull as the member for Wentworth, not Malcolm Turnbull as Prime Minister. As Prime Minister, he has embraced the so-called Direct Action Plan that he ridiculed when it was proposed by Tony Abbott, the member for Warringah, as the opposition leader. So what we have is a change of Prime Minister but not a change of climate change strategy. And that is unfortunate indeed, because this Prime Minister does know better, but this Prime Minister is frozen in time while
the world warms around him. We know that each and every year we are seeing it coming through in the figures—whether it be year-on-year, or the hottest month, or the hottest week, or the hottest season—around the globe and we need to take action.

The Paris Agreement came into force last Friday with enough of the large emitters already having signed up to ensure that it was put in place in record time. It is good that Labor will be part of the agreement but, as Labor members of the committee have noted, we are disappointed at its lack of ambition. Under the coalition, Australia's commitment to the world in the Paris Agreement is to reduce emissions by 26 to 28 per cent on 2005 levels by 2030. There is broad concern that that level of commitment is not consistent with keeping temperature rise below two degrees Celsius, and ideally, 1.5 degrees Celsius, as the agreement targets. For example, Bloomberg New Energy Finance has said:

Australia's current emissions reduction target of 26-28 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030 should thus be regarded as a low-case scenario. Australia's final 2030 target is likely to be higher and somewhere between this and a high-case scenario of 45-63 per cent, which is Australia's fair share of burden to limit warming to 2 degrees C.

It is very clear that we do need to be more ambitious.

Whatever the target is, we need an effective mechanism to get there. We need a target linked to total emissions. We need to have a renewable energy target after 2020. We need to ensure that we provide support to bodies like ARENA and the Clean Energy Finance Corporation. We need to make sure that there is a whole-of-government response. As it is now, importantly, national emissions are projected to keep growing to 2020, and likely beyond, until Australia has a real climate change policy. This is an issue which we have a responsibility to deal with not just for us but for our children and our grandchildren. This is an intergenerational equity issue beyond all others, which is why this parliament must show leadership and it is critical that Australia play our role as good global citizens.

**Mr CONROY** (Shortland) (17:33): I want to start by commending the contributions of my colleagues, the members for Macquarie and Grayndler. They have set up many excellent points. I want to focus on two aspects in my contribution: the targets embodied in the Paris Agreement and the just transitions clauses in the Paris process, which are quite revolutionary.

On the targets, as previous speakers have noted, Australia's official target of 26 to 28 per cent is grossly inadequate. Independent experts, both in Australia and around the world, have made the point that if other developed nations lodged similar targets, we would be on a trajectory for a four degree warming of the globe, rather than the two degree or, ideally, 1½ degree trajectory that the Paris treaty aimed for. This would lead to very extreme climate change events. This would lead, as Ross Garnaut in the Garnaut review has pointed out, a loss of the Murray-Darling irrigation area and a decimation of Australian agriculture—something that the National Party should consider. It would also endanger the Great Barrier Reef, a tourism attraction that drives $9 billion of GDP and employs 60,000 Australians—something Queensland Nationals MPs should consider. Our targets are wholly inadequate. Yet again that Liberal-National coalition's actions on climate change expose us as being international pariahs when it comes to taking action on climate change. That is why I am so proud of the Labor Party's commitment to a 45 per cent reduction on 2000 levels by 2030. It is a target that is wholly within the bounds of the Climate Change Authority's independent recommendation of
what Australia's target should be. This is a policy we took to the election and a policy I am very proud of.

Even when we look at the government's targets, the way they seek to achieve them is through smoke and mirrors. The government's official target for 2020 is minus five per cent on 2000 levels and they will only achieve this through methods that are, quite frankly, almost fraudulent. In 2008 the Department of Climate Change estimated that the cumulative abatement task for Australia to 2020 would be 1,335 megatons of carbon dioxide abated. That has since been reduced over time to 236 megatons so it has gone from 1,300 megatons to 236 megatons of cumulative abatement to hit the minus five per cent.

Why has this abatement task been reduced? It has been reduced because of four events in the projections. First off, a very significant drought led to lower emissions from our agricultural sector. Secondly, there has been lower electricity demand over the last few years as Australian consumers have actually responded to the price signals. We had this giant furphy from the then Prime Minister Abbott and his farcical climate change minister, the member for Flinders, who said that Australians would not respond to price signals in the electricity sector, that people would not reduce their electricity consumption if prices went up. The facts are in and the facts are that, like any other market, when there is a price signal, consumers respond to it. We have got lower electricity demand driving fewer emissions in the economy.

Thirdly, we have got a very significant reduction in manufacturing emissions because we have seen significant job losses in the industrial sector. Most particularly that is driven by the destruction of the automotive sector, a sector that was sustainable as long as we had Holden and Toyota still in this country. But the Abbott-Turnbull government drove those companies offshore which means lower emissions from our manufacturing sector. Fourthly, weaker than expected coal prices compared to original projections mean less coal production which in turn means less fugitive emissions. None of those four factors are within the government's control other than driving Holden and Toyota overseas.

With a reduction in the abatement task from 1,300 megatons to 236, if you add in carry over Kyoto protocol permits and add in the impact of Peter Beattie's visionary land clearing laws, it will mean that only 92 million tonnes of carbon need to be abated by the government to hit the minus five per cent, something they will claim to do through the Emissions Reduction Fund—the direct action dog we talk about. There are still real questions about this fund because this fund is paying farmers to not cut down trees they have already committed to not cutting down under state laws so there is a real question about additionality. Let me repeat that. This fund is paying taxpayers' money to farmers to commit to not cutting down trees they are already prevented from cutting down by state based laws. So I have real questions about whether this 92 million tonnes of abatement is legitimate.

We will probably hit the minus five per cent target but we will do it with an economy in 2020 that will actually have emissions three per cent above 2000 levels, not five per cent below. And that means our economic structure will be baked in at a higher level than it needs to be to then flow on for the 2030 target. On the 2030 target, the abatement task on the government's own figures is 2,200 megatons. The government claims they will only get 900 megatons from their policies but most of the reductions will come from detailed policies...
around the National Energy Productivity Plan and the Emissions Reduction Fund going forward.

Most farcical of all is that 200 million tonnes will come from 'unspecified technology improvements'. The government's own policy paper says: 'We are going to claim 200 million tonnes of abatement from 'unspecified technology improvements' that we have no idea about. We have no idea of what they are and we have no idea how we are going to achieve them, but we are just going to put that in our papers. We are going to claim this to the UNFCCC, that we are going to get 200 million tonnes of abatement from some magic pudding of technology abatement.' This does not bode well for hitting the 26 per cent target that the government has lodged. It is magic-pudding economics at its best.

But it still leaves a massive 1,300 megaton gap between what they claim they can achieve and what we really need to achieve to even hit the 26 per cent target. This will lead to either one of two things: us not hitting our targets, which will have massive international costs, or, secondly, a massive fiscal cost as we try to buy additional abatement—if we can—through direct action.

Let me summarise where we are on the government's own policy: (a) hitting minus five through policies that are not the government's; and (b) a wholly inadequate 2030 target of 26 per cent that we probably will not achieve, but which if we do by some miracle through the government's policies it will be at a massive fiscal cost. So I have real questions about this government's commitment to reaching these wholly inadequate targets.

In the time remaining I want to touch on one of the most important parts of the Paris agreement, and that is the commitment to just transitions—a commitment which says that we recognise that modern economies will need to change. Modern economies will need to decarbonise if we are to hit these abatement targets. That will affect regions in different ways. In capital cities—in CBDs—there will not be much change; there will be a bit around energy efficiency. But for resource-intense regions, such as mine in the Hunter Valley, or in the Latrobe Valley or in parts of Queensland, this will be a real challenge to industry and communities. But we cannot put our heads in the sand; we cannot pretend that change is not coming. That does not avoid the change, that just means that change will hit us like a locomotive in the middle of the night.

We need to plan for the future. Hazelwood announced its closure last week, not because of any climate change policies but because the plant was nearly 50 years old and the company could not see a rosy future in a climate-constrained economy. They were not prepared to reinvest in one of the most polluting energy power plants in the world.

What we could have done was planned for that closure and put in place real economic diversification—put in place policies so that communities and workers were not the first targets of this process. Instead, this government stuck its head in the sand because it is dominated by climate change deniers and dominated by the rump of the National Party—mostly out of Queensland, other than the Deputy Prime Minister, Barnaby Joyce. He is stuck in the 1900s, if not the 1800s! Because of this lack of commitment to our future and because they refuse to take action, this community in the Latrobe Valley cannot plan for the future. There is not sufficient investment in the economic diversification of that region. There is no commitment to pool redundancies, which would mean that workers at these plants would not have to lose their jobs if they do not want to.
That is why I am so proud of Labor's policy of pooled redundancies. That means that when an energy station has to close because of climate change we pool the redundancies amongst other power stations in that region so that instead of the 30-year-old fitter who has a mortgage and a young family and who wants to continue in the industry having to lose his job, instead it might be the 59-year-old worker down the road who is happy to take a package.

I am proud to commit to just transition. I am proud to be part of a political party committed to embracing the future, rather than those dinosaurs on the other side who just stick their heads in the sand and hope for the best, because that is betraying our future.

Mr ZAPPIA (Makin) (17:43): In speaking on this Report 163: Paris Agreement, Kyoto Protocol—Doha Amendment, I notice that recommendation 1 states:

The Committee supports the Paris Agreement and recommends that binding treaty action be taken. I assume that means ratifying the agreement, because it does not explicitly say that. But I would hope that that is the intent of the recommendation.

I also note that there were additional comments by the Labor members on that committee. In particular, I want to quote paragraph 3 of the additional comments, which state:

While Labor members of the Committee support ratification of the Paris Agreement and the Doha Amendment, we believe that Australia can and should participate more meaningfully and effectively in the global effort, and that treaty actions covered by this report are weak, poorly founded, and not supported by an adequate basis for implementation.

I quote that paragraph because that is exactly the conclusion I draw about the government's approach to climate change. And can I say that, ever since climate change has become a topic of international discussion, the coalition has continuously resisted any acknowledgement of the reality and consequences of climate change or acceptance of Australia's responsibility as to it. Indeed, just prior to the 2007 election, the Howard government succumbed to community pressure and finally accepted that an emissions trading scheme was necessary in order for Australia to play its part in combating climate change across the world.

Subsequent to the 2007 election, which the coalition lost and which Labor won, we saw the coalition then revert back to its old position, opposing Labor's emissions trading scheme when it was introduced. Indeed, the member for Wentworth, who is now the Prime Minister, lost his leadership over that very decision. But in 2013, when the coalition was returned to government, it again did away with its Howard-government-era commitment to an emissions trading scheme and brought in a very ineffective direct action plan—a plan which, the evidence suggested, would not work and would cause emissions to rise. In fact, from the latest report on that, I see that, by the year 2020, emissions are expected to rise by about six per cent, which confirms what many of the experts have predicted and continue to say. As we all know, the now Prime Minister, the member for Wentworth, has done a complete backflip and now supports the direct action policy which he was an intense critic of back in 2013 or shortly thereafter.

This particular agreement is about Australia playing its part in the globe in terms of doing something about mitigating climate change. We know that, as of last week, 87 countries—covering 61 per cent of all global emissions—had ratified the agreement. Again, Australia is left trailing behind in that it has not ratified the agreement as yet, and it is trailing behind with a very weak emissions reduction target of somewhere between 26 and 28 per cent on 2005
levels by 2030. The real question is: ‘Are we even going to reach those 26 to 28 per cent targets?’—let alone the questions of whether the targets are in themselves adequate and whether they reflect the level of responsibility that Australia has to play its part.

Evidence about climate change continues to grow. CO2 concentrations around the world now have surpassed 400 parts per million, which is the highest figure in two million years. In fact, in the pre-industrial era it was only 280 parts per million; it is now over 400 parts per million in most parts of the world. Terrestrial temperatures have risen by one degree over the last 100 years, and that is when most of the heat is absorbed by our oceans. The year of 2015 was the hottest on record, and July was the 15th consecutive month of record high global temperatures.

Extreme weather events have become a regular occurrence around the world. In May we saw extreme fires in Canada and extreme heat in India. In June we saw extreme rainfall in Paris and, in Louisiana, we saw a one-in-500-year rainfall event—and that was the eighth such event in the USA in the past 12 months. The facts speak for themselves, and Australia is no different. Here in Australia we have seen fires, floods, heatwaves and cyclones, one after the other, almost every year for the last seven or eight years that I have been in this place, and earlier this year we saw the extensive coral bleaching of the Great Barrier Reef.

The problem is that Australia is dithering while other countries are acting. North American leaders jointly pledged to reach a target of sourcing 50 per cent of their continent’s electricity from clean power sources, which included renewable energy sources. Eighty one corporations have now pledged to reach 100 percent of their energy from renewable sources, and 173 countries now have a renewable energy target, but not Australia. Instead, what this government has done is go in the opposite direction. This is a government that has attempted to shut down the Australian Renewable Energy Agency—one of the agencies put together in order to try and help Australia transition into a clean energy environment and into a new era where renewal energy was the way of the future. We saw this government try to close down the Clean Energy Finance Corporation. Worst of all, we have seen this government turn on and criticise state governments who have taken the initiative upon themselves to increase their own renewable energy targets when the federal government would not. I was most disappointed at seeing the Prime Minister, in his first response to the power loss in South Australia, initially try to blame it all on the wind generators in that state.

The consequences of Australia doing nothing are very, very serious, as they are for the rest of the world. Not only will we be left behind with respect to the clean energy jobs and the growth of that industry—the growth which other countries are forging ahead with and which is creating huge opportunities for those countries that are taking the initiative—but it means that we will continue to be using the kinds of energy system that simply add to the pollution that causes the problem in the first place.

The economic costs of not doing anything and of continuing to have to deal with the extreme weather events, whether they are floods, fire, heat or even sea level rises, will continue to rise. The figures in respect to the economic costs are very difficult to quantify. I have spoken in this place previously about those costs. They run into tens of billions of dollars. Because they have dissipated across a whole range of areas, it is difficult to say, ‘We can save this amount of money by doing this or that amount by doing something else.’ The reality is that every time there is a flood, a fire or a cyclone, there would be tens of millions of
dollars of costs expended in the states where they occur simply to fix the problem—before you even look at the productivity losses that might have arisen from it.

The other area of serious costs that is very rarely spoken about is the health cost to the nation. We know that heatwaves in particular cause a lot of people in this country to suffer very ill health and, in many cases, die. We also know that disease may well rise as a result of changing weather patterns. The CSIRO has put together some very good information about all of that if members care to have a look at it. We also know that as a result of climate change we will see huge environmental losses of flora and fauna. As a member of the standing committee on the environment in this place for the last eight years prior to this year—because I am not on it in this term of parliament—I have been involved in one inquiry after the other which all highlighted the environmental costs and losses as a result of climate change that we as a nation, in my view, are not doing enough about in trying to protect.

The last matter that I wish to very briefly talk about is the intergenerational cost that the member for Grayndler referred to earlier. All of these costs continue to rise. The more we do nothing about what should be done the costs will continue to rise and be passed on to future generations. That is the greatest type of intergenerational theft I can think of—to leave future generations to sort out and manage a problem that we refused to take responsible action about.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Buchholz): Debate is now adjourned and the resumption of the debate will be made an order for the next sitting day.

GRIEVANCE DEBATE

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That grievances be noted.

Trade Unions

Mr CHAMPION (Wakefield) (17:54): Barely a day goes by in this parliament without the hopeless government and their hapless Prime Minister floundering about the place. We know that they are divided on so many issues. We see that day to day. The backbench is pushing along a weak Prime Minister, a Prime Minister who called, for his party, the most disastrously long election campaign in living memory. It has resulted in a Senate that is chock-a-block full of, let's just put it this way—and I do not want to disparage the other place—erratic individuals about whom we are now seeing one question mark after another being raised in terms of its composition. I think it is quite a difficulty for the country. We have got a government that is really 'in office but not in power'. I think the member for Warringah referred to this government in those terms. It tells you everything about the state they are in. Where do they go back to? Rhetorically, they go back to immigration on one hand and beating up on unions on the other.

I wanted to devote this speech to the trade union movement, the importance of trade unions and the importance of their role not just in the economy but in our society. The importance of free trade unions is a critical thing. It is a marker of a society's ability to have economic fairness and social justice. The ability of unions to organise and to participate in the economic life of the country is an indicator of not just how fair you are and not just what kind of economic outcomes you get but how civilised your society is. We are seeing that this government really is not interested in that, except as a rhetorical device to beat up on.
The role of unions is, firstly, to advance conditions. Secondly, it is to ensure compliance of wage agreements and the like, to bargain on behalf of their membership in workplaces and to play a very valuable role in safety. I did a bit of occupational health and safety work for my union, the SDA, and I could regale the Federation Chamber and its members with some of the egregious examples of safety, even in quite significant companies. If you had a compliance problem on wages in a store or an outlet, you would often find that you had a safety problem as well. If you get compliance variations or people doing their own thing in one area, you inevitably get it in safety as well. That shows up in a whole range of impacts, but at its most extreme end workers do not come home from work—they die on the job.

 Barely a week goes by these days when we do not see a compliance issue in the newspapers. Most recently, The Sydney Morning Herald exposed Caltex workers being paid $12 an hour. Caltex is a very significant company. For them to have the workplace regulator raiding their establishments about allegations of intimidation and systemic wage fraud is a very serious issue indeed. The Sydney Morning Herald has reported a number of times that, despite Caltex reporting a half-yearly profit of $318 million, with $375 million reported in the previous period, workers—mostly students from Pakistan and India on student visas—have been paid as little as $12 an hour. That is a very serious issue, and in one of Adele Ferguson's very good investigations The Sydney Morning Herald has revealed that Syed Aqeel, for instance, who worked for the Grange Caltex service station, was paid $12 an hour when he started, as an accounting student from Pakistan, working overnight shifts. If the customer drove away without paying for petrol, the franchisee made him pay for it. This is not an unknown practice in service stations; it does pop up from time to time. They will try to make the console operator responsible for theft. In no other retail establishment would we consider this to be acceptable. That can basically destroy a worker's wages for that shift in a matter of moments. While theft from service stations is a serious issue, it should not be the workers who pay for it. In the words of Mr Aqeel:

- We stand there for eight-hour and 10-hour shifts and we are getting nothing, and if someone drives off, you have to pay out your whole shift money.

- That is what is going on in New South Wales. In 2012 another family member of that franchisee had to pay $18,367 in unpaid wages after an audit in that area.

- If this were just one example, we could say it was one egregious employer, but we know it is not. We know from 7-Eleven and from the chicken industry, from Baiada, that there are many workplaces now exploiting people on visas, using the fact that they are there on student visas to exploit them—standing over them and using it as a point of leverage to force them to accept below-award wages. It is a pretty serious issue. Joanna Howe, a professor from the University of Adelaide, wrote a very good article in The Sydney Morning Herald on 4 November, which began:

 Visa rules disempower student workers. Caltex shows there is a systemic problem involving the serious mistreatment of international students at work in certain industries.

 In these cases, international students were highly reluctant to complain to the authorities about alleged gross exploitation, the franchisor's head office was allegedly complicit in the exploitation or tipped off its franchisees …
About the raids. This is a very significant company, which has significant responsibilities for fuel supply, basically building into their business model the exploitation of workers who are ostensibly here to study. They are being exploited in the most egregious way.

Having not just good regulators but trade unions in these areas is particularly important. When we look at what has happened in a whole range of areas, we see that unions are completely necessary. The government are desperate to hide their own divisions, both in policy terms and in personnel terms. We know that they are divided on policy. Not a day goes by that we do not see a very active backbench—and I have seen Deputy Speaker Hastie out there on numerous ABC programs—raising one issue or another. Barely a day goes by when we do not have a very active backbench throwing up policy. I do not think all of it is particularly welcomed by the executive. And we see the member for Warringah in the House auditioning, just by his sheer presence—he is hanging his shingle out—for a new job in cabinet, with veiled threats to the incumbent Prime Minister.

*Government members interjecting—*

**Mr CHAMPION:** I knew I would get them eventually! I knew, if I baited the hook, the member for Goldstein would jump out of the water and onto the hook! He could not resist. He is of course another one auditioning for the frontbench. There are many people auditioning at the moment. Why wouldn't you, when you have got such instability in the government? But the one thing we do know is that they will refuse the legitimate role of trade unions in this country, every time. That is where they fall back to. It is a blight on their own party, which in fact has many supporters who are union members, who deserve representation on the conservative side of politics and do not deserve to have their organisations diminished and blackguarded in this place. Trade unions are good institutions. They have worked for the economic and social progress of this country, and their role in this country and in our society should be defended and applauded.

*The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hastie):* I thank the member for Wakefield for his entertaining remarks.

**Western Australia: Taxation**

**Mr RICK WILSON** (O'Connor) (18:04): Mr Deputy Speaker Hastie, it is good to see you in the chair. I am sure you share my grave concerns about a recent tax proposal in our home state of Western Australia from the WA Nationals. I would like to make the point that I certainly do not include my federal National Party colleagues, our coalition partners, in the comments that I am about to make in this speech. As you know, the WA Nationals are seeking to create a new revenue source by increasing taxes paid by the state's largest iron ore producers, BHP Billiton and Rio Tinto. The policy sends a negative message about government intentions at a time when we should be encouraging investments in our home state.

The WA Nationals' proposal to increase the 25 cent per tonne rental on production of iron ore ignores the basic principles of economic responsibility. Recklessly pursuing a new revenue stream through higher taxes is a dangerous proposition in the current climate within Western Australia, but the implications of this policy go beyond the short-term effects. The core values that encouraged investment and brought years of prosperity to Western Australia are at risk. We should all be deeply concerned about the message Brendon Grylls is sending...
to the world and the way in which he seeks to portray Western Australia to both domestic and international investors. By signalling his intention to unilaterally alter state agreements, Brendon Grylls has made a statement to WA's current and future investors. Since the WA Nationals revealed their plans, much has been said about altering state agreements. Although the WA parliament does have the legal authority to amend state agreements, doing so would set a dangerous precedent.

To focus solely on the legalities of such a policy would be short-sighted. There are some longstanding principles at stake. We must consider the impact this kind of approach would have on the state's reputation. It is because of the capacity for state agreements to be altered within the parliament that the government must demonstrate it can be trusted to honour its negotiations with the private sector. A state agreement is intended to represent a clear market signal to investors of the state's support for and commitment to a project, reducing sovereign risk. State agreements exist to encourage development of the state's natural resources to generate economic benefits.

Negotiating and ratifying a state agreement is supposed to be an indication of trust and faith between the State government and a private party. It is an acknowledgment of a mutually beneficial development. It is a promise of stability and consistency for an investor seeking to develop a project that will create jobs and stimulate the economy. An investor's commitment hinges on the guarantees provided by state agreements, which will help reduce the risks associated with developing a project over several decades.

Brendon Grylls's belligerent attitude to the guarantee provided through state agreements is sending an alarming message to would-be investors in the private sector. He has gone after the two major iron ore producers, arguing that the miners need to start paying their fair share of tax. Clearly he thinks the two companies are falling short of the mark, notwithstanding that, collectively, BHP and Rio paid $5.2 billion in company tax in 2015, $3.2 billion in royalties 2014-15—which represents 65 per cent of all minerals royalties paid in WA—and $259 million in other state government taxes. But it would be a mistake to think that only BHP and Rio Tinto would be affected by the WA Nationals' tax increase. In the short term, the policy might only pose a risk to the two iron ore companies and the thousands of Australians they employ every year. What Western Australians should be extremely concerned by is the image of our state that Brendon Grylls is promoting. We need investment. We need to encourage new projects to create job opportunities. But sending a clear message of sovereign risk to investors and threatening our reputation as a safe place to do business is simply bad policy in the current fiscal environment.

The apprehension felt by the private sector is extending beyond BHP and Rio. Companies operating in my electorate of O'Connor are getting nervous. Bill Beament, the managing director of Kalgoorlie-based Northern Star Resources, spoke of this sentiment last month. In reference to Brendon Grylls's proposal, he had this to say:

The stuff that is going on in WA at the moment is just disastrous …
Northern Star's register is half offshore owned, pensions funds in North America starting to dip their toe in ... And stability is something they require to make these long-term decisions. Not making policy on the run—it's death by a thousand cuts when we're changing policy all the time.
I note that Northern Star has been one of the most successful companies operating in the WA goldfields in recent years. Companies that have ridden the price slump and looked to acquire
new projects through times of hardship have softened the blow of poor commodity markets. Discouraging their financial backers from further investment in WA is something that we, as a state, simply cannot afford. Mr Beament's comments were echoed by St Barbara chief, Bob Vassie, who said:

…people underestimate how much of a bit of uncertainty in tax competitive, or changes in regulations, disrupts what investors and explorers choose to do …

Just last week, it was reported in the media that two Chinese steel companies had requested an urgent meeting with Western Australian Premier Colin Barnett out of concern over the WA Nationals proposal. Sinosteel Australia and Baosteel Resources have labelled the tax increase a sovereign risk for any Chinese company operating in WA.

Already, we are seeing threats to new development because of Brendon Grylls's attitude towards the guarantees outlined in state agreements. A huge part of my electorate includes the WA goldfields, where encouraging exploration is vital to driving economic activity. It is no good for anyone to see dozens of drill rigs parked in West Kalgoorlie gathering dust. We are at risk of signalling to investors that exploration in WA is a risky business, fraught with unpredictability and driven by inconsistency in government policy.

Of further concern is the fact that the WA Nationals have left none of the 60 state agreements off the table. At its state conference in 2015, the party passed a motion to review all state agreements in WA. This is now enshrined in the party's policy platform, and creates a worrying question of who might become their next target. The 25c production rental that Brendon Grylls wants to increase applies to all iron ore miners in WA that have been in production for more than 15 years. Cliffs Natural Resources joins BHP and Rio as one of the three companies that pay this fee at present, though they have not yet been on the WA Nationals radar. In September, Cliffs received the green light to expand their operations at Koolyanobbing, west of Kalgoorlie-Boulder. The new project will allow the company to continue producing and exporting more than 12 million tonnes of ore per year through the Esperance port.

This company supports about 650 jobs directly and 1,650 jobs overall. The revenue to the state government through existing royalties, port fees and other taxes is significant. The diversity it brings to the goldfields economy is invaluable. The ore in the Yilgarn region of the goldfields is of lower grade and quality than the hematite ore found in the Pilbara, creating a challenging business climate for mining operators in the Yilgarn. The iron ore price may have bounced back from the absolute depths we saw it descend to in the last 12 months, but commodity prices are still low.

It is inappropriate that, at this time, the WA Nationals are sending shockwaves through the mining industry with their attack on this sector. Brendon Grylls has sent a message to the resources sector that a state government at any given time may exercise what he sees as a statutory right to change the clauses in any state agreement. Clauses agreed upon by two parties on the back of negotiations between the government and the private sector enshrining contractual arrangements are no longer safe from ad hoc alterations. Mr Grylls argues the 25c fee is outdated, and that no-one has sought to modernise this clause in 50 years. But there are some critical flaws in his argument. One is that the tonnage of iron ore produced in the Pilbara by BHP and Rio has skyrocketed over the last decade to 600 million tonnes, meaning that
revenue from this production rental has dramatically increased one hundred and twentyfold from the five million tonnes of production annually in the 1960s.

The other glaring deficiency in Mr Gryll's argument is that the state agreements he refers to were modernised in 2010. The concessional iron ore royalties payable by BHP and Rio rose from 3.75 per cent to 5.625 per cent in 2010, and were later harmonised with most iron ore royalties at 7.5 per cent. The two companies also made a one-off payment to the state government of $350 million during the alterations made to the state agreements. Mr Grylls was a key member of the cabinet during those negotiations. He was the leader of the WA Nationals, and the minister for regional development. There was an opportunity to raise the production rental during those negotiations with BHP and Rio Tinto, yet, at the time, he saw no need to further increase taxes. Now, he and his party are seeking a new revenue stream, though they put no proposal on the table for reduced spending or fiscal responsibility. But their recklessness and greed will come at the cost of working families in towns like Kalgoorlie-Boulder, who will be the hardest hit by a contracting resources economy, sapped of capital, confidence and investment. If the WA Nationals really believe in regional WA then perhaps they would be better served by looking to implement a policy that creates jobs, not destroys them.

**Death Penalty**

*Mr HAYES* (Fowler—Chief Opposition Whip) (18:14): I take the opportunity to again raise my concern about the recent and deteriorating regional situation in respect to the use of the death penalty. Notwithstanding progress in our relationship, as a matter of principle, I must condemn the recent executions in Indonesia. Today, I also draw attention to the recent spate of extrajudicial executions taking place in the Philippines since the election of President Rodrigo Duterte.

My concern about and condemnation of the death penalty represents values that I believe are shared by most in this House. Our values in this regard are so strong that a cross-party working group on the death penalty was formed in this parliament and meets on a bipartisan basis to discuss the death penalty and to advance our advocacy in respect of abolition on a worldwide basis. An example of this shared concern was the foreign minister's recent statement stressing Australia's opposition to the death penalty to her Indonesian counterpart, Ms Retno Marsudi, at the ASEAN meeting in Laos on 25 July, just before the third round of executions in Indonesia under the new Indonesian government.

The international context is clear: the vast majority of nations have abolished the death penalty or have put into effect de facto arrangements amounting to a moratorium on capital punishment. Over 160 countries around the world have abolished the death penalty or have embarked on moratoriums. Fewer than 40 countries still carry out capital punishment. President Duterte appears determined to return the Philippines back to this minority of nations, with the added and most alarming element that executions in the Philippines do not even require the sanction of the law.

Whilst the death penalty remains legal under international law, executions can only be carried out for serious, violent crime, and this does not extend to drug related offences. Indonesia signed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in 2005. An instrument of the covenant urges states to have a high regard and respect for human life. This same universal value is echoed in Indonesia's law on human rights of 1999. In theory at least,
Indonesia should reject the death penalty or at least continue its earlier moratorium on its use. The ICCPR and human rights laws outline principles, standards and guidelines that establish clear measures for a state to be able to fulfil its objectives in a healthy democracy. Whatever drug policies a nation adopts, human rights should always be the mirror for a nation to set its standards and guidelines.

The three rounds of executions in Indonesia, on 18 January and 29 April 2015 and on 28 July this year, all under the new President, Joko Widodo, broke the de facto moratorium that was encouraged by his predecessor, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. The executions were mainly for drug related offences and they mainly involved foreigners, tragically including two Australians, Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran, both of whom had shown—according to all, including the governor of the prison—all the qualities of a complete rehabilitation.

Returning to the Philippines: since the recent election of President Rodrigo Duterte, according to Human Rights Watch, more than 4,000 people have been executed by police or vigilantes without their conviction being recorded by the courts. So draconian and lawless are these arbitrary measures employed by President Duterte that the Catholic Church has embarked on a campaign entitled 'Thou shalt not kill.'

Both the Indonesian and Philippines presidents invoke populist rhetoric in the use of the death penalty, especially against drug related crime. They say it acts as a deterrent—an argument long debunked by most credible authorities and certainly not supported by any credible evidence. One only has to look at the United States to see that the threat of execution does not deter gun or other serious crime.

Further, we know that in all legal systems mistakes do happen. In countries like Indonesia, the newspapers report the arrest and sometimes imprisonment of judges and officials for corruption and other related irregularities. The reports also highlight elements of manipulation and, sometimes, the fragility of the legal system. But the fact remains that, once someone is executed, that is final. Mistakes can happen in law. Take the case of Mary Jane Veloso, who was due to be executed on 29 April last year along with Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran. However, she won a surprise reprieve on the actual eve of execution after police arrested a person in Manila and now say Veloso was being used and was innocent of the offence. Another is Zulfiqar Ali, a 52-year-old Pakistani condemned prisoner who was notified he was to die in 72 hours on 25 July this year. Ali obtained an eleventh-hour reprieve. It was widely felt that the trial did not meet international standards. An international report conducted by the human rights and law ministry found that Ali was innocent of the crime.

In a world of increasing transnational crime, I believe it is in a nation's interest to abolish the death penalty. A very large number of abolitionist countries, Australia included, refuse international police cooperation and criminal intelligence sharing where the provision of such information or assistance could predictably expose a person to the death penalty. Many argue it is in Indonesia's best interests to abolish the death penalty or at least return to its former moratorium on executions. That is because Indonesia faces a huge problem with its own citizens being on death row in foreign jurisdictions. In April 2015, there were 279 Indonesian migrant workers facing execution abroad. In April this year, 12 months later, the figure was still 227, despite many executions taking place and the efforts of the Indonesian foreign affairs ministry to secure releases by paying blood money.
There is another, separate Indonesian domestic context which also suggests it may not be in Indonesia's practical interest to use capital punishment, even for terrorism offences. Executions can give a terrorist a type of martyr status. The case in point which demonstrates this is the execution of Imam Samudra, one of the masterminds behind the Bali bombing in 2002, which killed 202 people. After his execution, Samudra was buried in a grave outside Banten, 90 kilometres from Jakarta. Today, this site is seen as a point of pilgrimage for budding extremists inspired by his example.

Despite the well-publicised meeting between the Indonesian and Filipino presidents, it would be retrograde for President Widodo to follow his counterpart down the path of extrajudicial killings. The editorial in *The Jakarta Post* of 30 June 2016 poignantly said: Opting for the extreme way of eradicating drug-related crimes will not only mark a setback, but also undermine Indonesia's credibility as a champion of democracy and human rights. Worse ... if manifested in policy, would justify state violence and undermine the rule of law as the country's foundation.

The executions in Indonesia and disturbing extrajudicial killings in the Philippines should in no way deter us from our efforts to achieve the abolition of the death penalty. There are many things that we can do, and for starters I think we should monitor the levels of cooperation required of the AFP with foreign jurisdictions. Further, I think we should be raising in trade negotiations the importance that we as a country place on the non-use of capital punishment, as well as continuing our efforts in the United Nations and other international agencies to advocate for the worldwide abolition of the death penalty. I also fully support Australia's ambition for a seat on the United Nations Human Rights Council and applaud the efforts of the Minister for Foreign Affairs to use this as a vehicle towards a constructive platform for the pursuit of Australia's objective of the abolition of the death penalty worldwide.

**Economy**

**Human Rights**

Mr TIM WILSON (Goldstein) (18:24): Thank you, Deputy Speaker Hastie. You look very comfortable in that chair, and may you continue to reign long in it, as you see fit.

Today, we grieve for future Australian taxpayers. Our nation's finances speak to an injustice at the expense of our children and grandchildren. Our gross debt this year is nearing $500 billion and net debt is projected to reach $326 billion, costing us $43.6 million in interest every day. That is more than we individually spend on pharmaceuticals, public schools or jobseeker income support.

It is a structural deficit that is driving our debt. Half of the budget is composed of recurring health and social security spending. It is lifestyle spending for lifestyle debt. This government has tried to address this problem. Labor and the Greens have blocked it, justifying doing so by false moralising. The cost, if we do not rein in spending, is human. If we do not cut spending, we will not be able to afford the innovative medicines and treatments of tomorrow. Innovative medicines are coming to chronically manage or cure Alzheimer's, cancers and HIV, to name but a few. We will not be able to afford them or the benefits they will be able to provide for people who are suffering, nor aged care that delivers dignity, nor education to broaden minds for prosperity. This is not a formula for building Australia's future. It is a formula for managing our society's demise.
The value of a society can be judged by how well it takes care of its most vulnerable. Could unborn Australians be any more vulnerable? If we keep on this path, we ignore them for ourselves. The well off do have to pay their fair share—this is not in dispute. We also need a just tax system so they do so. Fifteen years ago, almost 80 per cent of taxpayers paid 30c in the dollar or less. Today, it is only a quarter. More taxes incentivise avoidance. Real reform is needed, not fiddling at the margins.

This is not just a debate about dollars and cents. This is a moral debt. Intergenerational debt breaks the social contract between generations. If a bank handed every newly-born child a maxed-out $10,000 credit card, Labor would be calling for a royal commission. But that is what we are doing, and Labor's answer is to argue for a limit increase while we are trying to pay it off. Those alive today are living off the labour of the unborn. The unborn are not beneficiaries. They did not vote for it, but they will be left with this debt. If it is left unchecked, they will work all their lives paying taxes to repay the debt. Our generation is of mature mind. We accrued this debt; we should balance the budget and we should repay it.

Today we also grieve for the victims of Islamic extremism, specifically women, homosexuals and Christians, who have been systemically oppressed by Islamists across the world. The atrocities inflicted on minorities by Islamic fundamentalism are illiberal, primeval and indefensible. Daesh represents an interpretation of Islam that is profoundly incompatible with the modern world. Children are murdered for watching soccer. Homosexual men are thrown from the tops of high-rise buildings after show trials. Women are discouraged from seeking education, and from choosing their own clothing or their partner in marriage. Christians are being murdered simply for their faith and acting consistently with their God. Arguably, this amounts to a genocide. Islamic State has enslaved and brutalised women while empowering female morality police to oppress their own gender and ensure children are raised as what they would call true believers. They envisage a future without aesthetic Western contamination and without liberalism or democracy. There is no willingness for mutual respect. They are destroying the cultural heritages of other civilisations. This problem is shared with many of those Muslim countries struggling in a globalised world against this type of extremism.

Daesh did not learn these illiberal attitudes out of nowhere. Australia's first openly gay imam, Nur Warsame, has labelled Islamic law out of date and not applicable to our society today. Coming from Somalia, where gay people face imprisonment and extrajudicial killings, he denounces archaic leaders who somehow preach punishment for homosexuals. The same sort of spirit is true of attitudes to the dignity of people of other faiths. This intolerance of religious pluralism cannot be tolerated. A free society does not seek to homogenise belief or conscience but instead affirms a respect for individual freedom—and that means freedom for everybody, not just for the select few or those who seek to advance their own agenda. We should never be afraid to stand up and speak out against these sorts of horrific crimes by extremists; they represent the worst of a mad ideology. It is a reminder of why I am a cultural conservative and not a cultural relativist—because not all cultures are equal. Such value sets have no place in a modern Australia, and we should not tolerate such vile practices or acts by extremists in other parts of the world, because they are inspired by barbarism and advanced by barbarians.
Today we also grieve for the future homebuyers of Australia. The Liberals strongly believe in the importance of homeownership and people having an equal investment in our society and a pathway to achieve that investment. Sir Robert Menzies was one of the great stewards of Australia's emerging middle class throughout the second half of the 20th century and understood, very importantly, how homeownership is central to the dignity and security that Australians enjoy. During his time, homeownership increased from 53 per cent in 1949 to 73 per cent in 1966. Yet, since 2002, we have seen homeownership among 25- to 35-year-olds fall from 39 per cent to 29 per cent. That represents more than 160,000 young people that would otherwise have found keys to their own home. While Australia's high level of social mobility is enviable—and it is—current trends in housing affordability are creating a class divide between homeowners and renters. Younger generations risk being unjustly subdivided based on whether they were able to buy a house and benefit from real estate appreciation much like their parents.

Removing negative gearing might sound like a very attractive solution, but it will actually do very little to impact on house prices in real terms. There is no single driver of increasing housing prices; there are many of them. There are issues of supply. There are issues of regulation, particularly at a state level, where overregulation extends time and cost and makes it more difficult for people to be able to invest and build the housing stock that we need for all stages of life—not just for younger Australians but also for the sort of housing that people need in the latter stages of their life. There are also planning restrictions in regulations and a lack of available financial instruments to enable people, particularly as they are going into the housing market, to secure the advancement they need and finance their future investment in a constructive way. To put it simply: to achieve a two-year decrease in the time an average income earner would need to save to reach a 20 per cent deposit on a median house price in Brisbane, Labor's solution would need to deal a blow of 20 per cent to house prices, which is well above the estimated decrease of 9.5 per cent. That is why we cannot focus just on negative gearing; we have to look at something much more substantial.

Loan repayment difficulty is actually comparable to historical norms. Given the current low cash rate environment, affordability on this measure is actually higher than it was six years ago. Aspirational homebuyers rightly identify the deposit gap as the most decisive barrier to homeownership. Sadly, the gap turns homeownership into a fantasy for many young people, who then spend their savings elsewhere. These aspirational homebuyers could be given access to their superannuation in order to secure a housing loan. Once the deposit gap is bridged, repayments rarely differ significantly from rent for similar dwellings. The Productivity Commission noted in 2015 that the most frequent use of superannuation lump sums was to fund housing, so this hardly undermines the integrity of the system. Ultimately, we need to focus on ways to assist and re-energise young Australians to save for their home and to be investing in the building of Australia's future. Innovation is needed to create pathways, and, fortunately, that is the Liberal way.

**Turnbull Government**

Ms BRODTMANN (Canberra) (18:34): I look forward to talking about the Liberal way and what it means for Canberra. Time and time again, we have seen how the Liberal Party wields power in Canberra. When it is not cutting funding for the national capital, is not just not funding the national capital at all. To the Liberal Party, Canberra is either an ATM or an
afterthought, and I will not stand around and let this Turnbull government treat Canberra with complete and utter disdain—to treat the servants of democracy, the public servants who actually serve this government, with complete and after disdain. After all, this is the city that was built-up by Sir Robert Menzies, and yet the Liberal Party has complete and utter contempt for his vision.

This government's treatment of the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority is a classic example. It is embarrassing to watch the Deputy Prime Minister try to defend this decision to uproot 175 staff from the APVMA. It is embarrassing because nobody can defend it. Nobody has so silver a tongue that they could adequately defend the Deputy Prime Minister's display of unashamed pork-barrelling when he decided 175 Canberra families should be forced to relocate from my electorate into his in New England. We know that the Deputy Prime Minister called for a cost-benefit analysis of this relocation decision. We know the cost-benefit analysis is completed. We know that, in the words of the Deputy Prime Minister himself, if you are basing your decision on the costs and the benefits alone, 'You wouldn't do it.' What we do not know is exactly how damning the case for the relocation actually is. That is because the Deputy Prime Minister has failed to release the cost-benefit analysis and failed to guarantee its release at any point in time—at any point in the future. They are happy to spend taxpayers' money producing a report; they are just not happy for taxpayers to ever see it.

I wrote to the Deputy Prime Minister on 28 June calling for the cost-benefit analysis to be made public, and what happened? I received no response—still no response after all this time. The member for Hunter wrote to the Deputy Prime Minister on 19 August and, like me, he received no response. I hope that the Deputy Prime Minister is better at reading the results of a cost-benefit analysis than he is at reading letters, because on current form, it is pretty ordinary. What is it—the 28th of June? How many months have we had since then? July, August, September, October, November—five months and no response to my letter. And how many months for the member for Hunter, and still no response to his letter? Because if the Deputy Prime Minister is better at reading the results of cost-benefit analysis than he is at reading letters, he will recognise there is nothing to gain from this move—nothing to gain from this relocation. This relocation promises all pain for no gain.

Under questioning in the parliament in October, the Deputy Prime Minister failed to cite a single benefit of the move for Australia's agriculture sector. So when I say there is nothing to gain from this move, it is because that is what the Deputy Prime Minister has said himself. And he would know, as he is the only person who seems to have seen the cost-benefit analysis into the move. There is nothing to gain from this, and Canberra has everything to lose.

Who is surprised, though, on the Liberal government's form with this town; this Liberal government's complete disregard for the welfare of its public servants? Who could be surprised that this government would treat these proud servants of democracy with contempt? We saw it in 1996, when the coalition government got rid of 30,000 public servants right across the country—15,000 across the ACT. Imagine the loss of 15,000 jobs in your electorate. Imagine the loss of 15,000—one, five, zero, zero, zero—public service jobs in the electorate. Take one look at the coalition government's track record and you will see exactly what this government thinks of public servants: when they are not cutting staff, they are cutting pay and conditions. The government has failed to conclude workplace bargaining
across the Australian Public Service, almost three years after the process began. The ‘chaos’—and that is the only word that describes these three years—has affected more than 150,000 people nationally, and 115 agencies in this time. That is 150,000 people across the nation who have not had a pay rise in three years.

This level of incompetence is breathtaking, and has not been seen from a government in 30 years when it comes to public sector bargaining. This government's hostility to workplace pay and conditions has led to an untenable bargaining position, and this government's arrogance has led to this dysfunctional and unworkable stalemate. Labor successfully established the Senate inquiry that will help to shine a light on the concerns that APS employees have, because there are real concerns that deserve to be heard and are worth hearing, even if the Prime Minister thinks otherwise. Just last week we had the Department of Immigration and Border Protection making history by voting down the enterprise agreement for the third time, with a vote of between 81 and 82 per cent over those three votes. This is after three years of these things being negotiated.

I am not surprised that Labor and the coalition would disagree on this issue, in terms of people having a right to be heard and their concerns listened to. Labor does not share the Prime Minister's agenda of cutting jobs and stripping rights. We do not believe that bargaining means bullying. Labor believes in an approach to enterprise bargaining that builds staffing capability and uses fairness as a starting point—and fairness is a novel concept for those opposite. These APS employees are our servants of democracy. These are the people who are serving this government. They are serving you. They deserve fairness in the workplace, fairness when it comes to work-life balance and fairness when ensuring secure, meaningful jobs, and that means fairness when it comes to bargaining so that agencies are not told to strip away rights and conditions. Canberrans are voting down these offers because they are not fair—like, as I said, Immigration and Border Protection have done for the third time, making history. It is as simple as that. They are voting these offers down because they are not fair. Canberra is a city that is dedicated above all else to the fair go. It is a city based on people who come here to serve the nation—to make a difference. These people have altruistic values, and how are they being treated? With complete and utter contempt from this government.

One of the best things about Canberra is how so many of us are here by choice and not birth. Canberra is the sort of place you come to to start a new life. It is what I did, and it is what so many others in Canberra have done. Canberra is not the sort of place that cares about where you went to school. Canberra lets you create yourself. In saying that I am reminded of Tamara Makeev OAM, who was born to a mother and father living in exile in 1923. They were in Poland when the Soviets advanced, deporting every Tsarist loyalist and their children to Siberian concentration camps. Her father was an officer in the Tsar's army and Tamara was put on the last train to Germany. It was there she met Kiril, the man she fell in love with while they were both in a displaced person's camp in Munich. Her wedding dress was hand sewn from an old Russian military parachute. Eventually the United Nations organised for Kiril and Tamara to work on the Snowy Mountains scheme, which they did before moving to our great national capital, Canberra. In Tamara's words, Canberra was where life began. She was actively involved in our community and made a significant contribution, to the point that she received an OAM. Australia owes her a great debt. It is through the efforts of Tamara and
through the efforts of so many others like her who come to Australia in search of a better life that Australia is so deeply enriched.

So when I hear about the Turnbull government's decision to back itself into a review of our hate speech laws, it worries me. It worries me because nobody from the government has ever made clear what they want to be able to say that they are currently not allowed to say. It worries me because watering down legal protections against racist hate speech is not how we prevent racist hate speech. We will not diminish the destructive and divisive effects of racist hate speech by legalising it. We want to control it.

The Prime Minister made a good point three months ago when he called the campaign by his far-Right conservative back to dilute Australia's race hate laws a 'distraction'. He made a strange point on Monday when he said the same campaign suddenly had 'considerable merit'. Nothing has changed—the case for reviewing 18C is just as paltry as ever—so, if it was a distraction in August, why does it now have merit? This Prime Minister has chosen to govern in the interests of a sliver of his party room. He has been successfully distracted into pursuing a bad idea to a very bad outcome.

Let me be clear: we should celebrate our diversity. We do not apologise for it and we do not accommodate those who seek to undermine it. These rights are hard-won, and they should not be easily surrendered. All Australians deserve the right to be free from racial and ethnic vilification. All Australians deserve a government that will protect against dangerous hate speech.

Law Enforcement

Mr WOOD (La Trobe) (18:44): My grievance is the awful crime surge in Victoria, in particular the youth gangs which are, sadly, nearly runny riot. When I say 'running riot', they actually did that during this year's Moomba Festival when we had the Apex gang at will run through the Melbourne CBD causing absolute fear in families who were dining out that night with children. The Apex gang is a gang which formed its name in the suburb of Dandenong in a street called Apex Street. The members are mainly of Sudanese origin and they have caused much concern and fear in Victoria.

One issue which greatly concerns me when dealing with this issue is the lack of police numbers in Victoria. As a former police officer, I know when I used to work at suburban stations such as Boronia, every shift would have a divisional van starting at three o'clock with the couple of cars. Now at stations such as Narre Warren and Pakenham, where there is this amazing growth corridor—in fact Cranbourne North is the fastest growing suburb in the country—there is only one unit on in the afternoon and all it is doing is rushing from job to job. Nearby Endeavour Hills police station is also under resourced. What does that mean? It means that if one unit gets tied up at Pakenham, Endeavour Hills or Narre Warren, the other units need to cover its areas. By the end of the shift, all the resources have been stretched to the limit and all members are basically tied up dealing with crooks or on other jobs.

The offences being committed are mainly modern offences which we have not seen before. You will be amazed to hear that the modus operandi these days for stealing cars, especially so-called luxury cars, is to break into a house and steal the car keys at night regardless of who is in that house. In Beaconsfield, a lady spoke to me whose door was kicked in at three in the morning. The family woke up and the mum and dad, who were upstairs, ran downstairs for
fear of their children and realised the keys had been stolen, not the car. The offenders came back three or four days later. The family were again disturbed and this time, when the mother confronted them, they basically said they would be coming back that night with firearms and shouted out, as they have on numerous occasions, that they were Apex gang members. They also returned again, which is so surprising. Normally with law enforcement, when a person has been detected or there are witnesses, they do not come back. These guys are absolutely brazen and do not care. The Apex gang is hard core. It has from 60 to 140 members law enforcement tell me. Copycats in other gangs now bring it up to 400 members. When it comes to car theft, we have had a number of instances where when people are driving along they get bumped from behind and when they get out of the car they get attacked by these Apex gang members or by other youths. Every week in Victoria now over 400 cars are being stolen.

In Victoria, all crime rates are pretty much going up, especially for aggravated burglaries. Car theft went up by 60 per cent. The figures for New South Wales are going down. Obviously they have a Liberal government up there doing a great job with Premier Mike Baird. In reverse, we have Daniel Andrews and the state Labor government in Victoria—an issue I will speak about later if I get more time.

We need changes to juvenile justice. If a juvenile was on bail for committing a serious crime, in the past if they breached that bail—meaning if they committed further offences—the police would actually charge them for breaching their bail. Premier Daniel Andrews, in his wisdom, thought he would remove that. So what does that mean? It means that if police catch a young person for committing aggravated burglary they then go on bail and they then commit other crimes whilst on bail. They are actually not having the charge of breaching their bail. To me, that needs to change, and change very quickly.

On Monday the front page of the Herald Sun had an article entitled 'Booted' which looked at the deportation of 173 criminals and the crackdown of this type of violence. I have been in communication with the minister for migration, Peter Dutton. And can I say he is doing a fantastic job; he is being very tough. I took these issues to him—the Apex gang. Also, I thank Minister Michael Keenan. We now have the situation where they have been run through the Australian Gangs Intelligence Coordination Centre. So the federal weight is now bearing upon these young criminals who have been involved in these awful crimes.

It is important to remember that the Australian government on behalf of the Australian community has the right to decide who will be accepted for permanent residency in Australia and, in its view, to become an Australian citizen. As the regulations currently state, any serious offence can mean that a non-citizen may be deported—this is when they are on the visas. Examples of serious offence which may render non-Australian citizens liable to deportation include offences when it comes to drug trafficking and other serious offences such as armed robbery, violence against the person, terrorist-related activity, kidnapping, blackmail and extortion. Crimes against children, because of their vulnerability, take a special importance, especially inducement to drugs, sexual assault, violence, kidnapping and crimes taking unfair advantage of children.

It is clear that those participating in the terrible gang activity that gangs like Apex have been committing recently in my electorate and all over Melbourne fits the criteria of violence against the person, armed robbery and, sometimes, organised criminal activity. These
regulations have been enacted primarily in the past, focusing on crimes of a sexual nature and drugs offences.

In 2015-16—and I congratulate Minister Dutton again—the visas of 23 child sex offenders, two convicted murderers and 23 people guilty of drug offences were cancelled, leaving them liable to deportation on completing their terms in jail. This is a good thing. People who commit crimes like these are not abiding by the social contract we all have in Australia.

The issue which was on the front page of the Herald Sun related to a 19-year-old New Zealand citizen—Sudan-born Apex member Isaac Gatkuoth, who was on ice when he pointed a gun at the head of a terrified motorist during a robbery. I am happy to say that Isaac's visa was revoked—and rightly so. He gave up the right to be living in Australia. He was deported to New Zealand in April earlier this year.

The prevalence of these activities has been worsened by the current Victorian state Labor government undoing breaches of bail laws, which I discussed before. I said to Annika Smethurst of the Herald Sun when I raised the issue—and which was quoted in the paper—that these deportations send a crystal clear message that those who do not abide by Australian laws will be booted back to their home country. When you speak to victims who have been absolutely terrorised by what has occurred to them, there is no option but to ensure that these people do not continue to operate freely in Australia. They have been committing hideous offences against good Australian people. They have targeted, for example, international Chinese students at university. Why? Because they are viewed as a soft touch. In my electorate, Indian communities and Sir Lankan communities have been targeted. It just cannot go on. It cannot continue on the path it is going. My great concern is that it is only going to get worse and worse, especially when these young people hit adult jails, where they will be converted to be extremists. I have no doubt that will happen.

Minister Peter Dutton said Australia is a generous nation and we settle a record number of people in our country each year, but we will not hesitate to cancel visas of people who commit crimes against Australians. I totally concur with his comments.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr HOGAN (Page) (18:55): I move:
That the Federation Chamber do now adjourn.
Question agreed to.

Federation Chamber adjourned at 18:55