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**SITTING DAYS—2020**

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FORTY-SIXTH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION—FOURTH PERIOD

Governor-General
His Excellency General the Hon. David John Hurley, AC, DSC, FTSE (Retd)

House of Representatives Office Holders
Speaker—Hon. Anthony David Hawthorn Smith MP
Second Deputy Speaker—Mr Robert George Mitchell MP
Members of the Speaker’s Panel—Hon. Kevin James Andrews MP, Hon. Sharon Leah Bird MP, Ms Sharon Catherine Claydon MP, Mr Jason George Falinski MP, Dr Michael Randolph Freelander MP, Mr Steven Georganas MP, Hon. Dr David Arthur Gillespie MP, Mr Ian Reginald Goodenough MP, Ms Julie Ann Owens MP, Ms Maria Vamvakinou MP, Mr Ross Xavier Vasta MP, Mr Andrew Bruce Wallace MP, Mrs Lucy Elizabeth Wicks MP, Mr Richard James Wilson MP, Mr Trent Moir Zimmerman MP
Leader of the House—Hon. Christian Porter 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 Butler MP

Party Leaders and Whips
Liberal Party of Australia
Leader—Hon. Scott John Morrison MP
Deputy Leader—Hon. Joshua Anthony Frydenberg MP
Chief Government Whip—Mr Albertus Johannes van Manen MP
Government Whips—Mr Rowan Eric Ramsey MP and Ms Nicolle Flint MP

The Nationals
Leader—Hon. Michael Francis McCormack MP
Deputy Leader—Hon. David Littleproud MP
Chief Whip—Hon. Damian Kevin Drum MP
Deputy Whip—Mr Kenneth Desmond O’Dowd MP

Australian Labor Party
Leader—Hon. Anthony Albanese MP
Deputy Leader—Hon. Richard Marles MP
Chief Opposition Whip—Mr Christopher Patrick Hayes MP
Opposition Whips—Ms Joanne Catherine Ryan MP and Ms Anne Maree Stanley MP

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<td>Wilson, Mr Joshua Hamilton</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wilson, Mr Richard James</td>
<td>O'Connor, WA</td>
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<td>Wilson, Mr Timothy Robert</td>
<td>Goldstein, VIC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wood, Mr Jason Peter</td>
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<td>Wyatt, Hon. Kenneth George, AM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Young, Mr Terry James</td>
<td>Longman, QLD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zappia, Mr Antonio</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zimmerman, Mr Trent Moir</td>
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PARTY ABBREVIATIONS
AG—Australian Greens; ALP—Australian Labor Party; CA—Centre Alliance; IND—Independent; KAP—Katter’s Australia Party; LNP—Liberal National Party; LP—Liberal Party of Australia; NATS—The Nationals;

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Clerk of the Senate—R Pye
Clerk of the House of Representatives—C Surtees
Secretary, Department of Parliamentary Services—R Stefanić
Acting Parliamentary Budget Officer—L Ward
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<tr>
<td>Minister for the Public Service</td>
<td>The Hon Scott Morrison MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Women</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Marise Payne</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public</td>
<td>The Hon Greg Hunt MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Indigenous Australians</td>
<td>The Hon Ken Wyatt AM MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister and Cabinet</td>
<td>The Hon Ben Morton MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure,</td>
<td>The Hon Michael McCormack MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transport and Regional Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts</td>
<td>The Hon Paul Fletcher MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Population, Cities and Urban Infrastructure</td>
<td>The Hon Alan Tudge MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Regional Health, Regional Communications</td>
<td>The Hon Mark Coulton MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Decentralisation and Regional Education</td>
<td>The Hon Andrew Gee MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Road Safety and Freight Transport</td>
<td>The Hon Scott Buchholz MP</td>
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<td>The Hon Kevin Hogan MP</td>
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<tr>
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<td>The Hon Nola Marino MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
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<td>The Hon Jane Hume</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Finance</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Vice-President of the Executive Council)</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency</td>
<td>The Hon David Littleproud MP</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for the Environment</td>
<td>The Hon Sussan Ley MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Waste Reduction and Environmental Management</td>
<td>The Hon Trevor Evans MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Forestry and Fisheries</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Senator the Hon Marise Payne</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Attorney-General</td>
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<tr>
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<td>The Hon Christian Porter MP</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Education</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Dan Tehan MP</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Assistant Minister for Northern Australia</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Michelle Landry MP</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Defence</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Assistant Minister for Community Housing, Homelessness and Community Services</strong></td>
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Each box represents a portfolio. **Cabinet Ministers are shown in bold type.** As a general rule, there is one department in each portfolio. However, there can be two departments in one portfolio. The title of a department does not necessarily reflect the title of a Minister in all cases. Ministers are sworn to administer the portfolio in which they are listed under the ‘Minister’ column and may also be sworn to administer other portfolios in which they are not listed. Assistant Ministers in italics are designated as Parliamentary Secretaries under the Ministers of State Act 1952..
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<td>Shadow Cabinet Secretary</td>
<td>Senator Jenny McAllister</td>
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<td><strong>Deputy Leader of the Opposition</strong></td>
<td>The Hon. Richard Marles MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>The Hon. Richard Marles MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Defence Personnel</td>
<td>The Hon. Shayne Neumann MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister Assisting for Defence</td>
<td>Mr Pat Conroy MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Defence Industry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Defence</td>
<td>Ms Meryl Jayne Swanson MP</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Leader of the Opposition in the Senate</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon. Penny Wong</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for International Development and the Pacific</td>
<td>Mr Pat Conroy MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister to the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate</td>
<td>Senator Jenny McAllister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon. Kristina Keneally</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Senator the Hon. Kristina Keneally</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Immigration and Citizenship</td>
<td>Senator the Hon. Kristina Keneally</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Multicultural Affairs</td>
<td>Mr Andrew Giles MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister Assisting for Immigration and Citizenship</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Disaster and Emergency Management</td>
<td>Senator Murray Watt</td>
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<td><strong>Shadow Minister for Industrial Relations</strong></td>
<td>The Hon. Tony Burke MP</td>
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<td>The Hon. Tony Burke MP</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Shadow Attorney-General</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>Shadow Minister for Cyber Security</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>Manager of Opposition Business in the Senate</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Shadow Assistant Minister for Government Accountability</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Deputy Manager of Opposition Business in the Senate</strong></td>
<td>Sensor Kimberley Kitching</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Shadow Minister for Families and Social Services</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Shadow Minister for Indigenous Australians</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Shadow Assistant Minister for Reconciliation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Shadow Minister for Ageing and Seniors</strong></td>
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<td>Shadow Minister for Innovation, Technology and the Future of Work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister Assisting for Small and Family Business</td>
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The SPEAKER (Hon. Tony Smith) took the chair at 10:00, made an acknowledgement of country and read prayers.

COMMITTEES

Petitions Committee

Report

Mr O'DOWD (Flynn—Deputy Nationals Whip) (10:01): I present the 18th report of the Petitions Committee for the 46th Parliament, comprising 53 petitions and four ministerial responses to petitions previously presented.

The House petitioning system has a new record: an e-petition regarding news media, recently closed, that collected the largest amount of signatures on an e-petition since they were introduced at the commencement of the 45th Parliament.

501,876 signatures were collected on this e-petition. This means that over half a million people, on this petition alone, have exercised their rights as citizens and residents of Australia, engaging directly with the parliament—a great result for democracy.

Members may also be interested in some other record-holding petitions. The largest amount of signatures ever recorded on a petition was presented in 2014 with just over 1.2 million, for a petition concerning community pharmacies.

The second-largest petition ever, presented in 2000 and concerning taxation and beer prices, was also on paper and collected over 792,000 signatures.

These figures demonstrate the consistent popularity of petitioning as a way for people to have their say on matters that concern them. As a committee we are pleased to be able to continue facilitating this important right of all Australians.

Thank you, and I look forward to further updating the House on the work of the committee.

PETITIONS

Mr O'DOWD (Flynn—Deputy Nationals Whip) (10:01): I present the following petitions:

Parental Leave

The Paternity Leave policy does not support stay at home dads whose female partners have successful jobs and continue to work. This is because it assesses applications based on the birth mothers income and working history even when she is not the main carer. This means a working female has a capped earning capacity for the father to receive the payment as the main carer but a woman can receive this payment even if her husband earns millions. This is discriminatory to stay at home dads.

We therefore ask the House to change the Parental Leave policy to assess the position of the main carer rather than the birth mother or assess the family all together rather than the birth mother alone to provide a fair and equal assessment process for all Australians.

From 637 citizens (EN1838)

Environment

Graeme Samuel's vision for EPBC Act reform as set out in his Interim Report is the development of enforceable national environmental standards. The idea is that the Commonwealth will set standards for matters of national environmental significance (MNES), such as threatened species, Ramsar wetlands,
migratory species, world and national heritage. As stated in Chapter 1 - National level protection and conservation of the environment and iconic places, "the environment and our iconic places are in decline and under increasing threat. The EPBC Act is ineffective."

We, the people, are greatly concerned at any proposed changes to be made to the EPBC Act without proper consult from citizens as per Graeme Samuel's survey, as well as the proposals within the Interim Report.

The Interim Report proposes that national standards are required to address desirable outcomes.

We, the people, are greatly concerned that the current EPBC Act does not include a power to create as well as enforce national standards, which are critical to ensuring well-planned processes towards any developments and maintenance for our environment.

We therefore ask the House to ensure that the Interim Report is followed and considered as practice, in all Chapter items, and that all parliamentary meetings on the EPBC Act are completely transparent as part of a democratic process.

We ask for full sets of environmental standards and laws created to cover all agenda items in the Interim Report Appendix 1 - Prototype National Environmental Standard for Matters of National Environmental Significance.

From 26 citizens (EN1839)

**COVID-19: Business**

Subsection 9(6) of the Coronavirus Economic Response Package (Payments and Benefits) Rules 2020 provides flexibility for any changes in ownership of a business and movement of employees. It is written to ensure employees are not disadvantaged if these events, which are ordinarily beyond their control, occur.

We believe the intent of the legislation is not to preclude businesses from changing hands during this period and with the majority of small business sales occurring between established entities and newly created ones (later entities), we believe the exclusion of newly created later entities from the JobKeeper Payment scheme based on ABN registrations will prevent many sales from occurring during this period and/or disadvantage all eligible employees in the process.

The ability for businesses to more freely change hands during this period is critical for struggling business owners both from a financial and mental wellbeing perspective.

We therefore ask the House to reconsider and rewrite the legislation around new ABN registrations in situations whereby a change of ownership occurs; this to ensure consistency with subsection 9(6) of the Coronavirus Economic Response Package (Payments and Benefits) Rules 2020.

From 8 citizens (EN1840)

**COVID-19: International Travel**

I was working as a Carer and went into lockdown. At the end of lockdown, I was then forced to extend my placement to enable me to be able to afford to return to Australia and NOW pay for quarantine.

We therefore ask the House to lift the cap for Australian citizens returning to Australia

From 128 citizens (EN1852)

**Australian Republic**

The petition of the citizens of Australia draws to the attention of the House the issue of the continuation of the Australian Federation's status as a dominion of the British Empire, with our head of state being the Queen and our Laws being over ruled by the Governor General, and as such not having the values and interests of the Australian people at it's heart. This status robs the Australian people of
their sovereignty, and it is therefore time for the Australian people to change the constitution and establish a truly sovereign Australian state, The Australian Republic.

We therefore ask the House to issue a citizen initiated national referendum for the establishment of an Australian Republic, based on the model of the Australian Republican Movement. As the enrolled number of voters in Australia at the time of writing this petition is 16,635,280, and under the Citizen Initiated Referendum Bill 2013 (Cth) the requirement for a citizen initiated referendum is the backing by one percent of the enrolled voting body of Australia, this petition will be presented to the house after at least 166,353 signatures have been obtained.

From 29 citizens (EN1853)

Australian Broadcasting Corporation

The Chinese communist regime's violent campaign to eradicate the spiritual practice of Falun Gong (Falun Dafa) has continued for 21 years since July 1999. Millions of innocent people in China have been fired, expelled, jailed, tortured, or killed simply for practising Falun Gong. There have been persistent reports on systematic, state-sanctioned organ harvesting from non-consenting prisoners of conscience in China, primarily from practitioners of Falun Gong;

We are petitioning to express our grave concerns about the ABC documentary on Falun Gong (Background Briefing and Foreign Correspondent). We believe the ABC program severely misrepresents the beliefs and practices of Falun Gong, breaches the ABC’s own Code of Practice and editorial guidelines on hate speech and trauma by inciting undeserved hatred, stigmatisation, and hostility towards members of an already marginalised, vulnerable religious minority. This exacerbates harm and distress to survivors, their friends and families. The report also appears to violate the ABC's own Code of Practice regarding accuracy, balance, impartiality, open-mindedness, the avoidance of misleading information, sensitivity to foreign cultural practices, and harm mitigation. We are further concerned that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is using the ABC content in their ongoing propaganda efforts against Falun Gong and will continue using it, as long as it is available online, to persecute Falun Gong in both China and Australia.

We therefore ask the House to urge ABC management to withdraw these programs that misrepresent Falun Gong and urgently investigate the potential CCP influence on these ABC programs.

From 432 citizens (EN1854)

Tibet

Whereas: In 1949 the PLA invaded Tibet and the Chinese Communist Party assumed control of the country.

Whereas: In 1959 the people of Tibet rose against the Chinese occupation forces but the rebellion was crushed.

Whereas: The Central Tibetan Administration was founded on the 28th of April 1959 in Dharamshala India.

Whereas: The head of state is the 14th Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso.

Whereas: The prime minister of the Central Tibetan Administration is Lobsang Sangay.

Whereas: The Central Tibetan Administration has forty six members with ten members elected from each of the three Tibetan provinces and the remaining representing the four schools of Tibetan Buddhism, the arts, sciences, literature, and community services nominated by the Dalai Lama.

Whereas: The Central Tibetan Administration sitting in Dharamshala has the loyalty of the great majority of Tibetan people.

Whereas: The Tibetan people view China as an hostile occupying power which seeks to destroy the Tibetan religion and culture.
Whereas: The freedom and self determination of the Tibetan people is deserving of the support of all freedom loving nations including Australia.

Whereas: According diplomatic recognition to the Government of Tibet in exile would send a message to the world that Australia values democracy freedom and human rights in all places.

We therefore ask the House to recommend the Australian Government accord recognition to the Central Tibetan Administration as the Government of Tibet.

From 24 citizens (EN1855)

COVID-19: Vaccine

Governments, traditional media and social media are promoting agendas that are not in the interest of Australian citizens and failing to take into account accepted scientific methods in favour of spin and propaganda. Real scientific methods must prevail against poor science propagated by funding by vested interests.

We therefore ask the House to not allow any Covid-19 Vaccine to be approved for use on the public unless it has been tested in a proper trial using accepted scientific method. That being: A double blind trial against a group taking a placebo.

Any Vaccine that has been approved overseas using any other method of testing must undergo independent testing via the Therapeutic Goods Authority and/or The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation using proper scientific method. That being: A double blind trial against a group taking a placebo.

From 23 citizens (EN1859)

Koalas

Australians draw to the attention of the House that the protection for our koalas is not adequate to assure their survival. In the States, it is still legal to bulldoze million of hectares of koala habitat under State legislation. Despite Queensland having introduced stronger laws, there are exemptions that still allow clearing and development without public consultation.

We therefore ask the House to:
- Upgrade the status of the koala to "Critically endangered",
- Strengthen the federal laws to ban clearing of koala habitat,
- Write a new federal Environment Act and National Environment Protection Authority,
- Protect native forests,
- Establish the koala priority habitat as permanent nature reserves,
- Have koala experts and community groups define koala priority habitat to be preserved and koala habitat to be defined, as many areas have been missed in the current koala mapping,
- Establish koala habitat restoration areas that will be rehabilitated,
- Do not allow for koala off-set that is not beneficial for the protection and survival of koalas,
- Make sure new developments leave mature trees standing and that no land for development can be cleared without a single tree standing,
- Make sure nature strips are kept on each development to allow for connectivity of land,
- Establish a koala expert group that develops a koala recovery strategy to save this species from extinction,

From 184 citizens (EN1862)
Veterans

The Australian Veterans' Recognition (Putting Veterans and their Families First) Act 2019 received Royal Assent on 30 October 2019 and commenced on 31 October 2019.

s7(2)(b) states the Commonwealth is committed to decision makers deciding claims "within a time that is proportionate to the complexity of the matter".

Although it is understood Veterans have no rights (whether substantive or procedural), or obligations, that are legally enforceable (s10(1)), the fact remains that disproportionate timeframes are commonplace.

It is well understood that the Department of Veterans Affairs is inadequately resourced to deal with claims that a reasonable person would consider be consistent with s7(2), with many claims for conditions historically taking months now well exceeding this timeframe, and in some instances taking years.

The current timeframes taken to decide claims does not promote public trust and confidence (s7(2)(c)).

We therefore ask the House to initiate processes that provide for adequate resources to be allocated to the Department of Veteran Affairs, in order to enable decisions within a timeframe proportionate to the complexity of the claim, that promotes public trust and confidence, and enables the Commonwealth to meet the moral intent of the Australian Veterans' Recognition (Putting Veterans and their Families First) Act 2019.

From 270 citizens (EN1867)

COVID-19: Real Estate

Requesting to intervene and save many Australians hard earned money 10% deposit towards land purchase being pandemic situation regardless of jurisdiction.

Due to covid-19 global pandemic purchasers are unable to pay contract of sale because of job loss or due to under value in market segment conditions the purchasers are unable to complete the sale contract. The developers are taking advantage and repudiation any request nor willing talk cooperate and unfairly retaining deposit by discharging purchasers.

There are millions of Australian in this situation unable to settle and have no place to go because these developers are acting innocent under shadow of sale contract laws and purchasers are left to mercy of developers no place to go or seek help.

Requesting to protect Australian dream to own home and save fellow citizens from developer's claws. Your help will reduce burden on social housing and mental health of this victims

We therefore ask the House to put an end to this unfair practice and help out buyers to get their hard earned money back in current crisis and pass land development laws to protect purchasers deposit which cannot be retain in any circumstance as land still belong to developers they can resale it again and performance of contract should be always to market value segmentation either council or banks. As a result, stronger protection encouragement for land buyers under Australian Laws weakening safer net of these corporate sales contracts which has already taken many Australians hard ear ne money and made them home less

From 7 citizens (EN1868)

Airport Noise

Airservices Australia's operating plan for Brisbane Airport NPR allows for 12 different take off and landing modes of operation, several of which are highly disruptive to nearby residents, while other modes (modes 1, 4, 9 and 12) are not. These non-disruptive modes are prioritised for night time use. However from 6:00am, they will immediately switch to one of the highly disruptive daytime modes,
even when conditions and traffic levels make night-time modes entirely feasible. Despite other airports setting a safe tailwind takeoff limit of 10-15 knots, Air Services Australia have created an overly conservative tailwind limit of just 5 knots and dry runway into their mode selection framework. Finally, even when Air Service Australia's operating plan finds both traffic AND weather conditions are favourable for non-disruptive operating modes, once the airport is operating in a disruptive mode, it will remain so unless counter conditions arise making it unusable.

We therefore ask the House to have AirServices Australia revise operating procedures with an emphasis on noise abatement. Night Time operating modes should be given priority at all times time where reasonable conditions permit (eg: < 10-15knot tail winds and below peak traffic).

From 4 citizens (EN1869)

COVID-19: Migration

New Zealanders in relationships with Australian citizens should be exempt from the current border restrictions. Prior to COVID-19, New Zealand citizens were not required, and are currently not able, to apply for a partnership related visa and were free to live and work with their partners in Australia. The indefinite nature of the closure to the borders is having a significant impact on couples who are currently split on either side of the Tasman with no means to be reunited.

We therefore ask the House to allow New Zealand citizens an exemption to migrate to Australia where they are able to prove they are in a relationship with an Australian citizen currently living here.

From 3 citizens (EN1870)

COVID-19: Migration

I bring your attention to the temporary residents of Australia who have stayed in Australia during the pandemic. They have continued to earn, spend and pay taxes to boost Australian economy instead of going back to their country of birth. Please note, they have NOT received any financial or medical benefits BUT, they consider Australia their home and so, became one with the society.

Since the pandemic, DIBP has focused on issuing PR to health care professionals (great!) however, other professions have been ignored, therefore creating an imbalance.

This is extremely disappointing as those who have 90+ points have no option but to leave their full time jobs, their home and their life in Australia to return to their country of birth as their postgraduate work permit is to expire.

We therefore ask the House to

1: Ensure that DIBP acts fast on the existing EOIs submitted for subclass 189 for all professions and/or

2: If DIBP is unable to handle the load, they should stop accepting new EOIs and manage their current load and ensure that they action the EOI before it expires (within 2 years).

3: Check which temporary residents continued to stay in Australia to support the economy despite having the option to leave and give them preference to process their EOI as they are onshore.

4: Consider giving PR via naturalisation process to those who have stayed in Australia for 5 years or more, have paid their taxes, are not in debt and have Police clearance.

From 3 citizens (EN1874)

COVID-19: Migration

Australian biometric centres in Europe are currently closed since the Covid-19 pandemic commenced, rendering applications to remain incomplete.
There is a partner visa application 309 backlog of over 90,000. That means 90,000 Australian citizens and their partners are left waiting needlessly. Applicants have paid $7800 but are waiting for their applications to be processed. Some couples and families are being physically separated for months due to this.

We therefore ask the House to please recommence processing partner visa applications 309 both onshore and particularly offshore.

Please reopen the Australian biometrics collections offices in Europe And elsewhere so applicants can finalise their applications which have been paid for.

Allow couples to be together in Australia.

From 73 citizens (EN1875)

COVID-19: State and Territory Border Closures

We request that the House requests the High Court to immediately order the opening of State Borders to permit freedom of movement and commerce as permitted by Section 92 of The Constitution.

We therefore ask the House to urgently the High Court to make an order requiring all States to immediately open their borders and cease restricting freedom of movement and commerce.

From 189 citizens (EN1879)

Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme

Home affairs has been rejected SC 187 Regional skilled migration scheme in Dec 2017 march2018 more than 25000 applications and Nomination without asking further information or documentation and most of the applicant received similar template which hasn't got clearly mentioned or genuine reasons of rejection its sounds like pre-planned mass rejected before home affairs abolished SC457 & SC187 changes implemented, after this messed up now thousands of business went liquidation and non resident families lost theirs employments and numbers increased on bridging visa holders struggling along with families to prove their nomination and visa applications in tribunal and federal, moreover this covid19 crisis played worst ever role for temporary visa holders(under review applicants on bridging visa holders)

Currently those who got rejection (unjustified applicants) in the mentioned time frame 2017/2018

Are struggling for food, rent, visa status, high lawyers fees, unemployment, no welfare support,

After numbers years and thousands of Dollars invested in Australia total injustice by Australian Home affairs and Australia Govt policies. Towards migrants

We therefore ask the House to reinvestigation of Dec 2017 to March 2018 mass rejected SC187 NOMINATION AND VISA APPLICATIONS

need official reason of Nomination rejection as **(mostly received printed similar template but dint mentioned genuine reasons for nominations refusal)

From 2 citizens (EN1880)

COVID-19: Temporary Graduate Visas

Please consider those students who stuck overseas. I am stuck in Canada not even into my home country India and it's becoming difficult for me to stay here. I am on 485 visa(graduation visa) , which is non-extendable and I have ongoing study (professional year by ACS ), which has to be completed within current visa status.

We therefore ask the House to extend graduation visa ( 485 subclass). Or give permission to continue remaining study from overseas.

From 3 citizens (EN1881)
Health Care

Australia leads the way in the fight against COVID-19, restricting our freedoms more than ever before for the sake of public health.

As of the 3rd of September, 2020, Australia has had 663 deaths as a result of COVID-19. For comparison, "There were 974 deaths due to influenza and pneumonia recorded from 1 January to 26 May 2020" - Australian Bureau of Statistics. In 2017, there were 4,269 deaths from Influenza and Pneumonia in Australia (ABS).

Considering our government's desire to protect lives at all costs (destroying economy/liberties/lives), we propose the following restrictions/bans:

We therefore ask the House to:

1. Ban the consumption and sale of cigarettes nationwide. Smoking results in 19,000 Australian deaths each year (ABS). Scientists also believe it increases ACE2, the entry for COVID19 (increases COVID19 risk). Make smoking a criminal offense.

2. Ban food/beverages which contain extreme amounts of sugar. "1,856 deaths from diabetes occurred between 1 January to 26 May 2020." (ABS).

3. As the PM desires mandatory vaccinations, we demand mandatory injections for mental health. In 2018 there were 3,046 deaths due to suicide. Poor mental health also contributes to domestic violence which many state is at epidemic proportions.

4. A ban on alcohol.

5. Two thirds (67%) of adults in Australia in 2017-18 were overweight or obese (ABS). We demand people be fined for being over a certain BMI, as such contributes to COVID19 risk and an overwhelmed health system. This would encourage better health outcomes for all.

From 4 citizens (EN1882)

COVID-19: International Travel

There is a very low rate of exemption approval with the current travel ban, and an unfair situation as an unprecedented number of migrants are suffering without the prospect of reaching their families.

We therefore ask the House to reconsider allowing departures in order for people with dual citizenship / foreign citizenship to see their families / relatives / partners / children overseas. Travel is not necessarily done for pleasure or holiday.

Please allow departures, as return measures are already ensuring safety and people going overseas will do so knowing they will stay in quarantine and pay for it upon return. New Zealand is allowing people to depart and their COVID-19 success is proven, no other democratic country has taken such a measure.

From 5 citizens (EN1883)

COVID-19

1. Policy re covid19 has been based on misrepresented statistical data showing the virus to be broadly far deadlier than it actually is. Specifically protecting and quarantining the at risk population ONLY is far more sensible.

2. The government appears reliant on misleading direction from the WHO and the TGA who persist in demonising effective treatments that with overwhelming experiential evidence now ought rather be embraced.

3. By utilising the treatment options that ought to be available and promoted, the virus poses even less of a real threat.
A combination of the above three points logically leads the argument towards a better public health policy approach going forward.

The consequences of continuing in the current vein is with massive personal, health and macroeconomic cost far exceeding that justified to successfully deal with this relative health threat.

We therefore ask the House to
1) Disband the objective at aiming for zero cases and preserving or creating "the bubble".
2) Set a new objective of developing herd immunity with safeguards for the elderly and at risk.
3) Act to immediately remove all impediments to the prescription and use of hydroxychloroquine.
4) Proactively implement effective treatment protocols for prevention and early treatment utilising zinc, vit c, hydroxychloroquine, ivermectin, doxycycline, azithromycin and others as evidenced.
5) Therefore with optimism and confidence, incrementally relax distancing restrictions and open up our lives and the economy.

From 214 citizens (EN1884)

COVID-19: Migration

During this uncertain time, thousands of Australians are separated from their loved ones as a result of the suspension of processing prospective marriage visa and other offshore partner visas. We are currently suffering mentally, financially and psychologically from the long separation with continuous delay in processing. Although the nature of this visa is in the partner visa category with applicants intending to marry their life partners in a genuine and lifelong relationship, they are not allowed to enter Australia because they are not legally considered as "immediate family member". Since the approval of prospective marriage visas is based on evidence of genuine relationship and mutual commitment, it sufficiently justifies the criteria of intending to become an "immediate family member". We understand and will comply with relevant quarantine processes upon entry to ensure the safety of all Australians but believe that the current processing and entry policy is unfair and discriminating against applicants lodging partner visas offshore. Prospective marriage and offshore partner visa holders should be treated equally and allowed entry to Australia.

We therefore ask the House to: 1. Immediately resume the processing of prospective marriage visa and other offshore partner visas; 2. Review the definition of "immediate family member" and accept the entry of qualified prospective marriage visa holders; 3. Make transparent an applicant's position in the "queue" and approximate waiting time; 4. Remove partner visa caps and urgently process the partner visa backlog exceeding 90,000 applications to help Australians reunite with their loved ones as soon as possible.

From 18 citizens (EN1885)

Australian Constitution

With COVID 19 and border restrictions being unrealistic put in place by State Governments, the time is right to look at the removal of State Governments

We therefore ask the House to Recommend a referendum for the removal of state governments

From 15 citizens (EN1890)

COVID-19: International Travel

I have a fiancée in South Africa. We haven't been able to see each other for eight months now (we had several visits planned and he hopes to move here), and it's so difficult not knowing when we'll be able to see each other again and get married and apply for a visa for him to live here. He has applied for a compassionate exemption but he was denied several times. He is willing to pay for quarantine, and
follow all COVID guidelines. He is not the only one in this situation, and there are no other alternative options for those of us in this situation.

We therefore ask the House to revise the criteria for granting a travel exemption to include those who fall outside of direct family relationships, but are intimately and personally related to a citizen of Australia, and can provide evidence of this relationship.

From 256 citizens (EN1892)

**COVID-19: International Travel**

After the sudden decision of the travel ban on 20th March by the Australian government, thousands of temporary visa holders including international students have been stranded overseas. The Federal Government has done little to let us come back to our families, friends, jobs, homes, and all valuable and irreplaceable belongings in Australia. Moreover, most of us are still paying rents and bills in Australia hoping the border to open soon. In addition, there is a risk of expiration of our lease contract even before we can get back and the long absence from the property may result in burglary or damage of our belongings. Even after being stranded for almost 6 months, our lives are full of uncertainty as the government has failed to publish a time-frame to start bringing us back and address our issues.

Uncertainty of getting back before the expiration of our visa and fear of losing all our accomplishments has resulted in mental anxiety and frustration among us. Therefore, we, all stranded temporary visa holders and international students are seeking a safe pathway to get back to Australia as soon as possible.

We therefore ask the House to appeal Federal Government to grant exemptions to all the Australian temporary visa holders stranded overseas mandating quarantine and test before boarding the flight as well as after arrival on returnees' expense OR find any possible pathway to do so as soon as possible.

From 949 citizens (EN1893)

**COVID-19: Vaccine**

It is unethical for me to accept and use a covid 19 vaccine produced using foetal cell lines

We therefore ask the House to make available to the Australian public a covid19 vaccine that all Australians can utilise. Covid 19 vaccines produced using foetal cell lines are unethical and cannot be accepted by all Australians. Vaccines produced using the HEK 293 or the PerC6 cell lines are examples of unethically produced vaccines and cannot be accepted.

From 14 citizens (EN1895)

**COVID-19: International Travel**

There are many people around the world that want to be able to see their partners in Australia. It is incredibly hard being apart for such a long period of time; especially for those who are in a relationship with someone so far away with no hope of seeing them again for the rest of the year. Partners do not fall under any of the categories listed for allowing a visit. I’d like to suggest that all partners wishing to enter Australia would like to take a Covid test and quarantine because they still realise that it's so important to keep everyone safe & they would do anything to see their loved ones.

We therefore ask the House to reduce travel restrictions and allow overseas partners to visit Australia

From 25 citizens (EN1896)

**Privacy Law**

Domestic and family violence is ripe in Australia. The legal system continuously fails victims, and this often means that victims need to go into hiding. However, as I learnt today, the Privacy laws in place give perpetrators the opportunity to find their victims by using a photo taken publicly without consent.
As Australians, we cannot ask someone to remove a photo of us if they have taken it without permission, unless it is on our own property. The person taking the photo can use that photo as they see fit. They can place it onto social media and websites without consequence. They have the right to take a person's photo, yet, we have no right to stop them. This needs to change.

Currently there are only three instances where it is illegal to take a person's photo:
1) When they are naked or semi-naked in a public setting (e.g. beach)
2) In the act of sexual interaction
3) Outside an Abortion Clinic

We deserve to have the right to say "No!" No, I do not give you permission to take my photo or my child's photo. I do not give you permission to use it however you please. In a time where we have so many cases of domestic violence and pedophilia, why do we not have the right to say no?

We therefore ask the House to update the laws around public photography and give people the right to not have their photo taken without consent in all settings.

From 10 citizens (EN1897)

Gulf Livestock 1

Requesting the Department of Foreign Affairs do more to aid in the search for the remaining survivors of the Gulf Livestock 1

We therefore ask the House to put forward options of how Australia can help with the now suspended search by the Japanese Coast Guard and act on them now. #bringthemhome

From 3 citizens (EN1898)

Gulf Livestock 1

The Gulf livestock 1 sank on Wednesday, 2/09/2020 00145 JST, with 43 crew on board. Since then 3 crew have been found, 2 alive and 1 deceased. The ship carried 2 x fully enclosed lifeboats (Jiangyin_Neptune_Marine_NPT58F (capacity: 45P)), of which 1 has been found, and diverse Viking life crafts. According to the 2nd survivor the missing crew was located on the bridge wearing life jackets and getting ready to board a lifeboat. The missing lifeboat combined with the missing crews' intention is solid ground to believe survivors can still be found. Likely survive-ability in a lifeboat as described well passes 4 weeks. Typhoon Haishen has likely broadened the search area.

We therefore ask the House to intensify the search and rescue mission.

This includes, but is not limited:
1. Broaden search area (including the open East China Sea).
2. Full search of uninhabited islands.
3. Ask for support from the South Korean, USA, Taiwanese and Chinese governments.
4. Locate and inspect ship wreckage, confirm the launch of 2 lifeboats.

From 5 citizens (EN1900)

Environment

Section 487 of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, specifically empowers green groups to challenge projects that have been approved by the federal environment minister.

Accordingly, the constant stream of court challenges by Green charitable groups in order to bring about the cessation of proposed mining operations by ADANI, which will benefit Australia as a whole, are affecting the viability of the operation. Increasing the costs of same, and as a consequence, affecting the livelihood of Australians and the Australian economy as a whole.
We therefore ask the House to repeal Section 487 of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, which will in turn eliminate Green charitable groups ability to mount constant costly challenges to Adanis operation.

From 5 citizens (EN1902)

COVID-19: International Travel

I request to the House of to help international students stranded overseas All are paying fee, bills, rego, rent and phone plans from last 6 months, even there is no income we can't pay more because we are done with are savings. Please figure out something we paid a lot for our studies and dreams but now every hope is falling down if we will not back soon this will impact our future or studies and leads to wastage of our parents money which we were from last 2 or 3 years to get bachelor

On another hand Canada is still inviting students who was approved for a study permit on or before March 18, 2020 but Australia is doing nothing for international students.

I think Australia should allow at least their existing students as Canada so that they can complete their studies for which they have paid a lot and paying as well

We therefore ask the House to please the federal government or acting ministers of immigration to reconsider the travel restrictions for latest existing students please put in exempt category so that we can return as soon as possible to Australia and can continue our studies.

I know this is tough time for government but we are with the authorities and will cooperate with the formalities as citizens are doing now like we are ready to pay for quarantine and we can also happy to provide negative covid report before boarding the plane but please do something for us.

From 177 citizens (EN1903)

COVID-19: Migration

On the behalf of Australian Citizens and Permanent residents who has Sponsored de facto partner's to get married in Australia, To the respective Department of Home Affairs, I am writing this to convey the situation of people who has been granted subclass 300 (Prospective Marriage Visa) just before the unforeseen Pandemic due to COVID 19, As the Visa is only valid for 9 months from the date of grant, as per the conditions stated on the visa, applicant has to enter and get married to Sponsor within the Visa valid period and apply for Permanent visa (Subclass 820,801). Due to current closure of Australian boarders to all the Non-citizens and Non permanent residents, subclass 300 Visa holders cannot enter into Australia. This is beyond the Visa Holders and also Sponsors.

Immigration Department has charged $7,715 as part of Application fees and long waiting time of around 18 months to get the Visa grant's, We all have left with no other options. There is no communication from Immigration so far on how they are going to address these Visa issues, as we are going through emotional breakdown that we cannot share our life's with our loved one's.

We therefore ask the House to consider our concern's and waive the ban for the first entry, if it is not possible then allow us to reapply for Subclass 300 at a free of cost on a fast track program. I request the Department of Home Affairs to consider our . Thank you

From 28 citizens (EN1904)

Queensland: Road Infrastructure

• A plan to construct a two-lane Tiaro bypass will put road users in danger and lacks vision for a growing Maryborough and Fraser Coast.

• Major new construction along the National Highway should always be built to the safest possible standard, and the Tiaro bypass should be no exception.
• To reduce the risk of fatalities and serious injury, the Tiaro bypass must have four lanes with a concrete barrier in between the north and south bound lanes.
  • If Maryborough's industry, manufacturing, jobs and the economy are to grow, the highway must be constructed to a four-lane standard to achieve that growth.
  • A four-lane divided highway will safely accommodate motor vehicles, B-doubles, caravans and wide loads into the future, so all road users and their families will be secure in the knowledge that the journey will be as safe as possible.
  • The two-lane proposal is an unsafe two-lane highway of yesterday, not a safe four-lane highway for tomorrow.
  • A two-lane design will be obsolete before it is finished and will end up costing more to duplicate.
  • The job must be done right the first time with four lanes.

We therefore ask the House to fund the construction of a 4-lane highway as part of the Tiaro Flood Immunity Upgrade (Tiaro bypass) project for the Bruce Highway at Tiaro.

From 34 citizens (EN1910)

Internet Content

Requesting that the House bans social media such as Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, TikTok etc is for all Australian users under the age of 18.

The increasing stats of depression, suicide, anxiety, body image struggles, eating disorders and bullying since social media has started is terrifying. Social media's algorithms are now working in a way that is more detrimental than beneficial for young Australians, we need to put a stop to this.

Recently there was a video that went viral on TikTok of a young man committing suicide that the tech giants could not stop. This got into the hands of many young Australians and not only has effected them mentally, but has also encouraged the behaviour.

Apps such as Instagram have increased the amount of body image issues and eating disorders. As I work within this field, I am seeing an alarming increase of these issues effecting Australians as young as 8 years old. Young females at school are scared to eat lunch in front of their peers because of the pressures social media places on them to look and be a certain way. This is a serious issue that is getting worse and the core problem of this is social media use.

Young Australians should be living care free and loving life. It's our job to keep them safe.

We therefore ask the House to ban social media such as Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, TikTok etc is for all Australian users under the age of 18.

From 170 citizens (EN1913)

China: Human Rights

Right now, more than 3 MILLION Uyghur Muslims are put in concentration camps in Xinjiang, China. The government has been targeting Muslims through a campaign of torture, surveillance, no rights to practice their religion and brainwashing these Muslims to disown their religion to become "normal citizens", they are being robbed of their basic human rights. A genocide happening right now!

We therefore ask the House to shed light on the inhumane acts and ongoing torture that is going on as we speak. We ask of you to speak up for those who cannot, Muslims are being oppressed by the government and detained in concentration camps simply for being a part of a religion. How can we stay silent and watch these innocent people having to go through this and cover our ears and eyes from their cries, where is our humanity? I am a Muslim myself and i refuse to sit back and watch people be punished for something they believe in. I have faith in the Australian government, I have faith that we will rise above, we will answer their cries and we will provide help. This is the least we can do. Some
ways we can help is to give more media coverage on this issue and spread awareness, we can also help financially for those who have escaped or for those who are trying to. With enough collective action and global pressure we can persuade the Chinese government to account for those targeted.

From 102 citizens (EN1914)

**Law Enforcement**

The House has the power to act on Commonwealth Legislation and for that reason, we petition the house to consider a further amendment to the Sexual Crimes Against Children and Community Protection Measures Bill 2019.

Australians hard earned tax is being used to house and feed criminals who sexually abuse children at an approximate rate of $302 a day (according to CEDA 2019). Whilst the maximum penalty for offenders has been increased, this is not considered justice for Australians who will now be asked to pay further costs for the care and rehabilitation of persons who have been proved beyond reasonable doubt to have raped a child (being less than 16 years old).

We therefore ask the House to amend the Sexual Crimes Against Children and Community Protection Measures Bill 2019 legislation to include:

1. Mandatory Capital Punishment for repeat offenders of sexual crimes against children,
2. The option for sentencing of Capital Punishment for serious cases of sexual crimes against children.
3. That no cognitive impairment or mental disability be allowed to excuse repeat offenders from punishment of their crimes.

From 73 citizens (EN1915)

**Australian Government**

State of disaster/emergency laws give state governments authoritarian power over a state. The last 6 months of these laws have led to states conducting themselves unconstitutionally and causing more harm than good. As all citizens of this country are Australian first and state members second, these laws should be decided on a federal level first and then put to a majority consent vote of all Australians before being enacted.

International treaties such as the UN Lima Declaration (1975) have had disastrous effects on the wealth of this country. These foreign entities should have no voice in our parliament. The federal government should not have the power to enter these treaties without the majority consent of the people.

We therefore ask the House to enact laws to ensure that State of Disaster/Emergency laws cannot be entered into, or extended without federal government approval and the majority consent of all citizens.

We also ask the House to enact laws to ban federal government from entering any international treaty without a majority consent of the citizens, and that all existing treaties be made available for a majority consent of the citizens.

From 117 citizens (EN1916)

**Australian Currency**

I refer to the coat of arms bearing the Dutch East India Company logo that will be printed on Australian gold coins under the Currency (Australian Coins) Amendment (2020 Royal Australian Mint No. 2) Determination 2020. The Dutch East India Company was established in the 1600s as a multinational seafaring trading company with public investors who could freely purchase and sell its bonds and shares. This publicly listed company quickly devolved however in to an organisation permitted to wage war, and to torture and execute prisoners. It also began importing slaves from West Africa to meet its labour needs from the mid-1650s onwards. In 2002, a monument (the
Slavernijmonument) was unveiled in Oosterpark in Amsterdam to acknowledge Dutch involvement in the Atlantic slave trade, as well as acknowledge Dutch Caribbean slavery. Dutch historians have detailed Dutch East India Company slavery in books such as "Kleurrijke tragie: de geschiedenis van slavernij in Azie onder de VOC" and "Daar werd wat gruwelijks verricht: Slavernij in Nederlands-Indie". Given Australia's firm rejection of slavery since Federation, the Dutch East India Company logo is therefore unsuitable to be associated with Australian currency in any way, shape or form today. We must therefore exclude the coat of arms bearing the Dutch East India Company logo from any Australian coins to reinforce our firm rejection of slavery.

We therefore ask the House to exclude the coat of arms bearing the Dutch East India Company logo from any Australian coins to reinforce our firm rejection of slavery.

From 26 citizens (EN1918)

Donations to Political Parties

The petitioners draw to the attention of the House:

1. Although climate change does not kill directly, it can worsen natural disasters which destroy life and livelihood.

2. In the December 20, 1989 issue of the New York Times, an article titled "Greenhouse Effect: Shell Anticipates a Sea Change" reported how Norske Shell was deliberating about how tall their new oil platform in the North Sea would need to be to withstand future rising seas. Since 1989, the link between climate change and fossil fuels has only become stronger.

3. Operation Spicer (NSW ICAC 2016) revealed that political donations can introduce corruption into politics. Yet the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 (Cwlth) remains deficient concerning this.

4. The Australian Institute report "Tip of the Iceberg" (2017) describes how the mining and fossil fuel industries have spent millions on political donations, exploiting vulnerabilities in the abovementioned Act. When issues important to these industries have been under Commonwealth Government consideration, donations have increased.

5. Donations from the fossil fuel industry to political parties are inappropriate considering the ongoing, worldwide adverse impacts of climate change. This situation calls for objective politicians despite the efforts of the fossil fuel industry to substitute the public interest with their own.

We therefore ask the House to:

Introduce legislation which prohibits donations to Australian Politician Parties from entities or associates or agents of such entities engaged in any Fossil Fuel Industry and that such legislation be introduced so that it is in effect before the next Federal election.

From 1444 citizens (EN1919)

Parliament

It has become clear now that many ministers are not working for the people or are qualified enough in their portfolios to be accountable for the people of Australia all they think about is their re election not what they can do for the people in their term of office.

IF PROMISES ARE MADE THEY HAVE TO BE HONOURED AS LOANS FROM LENDERS!

WE WANT PEOPLE WHO ARE ACCOUNTABLE & QUALIFIED AS OTHER WORKING PEOPLE IN AUSTRALIA.

We therefore ask the House to LIMIT THE YEARS MINISTERS ARE IN PARLIMENT.

2/3 TERMS SHOULD BE MAXIMUM.

FUTURE MINSTER HAVE TO HAVE QUALIFICATIONS IN THEIR PORTFOLIOS

From 13 citizens (EN1922)
Parliamentarians' Entitlements

It is time the so called Independent Ministers/Public Services Wage Tribunial is removed & be as any other workers be treated in Australia under the Australian Law.

It is obvious the many of the so called Independent Tribunial Members are not independent at all but are previous Minister or Privious Public Servants.

These Members do not apply the same rules as the private sector of the Wage Tribunial or Productivity

We therefore ask the House to remove the Tribunial & be under the same laws as other workers in Australia.

Ministers/Public Service to have KPIs/Productivity linked to any wage rises or other other perks alloed in their wages.

Why the different rules?

From 4 citizens (EN1923)

Parliamentarians' Superannuation

Why should politicians or any public servant get more the 9.5% as any Australian workers?

We therefore ask the House to remove the extra super payments to all politicians/public servants over 9.5%

From 21 citizens (EN1925)

Health Care

Why has the Gov now made working Australians with chronic pain on PBS have to yearly see another doctor & only be allowed a months prescription repeats?

While refugees & many who never ever contributed to the Australian Health System get everything for free?

I paid my tax so stop removing the benefits, removal is from the wrong people.

We therefore ask the House to bring back the original prescription requirements from GP/Dotors of chronic pain sufferers.

Why punish Australian Tax payers punish those that have not paid a cent into the health system

From 7 citizens (EN1926)

COVID-19: International Travel

Australia's Biosecurity Act, basis for the current outbound travel ban, allows for travel restrictions to prevent a listed human disease from spreading to another country. COVID has sadly spread across the world, and the very low number of infections in Australia compared globally cannot be seen as a risk of further spreading COVID outside of Australia.

An exemption is currently required to leave, but it has not been made clear on what basis any request for exemption would be assessed. Furthermore, as per the Attorney-Generals' guidance, the freedom to leave cannot be made dependent on establishing a purpose or reason for leaving.
Based on the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, everyone shall be free to leave any country, including his own. This can be restricted to protect public health, but, as per the Attorney-General's guidance, has to be proportionate, the least intrusive and the most suitable option to achieve a desired result. Leaving Australia is not posing any direct risk to public health in Australia.

Most countries revoked their initial outbound travel ban and implemented alternative measures. Australia appears to be the only country which is maintaining its strict stance - for 6 months already without any defined end-date.

We believe that maintaining the outbound travel ban violates human rights, causes an unnecessary anxiety in the community, impacts our economic recovery, and is no longer justified.

We therefore ask the House to immediately remove the ban on outbound travel, and ensure effective, proportionate, and least intrusive alternative measures.

From 240 citizens (EN1932)

**COVID-19: International Travel**

To bring jobs back
To lower unemployment levels
To provide sustainability to businesses
To allow people their rights to travel without exemptions to see family and friends and to obtain jobs overseas

We therefore ask the House to present to parliament a bill that allows Australian citizens to travel overseas without limitations and to save our travel industry and jobs

From 83 citizens (EN1934)

**COVID-19: Vaccine**

In 1986, as vaccine injuries began rising in the United States, vaccine manufacturers sought and were granted immunity from legal prosecution by the US Congress.

This decision made vaccine manufacturers the only product manufacturers in the US and possibly the world to receive legal immunity for their products.

Today, it appears vaccine manufacturers are seeking the same legal protection from governments, worldwide.

It is unclear whether the Australian government will or has already granted vaccine manufacturers with legal immunity or whether it is planning to do so.

In any event, it is well understood that the government in such instances is providing a Corporation/s with immunity from legal prosecution for a product that is meant to provide immunity to its Citizens. It is therefore fair and reasonable to expect that the government also provide the same or greater protection and safeguards for all its Citizens.

This petition seeks to obtain such protection and safeguards.

History tells us that injury from vaccines ought to be expected by the government and as such, the government ought to prepare for such events by providing all Australians with an unconditional offer of compensation, through appropriate legislation.

We deeply and sincerely thank the House for its time and consideration.

We therefore ask the House to expeditiously prepare and introduce legislation to unconditionally indemnify all Australians against all out of pocket expenses upon receiving notice of a vaccine injury claim and commensurably compensate Australians in the case of a successful vaccine injury claim.

From 255 citizens (EN1939)
Energy

WE ARE THE MOST EXPENSIVE ENERGY IN THE WORLD & GOING ON A CARBON REDUCTION IS FALSE & WILL DO NOTHING TO LOWER THE TEMPERATURE OF THE WORLD UNLESS THE BIGGEST POLLUTER CHINE, INDIA & OTHERS DO ALL THE SAME AS WE ARE. SHUTTING DOWN ALL POWER STATIONS.

IF AUSTRALIANS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO USE OUR OWN COAL THEN NO MORE SALE TO OVERSEAS USERS EITHER

We therefore ask the House to REMOVE ALL SUBSIDIATION OF SOLAR & WIND & BUILD NEW COAL POWER STATIONS IN ALL STATES OF AUSTRALIA.

THE CHIEF AUSTRALIAN SCIENTIST SAID NO MATTER WHAT AUSTRALIA DOES IT WILL NOT BRING DOWN THE TEMPERATURE OF THE WORLD SO WHY ARE WE THE ONLY IDIOTS DETEOYING AUSTRALIANS LIFESTYLE & WEALTH & CHAP ENERGY?

From 20 citizens (EN1940)

Energy

Gas is a major polluting fossil fuel and a key contributor to climate change thus it would cause a significant impact on our environment. Human-induced climate change is already occurring, the increases in coral bleaching in the Great Barrier Reef is just one example of this. We must listen to the science and acknowledge that gas will only worsen human induced global warming leading to worse impacts than the summer Australian bushfires placing our country in a much worse state. Not acting on climate change is a failure of the house to uphold the principle of representative government, a poll commissioned by Greenpeace highlighted that more than 70% of Australian want ambitious renewable energy targets.

We therefore ask the House to not utilise a gas-led economic recovery but rather look at other options such as renewable energy in the best interest of the future generation.

From 2898 citizens (EN1942)

Internet Content

Omegle is an online chat site which allows random users across the world to socialize 1 on 1 - without signing up, providing any personal information or informing their identity.

Essentially, there is a text-text chat section and also a moderated video to video chat section. Hundreds of thousands of users frequent this site globally. There is also an unmoderated video to video chat section which is used largely for adult & consenting cyber mutual masturbation.

However, when using this site (moderated & unmoderated video-video) twice I've seen illicit acts of blatant child sexual abuse & pedophilia. It makes me believe firmly there is no need for a site like this at all. There are other ways to socialize, without the dreadful implications of predators willfully showing off their sick, illicit & abusive activity against minors.

It's a shame & a disappointment that our government bans movie/TV streaming ISPs quickly & at a much higher frequency than banning an ISP like omegle dot com which allows the undisguised portrayal of sickening & malicious content.

I assume cracking down on the forced distribution of child sexual abuse video is more important than being steadfast in preventing some random, law abiding working class person from watching the avengers for free. I guess money changes our priorities.

We therefore ask the House to ban the ISP - omegle.com - permanently.

From 66 citizens (EN1943)
COVID-19: International Travel

This petition asks that allowances be made by the Federal Government to allow tourists from overseas countries to visit Australia on a Tourist Visa, providing that those tourists self-fund their stay in hotel quarantine to prevent the spread of Covid-19. This motion would allow for relatives and significant others who do not already have an existing Visa to visit their loved ones currently living in Australia.

We therefore ask the House to consider making provisions for foreign nationals who are willing to self-fund their required time in hotel quarantine to be able to enter Australia based on these terms.

From 96 citizens (EN1944)

Veterans’ Review Board

When the Veterans' Entitlements Act was enacted in 1986, the role of the Veterans Review Board (Board) was simple, so much so that legislation was constructed in such a way that parties to a the review are prohibited from legal representation, further there is no legislative requirement for any Board members, including the Principal Member to have any legal credentials.

Since 1986 there have been a number of significant changes that effect the VRB, among them the introduction of MRCA, outreach and ADR functions, and most importantly the very legal and technical Statement of Principles, all of which have added layers of administrative and legal complexity.

The Minister DVA has recognised that recent Federal Court Judgment from Justice Logan had provided clarity, in relation to a matter that the VRB had decided was, "effectively illegal". What is most disturbing is the fact this relates to an initiative of the Principal Member VRB, and arguably question her knowledge, understanding and the importance of administrative law.

The passage of time, and changes that affect the way the Board conducts itself warrant review, as it would be difficult to imagine procedural failing of this nature would have occurred if someone with a skillset equal to that of Justice Logan were Principal Member of the Board.

We therefore ask the House to initiate processes that cause such changes to the VEA, so that it be a requirement that the position of Principal Member of the Veterans Review Board be a retired Federal Court Judge.

From 43 citizens (EN1946)

Domestic and Family Violence

Coercive control is at the core of domestic violence yet Governments across Australia have consistently failed to address this major issue despite the overwhelming evidence that it is a precursor to physical violence and often murder.

Criminalising coercive control is essential if we want to reduce violence against women and prevent domestic homicide.

The time is now for the Commonwealth Government and all other Australian Government's to recognise that coercive control is the first step on the path towards domestic homicide and to do something about it.

We therefore ask the House to, through the Commonwealth Government's next National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children, make strong recommendations to the States and Territories that a new, nationally consistent, offense of Coercive Control, similar to laws in the United Kingdom, be incorporated into State and Territory criminal Codes.

We also ask the House, through COAG Women's Safety Council, to promote a new nationally consistent State and Territory based Coercive Control laws.

From 501 citizens (EN1948)
Petitions received.

PETITIONS
Responses

Mr O'DOWD (Flynn—Deputy Nationals Whip) (10:03): I present the following ministerial responses to petitions previously presented:

Minister for Indigenous Australians

Dear Mr O'Dowd

Thank you for your letter dated 9 April 2020 to the Prime Minister, the Hon Scott Morrison MP, regarding the petition number EN1297. I note the petition requests for the House of Representatives to call for the resignation of the Minister for Indigenous Australians, the Hon Ken Wyatt AM MP. The Prime Minister has asked me to respond on his behalf. I sincerely apologise for the delay in responding to you.

There are no grounds to call for the resignation of the Minister for Indigenous Australians under the Statement of Ministerial Standards. The Minister was elected as the Federal Member for Hasluck by the people of that electorate and appointed as the Minister for Indigenous Australians in full accordance with Australian law.

The Australian Government is committed to ensuring Indigenous voices are heard at all levels of government. We acknowledge this requires the buy-in of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians to the matters and policies that affect them. There are many views on how to achieve this and it is clear that more work needs to be done on a way forward.

This is why the Government is undertaking a co-design process to develop options for a voice for Indigenous Australians. The 2018 Joint Select Committee into Constitutional Recognition relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples had four recommendations, the first being that a process of co-design be initiated across Australia. The Minister for Indigenous Australians is leading this work.

The Government is also committed to the constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. It will be important to develop a shared approach and vision, with a real consensus, that will deliver on the aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and be supported by the Australian people. The Government will continue to pursue the recommendations of the Joint Select Committee, and the process of co-design, as the way forward.

Thank you for bringing this petition to the Prime Minister's attention. I trust this information will be of assistance in responding to the petitioners.

Yours sincerely

from the Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Mr Morton

Migration

Dear Mr O'Dowd

Thank you for your correspondence of 15 June 2020 enclosing Petition EN1472 concerning temporary visa holders in Australia during COVID-19. The Acting Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs, the Hon Alan Tudge MP, has asked that I respond on his behalf.

While recognising that this is a difficult time for temporary visa holders in Australia, the current focus for the Australian Government is on maintaining public health and ensuring the provision of essential goods and services. The key principles guiding Government decisions on visas while responding to COVID-19 are that our visa system must support the public health response, and that settings should not displace job opportunities for Australians.
Working Holiday Maker (WHM) visas cannot be extended, deferred or suspended once they have been granted. There is also no provision in the legislation to waive or relax the ‘specified work’ requirement for a second or third WHM visa.

On 4 April 2020, however, the Government announced a number of changes to temporary visa arrangements to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. These changes enable temporary visa holders, including WHMs, to remain in Australia lawfully and continue working in critical sectors, including health, aged and disability care, agriculture, food processing and child care.

WHMs employed in these critical sectors are exempt from the six-month work limitation with one employer, and may also be eligible for a Temporary Activity (subclass 408) Australian Government Endorsed Event (COVID-19 Pandemic event) visa to remain working in Australia. These new arrangements are intended to manage the extraordinary circumstances that have arisen due to COVID-19 and the application for this visa does not attract a visa application charge (VAC).

If a current temporary visa holder is not working in a critical sector, their visa is expiring, they are unable to return home and they can’t meet the requirements for another visa, they may still be eligible for the Pandemic event visa. Visa holders will need to demonstrate why they can’t meet the requirements for another visa. This could include a statement and evidence that they do not have access to sufficient funds to be able to pay a further VAC.

The Government has expanded the definition of ‘specified work’ to enable more WHMs to meet the requirements for a second or third WHM visa. Since 19 August 2020, WHMs can count critical COVID-19 work in the healthcare and medical sectors carried out after 31 January 2020 as ‘specified work’.

The Joint Standing Committee on Migration has recently completed their Inquiry into the Working Holiday Maker Program and published their interim report. This report makes a number of recommendations that the Government will consider as part of its response to the COVID-19 pandemic.


Thank you for bringing Petition EN1472 to my attention.

Yours sincerely

from the Assistant Minister for Customs, Community Safety and Multicultural Affairs, Mr Jason Wood

Carers Allowance

Dear Mr O'Dowd

Thank you for your email dated 24 August 2020, regarding Petition EN1602, which seeks an increase in the rate of Carer Allowance.

The Government appreciates the important ongoing role that carers play in the community and demonstrates this through a range of payments and additional supports.

Carer Allowance is a supplementary payment of $131.90 a fortnight, paid to carers who provide a level of daily care and attention for people who need significant additional care. Carer Allowance can be paid to carers whose earnings and those of their partner are under $250,000 annually and to carers who also receive an income support payment, such as Carer Payment or Age Pension. The purpose of Carer Allowance is to provide assistance towards some of the costs a carer may incur. It is not designed to be a wage to compensate carers for providing care, or to cover the full cost of caring for another individual.
Carers who are unable to work due to the demands of their caring role may be eligible for Carer Payment, which is an income support payment to assist carers with their cost of living. Carer Payment is an income and asset tested pension payment and is usually paid at the highest rate in the social security system. In addition to Carer Payment, recipients may receive a range of supplements, such as the Pension Supplement, Energy Supplement and Rent Assistance. Carer Payment recipients also receive a Pensioner Concession Card, which entitles them to subsidised prescription medicines and Medicare services as well as state and territory based concessions, such as discounts on motor vehicle registration, utility bills and rates. Most Carer Payment recipients also receive Carer Allowance.

Carers may also be eligible for an annual $600 Carer Supplement for each Carer Allowance they receive, with an additional $600 supplement paid to recipients of Carer Payment. Carers in receipt of Carer Allowance for a child under 16 years may also receive the annual $1,000 Child Disability Assistance Payment. These annual payments aim to alleviate some of the financial pressures that carers and families may experience as a result of the care they provide.

In addition to these ongoing payments, as part of the Government's national response to the COVID-19 crisis, Carer Allowance and Carer Payment recipients received two Economic Support Payments of $750.

In regard to superannuation payments for carers, income support payments are intended to be a safety net for eligible Australians and accordingly, do not include superannuation contributions. In recognition that time out of the workforce can have a significant impact on retirement income, carers are encouraged to participate in employment, wherever possible. This is supported through Carer Payment provisions that allow carers to cease providing care for up to 25 hours each week to undertake paid employment, without losing payment eligibility (please note that income tests do apply). While combining care responsibilities and work can be challenging for many carers, the provision of care to eligible care receivers through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) or Home Care Packages may see some carers having time to increase their workforce participation, and by proxy, their superannuation.

Thank you again for raising this matter with me, and I trust the information provided will be of assistance.

Yours sincerely

from the Minister for Families and Social Services, Senator Ruston

Aboriginal Deaths in Custody

Dear Mr O'Dowd

Thank you for your correspondence of 24 August 2020 referring petition EN1633 titled Full implementation of recommendations. I appreciate the signatories taking the time to petition the Australian Government on this important issue.

The review by Deloitte Access Economics found significant progress has been made in implementing the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (the Royal Commission). The review found, of the recommendations for which the Australian Government had responsibility, 91 per cent had been fully or mostly implemented.

I note that the majority of the Royal Commission recommendations require action by states and territories, as they hold responsibility for their justice systems. The above review assessed jurisdictions as having sole responsibility for 116 of the 339 Royal Commission recommendations, and the Commonwealth as having sole responsibility for 29 recommendations.

I believe we need a co-operative approach between governments, and with communities, to address the factors that contribute to high incarceration rates for Indigenous Australians. The Morrison Government is committed to continuing to work with states and territories and communities to address
the drivers of Indigenous incarceration and identify how we can address the disproportionate level of Indigenous Australians in the justice system, through initiatives such as the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (the Agreement).

This Agreement outlines a better way of working, with governments working in genuine partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to get better outcomes. This means that there is shared decision making, shared responsibility and shared accountability to close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. The Agreement sets out ambitious targets and new Priority Reforms that will change the way governments work to improve life outcomes experienced by Indigenous Australians. The Agreement is available at www.closingthegap.gov.au.

This Agreement is also an important opportunity to address the issues raised in the petition, including considering whether further action is required on recommendations around non-custodial approaches and self-determination. Developed in genuine partnership with Australian governments and Indigenous peak bodies, the Agreement identifies the major drivers that must be addressed to prevent Indigenous Australians having contact with the justice system. This includes strengthening families to ensure parents and children are safe, ensuring young people are engaged meaningfully in education, adults are employed and all people have good health and wellbeing.

The petitioners may also be interested to know about actions already underway that aim to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and divert Indigenous Australians from the justice system. Under the Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS), the Morrison Government has committed $261.3 million in 2020-21 to fund a range of activities to complement efforts by states and territories to improve justice and community safety outcomes for Indigenous Australians. This includes investment in Custody Notification Services (CNS), a key recommendation of the Royal Commission. The Morrison Government has offered to fund the establishment of CNS in each state and territory, with Australian Government funded CNS operational in New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory, the Northern Territory and Western Australia, and a CNS soon to be established in Victoria and South Australia. These services provide an important safeguard to reduce the likelihood of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander deaths in custody.

Through the IAS, the Australian Government is working to improve the way the Government does business with Indigenous Australians to ensure funding achieves outcomes. The structure of the IAS supports working with Indigenous Australians, communities, industries, business and service providers. It allows for joint development of solutions at the regional and local level. Funded providers are expected to work closely with Indigenous communities in the design and delivery of projects.

I believe that substantial change for Indigenous Australians can be achieved when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the ones providing advice and making decisions on the issues that affect them. That is why the Morrison Government is undertaking a co-design process to determine models for local, regional and national elements of an Indigenous voice. Professor Tom Calma AO and Professor Marcia Langton AO are leading this important work. Through this process we seek to ensure that Indigenous voices are heard on the decisions that affect their lives.

Thank you for referring this matter.

Yours sincerely

from the Minister for Indigenous Australians, Mr Wyatt

COMMITTEES

Communications and the Arts Committee

Dr Gillespie (Lyne) (10:04): On behalf of the Standing Committee on Communications and the Arts, I rise to make a statement on the results of a survey conducted as part of the inquiry into Australia's creative and cultural industries and institutions. As the
Speaker and members would appreciate, the cultural and creative industries and the arts have been devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic. We thought a survey would highlight a lot of the issues a lot more quickly than the more in-depth inquiry will, and we were overwhelmed by the response to the survey launched by the inquiry.

The survey closed on 22 October and, at completion, 4,871 responses had been received from around the nation. It was the second-most participated-in survey ever undertaken by a House committee. Almost three-quarters of all respondents were middle-aged—it's all relative, I know, depending on one's age, but that means 35 years or older—and two-thirds of respondents were from Victoria, or almost 37 per cent; 31 per cent were from New South Wales. But they came from all over the nation. The majority of respondents were from metropolitan areas, and the majority were female—60 per cent. Fifty-six per cent of those who replied were actually involved in paid work in the arts and creative industries. Many of these had been long-term industry workers. Also a large slice of that—almost 50 per cent of respondents—worked in other areas, outside the arts, and education was the No. 1 area employing people in a second income stream.

All mediums were presented in the survey, from literature through to major cultural institutions—music, live entertainment, theatre, film, television, dance, comedy and video games, and circus had some representation. The digital creative space was also very active in their responses. Digital media is growing. It's not just video games but also video production, video on demand, streaming services. Everything is growing in the digital space. Many called for—surprisingly—greater financial support from various governments. Another common call was for greater recognition by the broader community of the importance of the arts in everyday life. During the pandemic the sector been particularly useful, because streaming of arts has kept people sane. It's allowed an outlet for people with creative talent to go online. But it doesn't replace regular business as usual. We note that the majority of survey respondents came from Victoria, which, unfortunately, has had the most stringent second-phase lockdown, exacerbating the problems they've all faced. Universally, pretty much everyone who responded to the survey had lost their incomes overnight. We know COVID affects everything, but there is a future, which is coming back rapidly.

The committee appreciates the time that all 4,800 people took to complete the survey. The results will inform the committee as we consider further submissions. The importance of this industry—and I say 'industry' because people don't look at the economic side of the creative and cultural sectors—is that it is a massive employer of people. Working in the creative arts has empowered many people who are without other career opportunities, whether in remote or very remote Australia. The Indigenous arts industry is empowering lots of communities in remote Australia. A lot of artists live regionally. They display in metropolitan centres. It is a huge economic driver and empowerer of economic independence, and that is something the inquiry is very much focused on. We are trying to sort out the conflict between various income streams. It is a space of such great interest, and that is reflected in the survey results. Because there was such a major response by the community—as I mentioned, 4,871 people—the committee, my co-members and the secretariat, were very keen to let all of them know, rather than waiting until the middle of 2021, when we should complete this inquiry. I commend this inquiry and the survey to the House.
Mr HUSIC (Chifley) (10:09): I welcome the opportunity to speak and follow on from the committee chair. The Standing Committee on Communications and the Arts, of which I am deputy chair, launched this inquiry into Australia's creative and cultural industries and institutions, which aims to explore the economic and non-economic benefits and employment of the creative industry, how the arts promote social cohesion and wellbeing, the impact of COVID on the sector and how to support innovation in the sector through advances in technology.

Today's update, brought to the chamber by the committee chair, was triggered by the phenomenal response the committee received to the sector survey issued recently. Nearly 5,000 responses were received—the second-highest number of survey responses to a House inquiry. It also reflects the vigour and energy applied to the petition recently tabled by the member for Watson and shadow minister for the arts, which called for JobKeeper to be extended to arts and entertainment sector workers. The petition, driven by Chloe Dallimore and the MEAA, gained over 36,000 signatures and called on the government to deliver to the sector a tailored and properly targeted relief package to ensure its ongoing viability. From these two points, it's not hard to conclude a number of things—notably, that the arts and creative sectors of this nation are sending their strongest message about the pain they have felt this year as the pandemic affected our health and their jobs. Through this it's also clear that Australia's creative sector feels it has been cast adrift without meaningful, tangible government support, especially if you are a young member of our nation's creative community or a champion of artistic and creative endeavour in regional Australia.

Whilst the government might point to its announcement celebrating hundreds of millions of dollars of funding to assist the sector, the cold truth is that many organisations have yet to feel or experience any benefit. It's worth pointing out here that if there were ever a community that gets symbolism and gesture, it's this one. It's a tool of their trade. They can easily interpret how much this government truly values them when emergency support announced with flourish 130 days ago hasn't materialised. You can't pay the bills with empty promises and pockets packed with confetti.

The last session of Senate estimates found no grants approved under the $75 million RISE Fund and the guidelines had not been settled for the $90 million concessional loans scheme.

This inquiry is not founded on partisan lines, and nor should it be. Labor members on the committee are simply not interested in politicking. We think the inquiry is a terrific opportunity to think practically in long-term ways to promote the growth of a sector that is vital not just to our economy but to our national identity. But the creative community in crisis would find it perplexing, almost offensive, for me to not acknowledge in my contribution the pain the community is experiencing or to register their justifiable demand for help they rightly deserve. Hopefully the findings of the inquiry will encourage the government to convert word to meaningful and sustainable deed.

As part of the inquiry, the survey that was conducted received nearly 5,000 responses. Half were received in the first two weeks. Sixty per cent of the respondents had been in the arts sector for a decade, with 80 per cent having been involved with the arts community for more than 10 years. Half the respondents had no other form of paid work outside the sector; they are completely and deeply committed to the sector and its fortunes. As the chair observed, the majority of responses were from women. Feedback in the survey by people in the sector
included: 'The government did not see fit to recognise my freelance status as worthy of JobKeeper. I have lived on savings while only having seven days work in seven months. My view is that there is no future in the arts in Australia unless the government step up to the plate and support the industry.' With the committee beginning public inquiries at the end of the week, it is important, now more than ever, that the sector be given a voice and be heard by government.

I would also mention that one of the elements of this survey is to look at the impact of technology on the sector. In this place I have been an unabashed advocate for the embracing of technology to improve the way we live and work. When it comes to the creative community, some in the sector may have, with some justification, viewed my passionate advocacy as being sometimes narrow or allowing little wider consideration of technology's impact. I apply advocacy in equal measure in listening to and considering different views, and I genuinely believe technology and our firms within that sector see themselves as natural partners, not adversaries, in the creative community's efforts to grow. From my point of view, this is one aspect of the inquiry I particularly look forward to exploring. I welcome the opportunity to speak on this and the fact that the survey has been brought to the floor of the House so soon.

BILLs
Climate Change (National Framework for Adaptation and Mitigation) Bill 2020
First Reading
Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Ms Steggall.
Bill read a first time.

Second Reading
Ms STEGGALL (Warringah) (10:15): I move:
That this bill be now read a second time.
Climate change is the challenge of our time, and how we respond to it as a nation and global community will have a huge impact on our future.

We have seen in the US a nation divided by politics of lies and misrepresentation. I congratulate President-Elect Biden on his victory and look forward to his science-based approach to key issues. I welcome his commitment on climate change and the US rejoining the Paris Agreement.

Australia has already seen too many years of divisive politics around this issue. This parliament needs to unite behind a common goal, to keep our way of life and Australians safe. Facts and the truth matter on this important issue. There is no more room for spin and talking points. We are not going to meet and beat our emissions reduction targets. We are not on track to keeping global warming below two degrees.

So the world is acting and committing to net zero by 2050. Our major trading partners are committed and working together on the solutions. They will be at the forefront of technology developments and investment. Australia is not at the table. We are falling behind. We have our handbrake firmly on. Seventy per cent of our two-way trade is now covered by net zero targets in those jurisdictions. Australia faces the real threat of border carbon tariffs if we continue to fall behind the rest of the world.
So it is time this parliament passed legislation that sets into law a commitment to net zero by 2050. In doing so, Australia will have effective climate change laws in place, like the UK, Germany, France and New Zealand, to name a few. Net zero by 2050 is endorsed by our state and territory governments, businesses, peak bodies, civil society groups and our trading partners.

Over 80 per cent of Australians are worried about climate change impacts. There are so many reasons we need to pass this legislation and lock in a bipartisan, sensible legislative framework to net zero. We need to take the party politics out of addressing climate change. This issue is bigger than any one party. This goes to the heart of keeping Australians safe. The government failed terribly to hear the warnings and prepare for the horrendous bushfires last summer and we cannot let that happen again. Our success or failure as a nation to properly address climate change impacts and emissions reduction will be felt across every sector. A government that downplays the risks and urgency to act is a government that also fails to prepare Australia to build resilience and to adapt.

Australia is already feeling the impacts of global warming. As the recent natural disaster royal commission report showed, we are exposed to the worst of climate impacts, and these will become more severe over time. We must act decisively in the face of such a threat to our way of life, our health, our environment and our economy.

The COVID-19 pandemic has given the world a prelude to the widespread disruption that climate change will cause. The recent Deloitte study found that climate change will be ‘like having a pandemic every year from 2050’. We stand to lose as much as $3.4 trillion, in economic damages, by 2070. But we can take the first step to avoid that legacy now, with this sensible legislation. Our business community want better policy and clarity on emissions reduction plans. They want to plan their transition and long-term investment strategies. Legislating a net zero target by 2050 with five-year emissions reduction budgets provides the policy certainty and a framework to the private sector. It focuses investment on low-emission technologies and accelerates the development and uptake of those new technologies. It then permits more and more ambitious five-yearly emission reduction budgets.

Our doctors and the AMA and the broad health sector all identify global warming as a major health threat. Having experienced this year the widespread disruption of COVID-19, we know that policy based on factual, scientific advice is the key to success.

The Climate Change (National Framework for Adaptation and Mitigation) Bill 2020 legislates for regular risk assessment, adaptation and resilience plans. We urgently need to better understand how the impacts of climate change will affect our way of life, our society, our environment and our economy, and we need to ensure a planned transition for all, as communities and workers will be more disrupted and impacted than others—regular risk assessment of where and how climate impacts are going to be felt from environmental impacts like heat, drought, extreme weather events, increased bushfires, water and food security to how it will impact employment sectors and our economy.

Our building sector and building codes need to address climate risks. Investment in building resilience is far more cost-effective than funding disaster recovery. The longer Australia waits to implement effective adaptation plans to emerging climate change impacts the more expensive it will become to do so.
This bill establishes the independent Climate Change Commission, which will report and advise on technology assessments. This is a collaborative effort. The bill adopts the government's annual low emissions technology statements to identify and fast-track existing and emerging low-emissions technologies. By transitioning to a net zero-emissions economy, Australia will benefit from the jobs, productivity and growth that will be created by new clean industries. We can protect our environment and our jobs, our way of life and our children's future.

Australia is uniquely positioned to prosper through this transition. We have the financial wealth and the human capacity. We have the scientific innovation. We have zero-emission energy resources and potential for soil regeneration and carbon sequestration. We are uniquely placed to take advantage of the boom that is coming. This bill will enable Australia to make an immediate, positive and nationally supported response to the risks, challenges and opportunities of climate change. I cede the rest of my time to the member for Mayo and I commend this bill to the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Zimmerman): Is the motion seconded?

Ms SHARKIE (Mayo) (10:22): It is a privilege to speak to and second the second reading motion on this bill today, and I would like to commend the member for Warringah for the extraordinary body of work that she has done on this bill, the Climate Change (National Framework for Adaptation and Mitigation) (Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2020.

We need a new approach. I think every person in this place would accept that we need a new approach, particularly those on the government side who, I can see, are torn on this. When they're out in their communities, they say that they want to see action on climate change, and then, when they come into this place, they are silent. This is your opportunity, so I call on all members in this place: with your leadership caucus meetings, please call for a free vote on this bill in this place. This should not be about party lines; this should be about what's right in Australia. In 30 or 40 years time, when people and students are reading Hansard, they will look back at this time. I want them to see a time when Australia actually acted, not a time about which they will say, 'Wow! Why didn't they do anything back then? They knew back then, but they did nothing.'

We need to act in this place. The business community of Australia wants certainty. They want a framework. They want us to act. This isn't radical and new. The United Kingdom has had it for 12 years. New Zealand has it. This will provide us with the framework of certainty for business so that business can make changes and can take steps forward. We have been living in a political wasteland in this place with respect to climate change for the entire time that I have had the privilege of being the member for Mayo. People in my community, including farmers, say to me: 'We're not acting on this. You don't understand. Regional Australia faces this first. We'll face an absolutely catastrophic future if we don't get this right.' And we have a duty to show leadership around the world. When we look to the Pacific islands, they know what climate change is about. Yet, here in this place, we still have people who won't accept the science, people who say they don't believe the science. Science isn't something that you either believe or not. Science is science, and the science says that we need action.
I commend the member for Warringah for this extraordinary work. What different leadership she is showing compared to previous members of Warringah who chose to take a negative step towards climate instead of a positive step. This is a wonderful opportunity for Australia, and I urge every member in this place to show leadership and to show bravery. Let's make this work.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Zimmerman): The time allotted for this debate has expired. The debate is adjourned, and the resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

Climate Change (National Framework for Adaptation and Mitigation) (Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2020

First Reading

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Ms Steggall.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Ms STEGGALL (Warringah) (10:26): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I've already introduced the climate change bill which puts into law, if passed, a net zero emissions target by 2050; legislates for climate risk assessment and adaptation, and resilience planning; and establishes regular technology readiness assessments and an independent climate change commission.

Independent Climate Change Commission

Underpinning the other elements of the climate change bill, is the establishment of an independent climate change commission.

This body is modelled on the successful and respected Climate Change Committee in the United Kingdom.

The Climate Change Committee has provided sound advice over the last decade, ensuring that the United Kingdom is on track with their Paris commitments.

We have already had the Climate Change Authority, but, unfortunately, over many years of partisan attacks it has been defunded and weakened. We need a trusted independent body that the government defers to and from which the public can receive clear, independent, expert based climate advice.

The Climate Change (National Framework for Adaptation and Mitigation) (Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2020 will repeal the Climate Change Authority and establish the Climate Change Commission.

Importantly, and as a point of difference to the authority, the membership of the commission will be selected by a bipartisan parliamentary committee and will reflect broad skills and requirements such as regional development, agriculture economics, financial investment, technology development, energy production and supply, industrial relations, an Indigenous voice, climate science and policy.
The commission will have a commissioner of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent. This will ensure that Indigenous Australians are at the centre of this transition and will benefit from the many opportunities that come.

The commission does not usurp the role of government. Setting policies and delivering strategies will still be the role for the government.

But the commission is a trusted advisory body that will ensure that we are on the right track.

The commission will work with the government in a transparent and accountable way:

- The commission will assess climate risks, new technologies, and provide advice on adaptation plans and emissions budgets that are fair and equitable across generations, across regions and across industries
- The government will present plans and budgets to parliament, with reasons for any variation from the commission's recommendations, and
- The commission will report annually on progress against Australia's emissions targets, technology goals and adaptation and emissions reduction plans.

The Australian people want clarity.

**Climate risk disclosure**

Financial organisations including Commonwealth entities like government agencies and departments are exposed to the risks of climate change impacts.

In an October 2019 financial stability report, the Reserve Bank of Australia observed 'climate change is exposing financial institutions and the financial system more broadly to risks that will rise over time if not addressed'.

Since 2017, the Taskforce on Climate Related Financial Disclosure (TCFD), led by Michael Bloomberg, has been leading voluntary climate reporting standardisation for private companies.

Companies around the world have recognised the value of climate disclosure. Benefits include more effective risk assessment, capital allocation and strategic planning. Banks, insurers, developers, miners and big business around the world have been rapidly incorporating climate disclosure in their annual reporting.

After a landmark opinion by Noel Hutley SC and Sebastian Hartford Davis, legal cases like the recent McVeigh v Rest Super and the Australian Securities and Investment Commission's and the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority's guidance on climate risks, Australian companies must start disclosing material climate risks or be exposed to legal and regulatory actions.

According to APRA, 'A listed entity should disclose whether it has any material exposure to environmental or social risks and, if it does, how it manages or intends to manage those risks.'

But how can we ask the private sector to do this, but the public sector does not? Commonwealth entities are also exposed to those risks.

A recent legal action claiming that the government is not disclosing climate risks on Treasury bonds demonstrates this.
National governments have been successfully prosecuted in Ireland and the Netherlands for failing to adequately respond to climate related risks.

The federal government is exposed.

This bill will ensure that the accountable authority of a Commonwealth entity must consider, in the exercising of duties or powers, the potential risks of climate change and the potential contribution to Australia's emissions of greenhouse gases and broader impacts from those actions.

This bill will also establish reporting on material risks to those entities and disclosure of actions taken to mitigate those risks.

By providing for these considerations in this bill, there will be an alignment between the Commonwealth entities and the private sector.

As well, stakeholders including the community will have confidence that the government is managing its own climate risk.

**Conclusion**

The climate change bill and consequential transitional provisions provide for comprehensive climate action.

They ensure we have the plans in place to grasp the opportunities of a net zero transition, as well as mitigate the risks of climate impacts.

Just like we have come together in responding to the pandemic, I ask that all sensible members come together on this issue. This is the issue of our times, and we need to support this solution.

If members claim they are for climate action, this is their opportunity to come to the table. It's time to put partisan politics aside.

For our prosperity, our safety and our future, these bills are so important. I commend these bills to the House.

I cede the rest of my time to the member for Indi.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Zimmerman):** Is the motion seconded?

**Dr HAINES (Indi) (10:33):** I am proud to second the second reading motion for the Climate Change (National Framework for Adaptation and Mitigation) (Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2020. I am proud that the electorate of Indi is written into history in seconding it, and I am proud for the people of Warringah that their member has introduced this bill.

Climate change is a significant challenge and a great opportunity for regional Australia. This bill will help us to protect our way of life in the regions and to seize the opportunities that are before us. I say to any rural and regional MP in this House: look to this bill for your opportunity to conserve what you love about the regions and to seize the opportunities that are there for the people you represent.

In Indi, the CSIRO projects that runaway climate change, which is our current pathway, would see rainfall decline in north-east Victoria by up to 36 per cent—not in a bad year but in every year. Average temperatures in north-east Victoria have already increased by one degree and could go up by 2.4 degrees within 30 years. That would mean double the number of
extreme heat days and a 44 per cent increase in extreme fire danger days. Like everyone in north-east Victoria, I love our region and I want to conserve the things that we all love about it. I want our dairy farmers to be able to rely on the spring rains and produce Australia's best dairy products in the Kiewa valleys and the Upper Murray. I want our grape growers in places like Rutherglen and King Valley to continue to make the best wines in the world and not be driven out by the danger of smoke taint. I want our alpine villages of Mount Hotham, Mount Buller and Falls Creek to remain viable and to continue to have snowy winters far into the future. I want to see my grandchildren ski and toboggan. I want our tourist towns, like Mansfield and Bright, to be able to rely on the summer trade and not have it periodically wiped out by catastrophic bushfires. I never again want to see 30,000 people evacuate from my region in a catastrophic bushfire. It is these things—the things that we love about our community—that are at risk if we fail to take proper action to stabilise our climate and if we fail to embrace the opportunity that the member for Warringah has given us today.

At the same time, if we want to create a better future for our regions, we should be moving now to seize the opportunities that create jobs in these emerging industries. Instead of importing polluting petrol from Saudi Arabia, I want to see us exporting Australian made, zero-carbon hydrogen fuel. Instead of importing carbon-intensive steel from China and the US, I want to see us exporting Australian made, zero-carbon steel. A net zero economy means new manufacturing industries based in regional Australia, and it means massive investment in clean energy in regional Australia—the regions that I represent.

This bill sets out a framework to both conserve all that is precious about our communities and capture opportunities that are before us. I am a proud regional Australian and I am a proud advocate for the regions, and I am so proud to second this bill. I commend it to the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Zimmerman): The time allotted for this debate has expired. The debate is adjourned, and the resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Remembrance Day

Mr THOMPSON (Herbert) (10:37): I move:

That this House:

(1) notes that Wednesday, 11 November 2020 marks Remembrance Day, formerly known as Armistice Day, when the guns fell silent during the First World War;

(2) recognises:

(a) that since the First World War, almost two million men and women have served in our defence forces; and

(b) the more than 102,000 defence personnel who have tragically died during, or as a result of, warlike service, non-warlike service and certain peacetime operations; and

(3) acknowledges the service and sacrifice of all those who served in our defence force and the families that supported them by encouraging all Australians to observe one minute's silence at 11 am on 11 November 2020.

On Wednesday morning, at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, our nation will fall silent for a minute. It's not an eerie silence or an awkward silence, it's a reflective silence.
Monday, 9 November 2020  HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  8993

This is a minute to stop and to think about and remember the brave men and women who fought and sacrificed so that we could enjoy our freedoms, which we hold dear to this day. It is a minute to think about the members of the Australian Imperial Force, who bravely put the needs of their nation ahead of their own self-interest and their own safety. On Wednesday, we think not only of those who fought in World War I but also, as this motion acknowledges, of those who have served in uniform ever since: the two million men and women who have served in our armed forces since World War I and the more than 102,000 defence personnel who during, or as a result of, warlike service, non-warlike service and peacetime operations have tragically died.

On Remembrance Day we pause and take time to remember. We enjoy the freedoms of democracy and life in the best country in the world to live in. It is incumbent on us to not forget what it took to defend those freedoms and the way of life we are fortunate enough to have, because, if we forget, we run into the danger of becoming complacent and forgetting just how valuable what we have is. We need to ensure we do everything we can to defend it so that these lives that were lost will never have been lost in vain.

Fortunately, we have a strong history of marking Remembrance Day since the first Remembrance Day in 1919. I recently came across an article from The Townsville Daily Bulletin, from Wednesday 12 November 1941, which reported on the 23rd anniversary of the signing of Armistice and how quiet the city became at 11 am. The article reads: ‘On the hour striking, there was a hush. So general and thorough was the silence that those on the balcony of town hall could hear across from McKinnon’s, from the machine in that building. The broadcast of the chiming of the Brisbane Town Hall, and also the bugler in the city, sounding the Last Post. In fact, said the town clerk, when reviewing the ceremony later, the silence was so thorough and complete that you could have heard a pin drop in Flinders Street.’

The tradition continues at my home town of Townsville, Australia's largest garrison city. Remembrance Day is extremely special. Each year a large crowd gathers at Anzac Park down on The Strand for the ceremony supported by members of the 3rd Brigade and many local veteran groups and organisations. At 11 am the city falls silent as we observe a minute's silence. While I'd really like to be present at Anzac Park on Wednesday, I am very glad to be able to attend the national Remembrance Day ceremony at the Australian War Memorial.

So who will I be remembering on this Remembrance Day? In my maiden speech in this place, I mentioned a warrior—a brother, a mate—killed in action on 18 July 2009 in Afghanistan. So on Remembrance Day I will be remembering my mate, Ben Ranaudo, a brave man who served his nation with pride. And I was proud to serve beside him. Of course, there's not a day that goes by that I don't remember him. On this Remembrance Day, joining my other mates, and the whole nation, there's an extra sense of not only sadness but also pride. But, tragically, there are many others who I'll also be remembering, and they may not have died in war but they have succumbed to their war within. On Wednesday, I'll be remembering Jesse Bird, Brad Carr, Paul McKay, Ben Brown, Peter Atkins, Dylan Clark, Tristan Hardie, Daniel Halpin, Steven Fazel, Shaun Jenkins, Geoffrey Price and Lewis Shelley. They too proudly served their nation and should be honoured for their service and their sacrifice.

There has been a lot of talk lately about the tragic loss of life, how we can do better to prevent this happening and the unacceptable numbers of our veterans who have succumbed to
their war within. We are taking action, but there is a long road ahead. Wednesday is the time for our nation to unite, pause, remember and reflect. I encourage everyone around the nation this year to stop for a minute's silence this Remembrance Day. Lest we forget.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Zimmerman): Is the motion seconded?

Mr NEUMANN (Blair) (10:43): I second the motion. I thank the member for Herbert for this motion, I acknowledge his service and I thank him for bringing this timely motion to the chamber today. Wednesday 11 November 2020 marks Remembrance Day, formerly known as Armistice Day, when the guns fell silent on the Western Front, officially ending the First World War. It was supposed to be the war that ended all wars; tragically it was not.

Remembrance Day is a time to recognise the service and sacrifice of all those who've served in our Defence Force, and the families that support them, by stopping and observing a minute's silence. This Wednesday, along with the member for Herbert, I, and many members of this chamber and in the other place, the senators, will attend a national ceremony at the Australian War Memorial, where the names of more than 102,000 who've fallen on our behalf are inscribed. The ceremony will be broadcast nationally.

Remembrance Day is about honouring all Australians who served in wars, conflicts and peacekeeping operations. Every community in Australia has its own story to tell, and Remembrance Day is an opportunity for those local communities to honour and renew those connections. It's a tragic reminder, a sad reminder, of the terrible impact that wars have had on the economies and social fabric of small, regional and country towns, and major cities.

I want to talk about the impact on a small regional rural community in my electorate and an individual in my home city of Ipswich. In Elizabeth DeLacy's 2015 book The Colinton Boys, she tells the story of the harsh reality of the lives of men who returned from the First World War to their small town in the Somerset region in the electorate of Blair. Colinton is the site of Queensland's first-ever war monument, unveiled on 18 January 1917. With a population of 200, Colinton made an extraordinary contribution to the war effort. By 1917, 44 men out of a town of 200 had enlisted in the AIF. When the war ended, only about 13 men returned home, many to find that their jobs had disappeared from the local dairy industry, so they were forced to move away in search of work. Colinton is now a ghost town, effectively, but there's still a monument there that inscribes the names of 43 men across the whole war who lost their lives. This insightful book by Elizabeth DeLacy talks about how poorly these men were treated when they came home from the war and how many of them suffered from their wartime experiences: mental health issues, relationship breakdown and personal tragedy, and we haven't learnt enough in this country, even today.

The latest newsletter of the Ipswich Genealogical Society in my electorate records the story of Ipswich man Major Sydney Beresford Robertson, who was a local solicitor and the son of a local pastor. He was among the men from what official war historian Charles Bean describes as the outer states—Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia—who landed at Gallipoli on the very first day. On that day, Major Robertson and his comrades were involved in the bloody battle at Sari Bair. Heavily outnumbered by the Turks and with his regiment desperately trying to hold a ridge, Major Robertson was killed in action, cut down by shrapnel while bravely trying to get reinforcements to his troops. On this Remembrance Day we salute the courage of brave soldiers like Major Robertson and all those who made the ultimate sacrifice in all wars.
Reflecting on these conflicts again reminds us of the terrible impacts of war. One of the most important ways we can give weight to the meaning of 'lest we forget' is to ensure that our veterans and their families receive the support and respect they deserve. To paraphrase the motto of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, 'We should honour the dead by fighting like hell for the living.' In this place we should recommit ourselves this Remembrance Day to giving our veterans the best possible support with policies that provide tangible outcomes, including in areas like mental health and wellbeing, civilian transition and employment programs. As the latest figures on defence and veteran suicide have shown, we need to act urgently to address these issues.

I want to thank the member for Herbert and all those on both sides of this chamber who have served in the military, and remember those who came back from the wars, who served in this place on both sides of the chamber. I want to thank the men and women from the RAAF and the Army units situated at RAAF Base Amberley in my home community. I thank them for what they do for my local community. Member for Herbert, I support your motion, I thank you for your service and thank you for the motion, and I commend it to the chamber.

Mr PEARCE (Braddon) (10:48): On the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month each year Australia pauses. We as a nation collectively bow our heads and reflect on the supreme cost, the pain and the sacrifice that paid for our freedom, our security and our sovereignty—just one day a year. For the brave men and women who serve, who have served, or indeed are affected by the sacrifice that goes with defending our nation, these thoughts go on each day. At ceremonies right across the nation, many speeches will talk of the bravery, the loss and the torment of these same young Australians and their sacrifice in defending Australia and its interests. I believe, deep in my heart of hearts, that no words, no speech, much less my own today, will even come close to truly articulating the degree of solemn gratitude that is deserved in remembering the lives lost in war or conflict.

Instead, the day to me is the solace that follows such speeches. It comes in the power of the silence, for it is in the silence that we, as a grateful nation, can begin to embark on our profound act of remembrance. The very first Armistice Day, in 1918, followed the silence—the silence of the guns on the Western Front, the silence over 46,000 young Australians, scattered across the scarred landscape of the Western Front, a place described by Charles Bean as being 'more densely sown with Australian sacrifice than any place on earth'. On the Gallipoli Peninsula, again, there was silence: silence filled the 8,141 young Australians who lay dead on that ground; silence embraced their first landing there; and, ironically, it would be silence that would cover their tactical withdrawal.

Regrettably, war seldom remains silent for long. Following the deafening fog of the Second World War in Tobruk, in the Pacific, in Singapore and New Guinea, and in conflicts right across the world, again there was silence: the endless silence of over 27,000 young Australian service men and women. Silence followed in military funerals of more Australians in Korea, in Malaya, in Borneo. Young Australian forward scouts moved in silence as they closed to contact in close country in the jungles in Vietnam. These same diggers listened to the silence as they stood, too, at the dawn. For it is in the silence of the dawn that the danger comes, and every Australian digger knows that. In the Gulf, in Afghanistan, in Iraq: more funerals, more sacrifice and more silence. In East Timor, the Solomons, Bougainville, the Sinai, Somalia, Rwanda and Mogadishu: again, Australians would be called to keep the silence.
But it is in this very silence that the torment and the scars of war remain. It's in the silence that many service men and women continue to suffer. Many—far too many—are deafened by the silence that they endure each day. Many can't bear the silence. Sadly, many succumb to the silence. Silent, too, are the spouses, the kids, the loved ones who are close to our veterans. They're silent because they don't know what to say. They know that their loved one is suffering. They don't know what to do, so they remain silent. But all they get in return is silence.

So, to every last Australian, when the 11th hour comes—when the haunting sound of the last post beckons the silence—I'd urge you to all truly pause to reflect on the sacrifice and the torment of war and to truly listen to the sound of the silence. Lest we forget.

Mr BRIAN MITCHELL (Lyons) (10:53): I'd like to thank the member for Herbert and the member for Braddon for two wonderful speeches, and I thank them for their service. In two days and seven minutes we will mark Remembrance Day with one minute's silence. We take this minute to commemorate the more than 102,000 men and women who have given their lives in the service of this nation and to honour the almost two million who have served in our defence forces since the First World War, including those who serve today. In my thoughts will be Teddy Sheean, a labourer's son from Lower Barrington who strapped himself to a gun aboard a sinking ship to fire at Japanese warplanes that were strafing his comrades in the water. The 18-year-old knew that by strapping himself to that gun he would die that day. His sacrifice saved more than 40 men. Teddy's actions were always worthy of a Victoria Cross. After a campaign that took far too long, that was finally acknowledged this year.

As a nation, we generally do well at memorialising sacrifice on the battlefield, but we do less well at looking after those who come home damaged in mind, body and spirit. A short distance from this place is a monument to our fallen that we have all agreed to spend around half a billion dollars on expanding so that we can extend exhibits and better tell the stories of our military history, and many of us will be there on Wednesday. I cannot help but think that we should be putting at least as much effort into assisting those who return as we do into remembering and honouring those who do not.

I thank the member for Herbert for bringing on this motion and acknowledge his service and his long campaign for better mental health support for returned services personnel. He knows all too well that the rate of mental illness amongst veterans is much higher than that of the general Australian population. Australian male veterans are 21 per cent more likely to die by suicide than other Australian men. Australian women who have served die by suicide at twice the rate of other Australian women. Forty-one ADF personnel and veterans have taken their own lives this year. More Australian service personnel are dying by suicide than in armed conflict.

These are staggering statistics that none of us should be willing to accept. Often, the challenging transition back to civilian life is compounded by the frustration of dealing with the Department of Veterans' Affairs, with long delays for claims and payments, unexplained or incomprehensible rejections and an unfriendly and impersonal bureaucratic interface. Veterans are waiting for three months to access counselling and they can't see a psychiatrist until next February. None of it is conducive to the mental and emotional wellbeing of people who can be suffering with a variety of issues.
Labor acknowledges the government's release of an interim response to the 2019 Productivity Commission report on the veterans' support system. The response and additional funding for mental health, transition and employment in the budget are welcome, but more is needed and more must be provided. We note that of the 69 recommendations made by the PC, the government committed in the budget to implementing just 25. Labor also notes the government's decision to create a national commissioner for defence and veteran suicide prevention. We are concerned that creating this office essentially puts the cart before the horse. That is why we have asked to refer it to the Senate inquiry.

It appears, for example, that the national commission does not have all the powers of a royal commission—some, but not all. We would prefer that a royal commission be instituted. It would ensure accountability, such as holding public hearings, and be able to compel witnesses to testify and produce evidence. Importantly, a royal commission would have the power to refer charges of criminal or official misconduct. It may well be that out of such a royal commission a key recommendation would be to institute a standing national commission like that which the government proposes. But a royal commission may well also uncover other essential information, leading to other important recommendations. We won't know if we don't hold one.

Nikki Jamieson, from Northern Tasmania, told *The Examiner* newspaper that a national commission doesn't go far enough. Her son, Daniel, died by suicide while serving. She now has lots of qualifications in this area and is working on her PhD. She says:

… all of my participants came to my research because of the horrendous experiences [they had] within Defence and Veterans' Affairs. Horrendous experiences. We must do better; we must have a royal commission that will get to the bottom of these issues once and for all. Our veterans deserve no less. Lest we forget.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Zimmerman):** The time allotted for this debate has expired. The debate is adjourned and the resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

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**South-West Sydney**

Ms STANLEY (Werriwa—Opposition Whip) (10:58): I move:

That this House:

(1) acknowledges south-west Sydney:

(a) is one of the key contributors to economic growth in the Australian economy;
(b) is in need of investment to support jobs and growth;
(c) is home to diverse and endangered species;
(d) has a population of approximately 700,000, which is over 9 per cent of the NSW population; and
(e) provides over $30 billion in gross regional product to the NSW economy;

(2) notes that south-west Sydney is chronically underfunded and under-resourced in the following areas:

(a) road infrastructure and public transport;
(b) hospitals and health services;
(c) communications services; and
(d) schools and universities;

(3) further acknowledges that investment in south-west Sydney is required to support jobs creation; and
(4) calls on the Government to provide the necessary support to:
(a) encourage business growth;
(b) encourage jobs growth; and
(c) build infrastructure to sustain growth.

One of the recurring themes I've spoken about during my time in this place has been the need for governments at all levels to provide basic infrastructure and services for our community. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 70 per cent of Werriwa residents left the area each day to go to work. They do this on congested roads and overcrowded trains and buses. It took a concerted campaign over many years for the expansion of parking at Edmondson Park railway station; a station which opened five years ago to cater for tens of thousands of new residents will finally get a multistorey car park. That car park has only now started construction, well after its promised start date. And those who have no choice but to take the car to work are now being slugged by a new toll on an old road: the M5 East. Barry Calvert, President of Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils, summed it up well in a recent op-ed:

As the future hub for Greater Sydney and the engine room of the state, Western Sydney deserves an equitable approach to the key issues of transport infrastructure from the NSW Government; including a more efficient, fair and sustainable tolling system that does not plunder the region's pockets.

The people of south-western Sydney are taking their fair share of population growth, but they also deserve a fair share of the infrastructure and services to support it.

In coming years, Austral in my electorate will house a population the size of a regional city. Like those regional cities, Austral and its surrounds will need critical services, like a hospital, police station and ambulance station. It will need arts and cultural facilities and major sporting amenities, yet things are going in the opposite direction. The New South Wales government recently merged police local area commands in my electorate, and a recent report on Liverpool Hospital by Westir found that the local health district was significantly under-resourced in comparison to other Sydney health districts. Under-resourced health districts mean longer wait times for operations, significant strains on doctors and other health staff and poorer health outcomes, which is even worse during the current pandemic.

Education is another area where the people of south-west Sydney are being short-changed. Many of my constituents have contacted me about the lack of a public school at Edmondson Park. Students as young as five are being told they should attend Prestons Public School, which is a really great school, also in my electorate, but it is over five kilometres away, with no public transport links that are easily accessed. The local public high school is still further away, and in another suburb, Casula. I call on the New South Wales government to start building a school at Edmondson Park and to do it now. Too many schools in Werriwa are already over-enrolled; some are 180 per cent over capacity.

Public schools in Carnes Hill, Green Valley, Liverpool, Horningsea Park and Hinchinbrook now have larger classes and smaller playgrounds, because the demountables have been rushed in to take this increase in student numbers. This wasn't unforeseen. The government that looks after these schools is the same one that oversaw the new subdivisions and suburbs. This lack of planning by the state government is laid out only today in the Daily Telegraph: 'Schools in Western Sydney with 40 to 50 demountable classrooms'. This is not about a lack of money; it is about priorities and about the south-west of Sydney being short-changed.
The electorate of Werriwa is also home to the $5.3 billion Western Sydney airport. If successful, the airport will bring residents of south-west Sydney good quality jobs, education and infrastructure that are sorely needed. Revelations regarding the $26 million overpayment do not bode well. Not only did this undermine confidence in the project; it is also a shocking waste of taxpayers’ money. That wasted $26 million could have been used to upgrade Cambridge Avenue and Middleton Drive, to improve parks and playing fields in Werriwa and to build a genuine national broadband network that is fit for purpose—and that is just in my electorate.

Werriwa and south-west Sydney as a whole have been let down and neglected by the government. The south-west of Sydney is one of the key growth areas of Australia and is on the cusp of realising its economic and cultural potential. I call on the government, both federal and state to provide the necessary funding and resources to reinforce the growing powerhouse of south-west Sydney.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Zimmerman): Is the motion seconded?

Mr Thistlethwaite: I second the motion and reserve my right to speak.

Mrs McIntosh (Lindsay) (11:03): The reason we're in parliament is to advocate for more opportunities and investments for our communities. Every day, I'm here to represent the people of Lindsay and Western Sydney and to ensure my electorate gets the projects and infrastructure my community needs. I need to fight for that. I need to represent my people in this place. That's what we all need to do to get the best for our communities, whether it's roads, infrastructure, education opportunities or job opportunities. Western Sydney has the opportunity to drive our economic recovery from the coronavirus pandemic. We are delivering job opportunities to create initiatives and unlock this potential. We know that Western Sydney is one of Australia's fastest-growing regions. To harness the opportunities for families and businesses, we are investing in local infrastructure. We're delivering better, safer and more accessible roads, to make sure that, as we continue to create more local jobs, people spend less time stuck in traffic, less time on that daily commute, and more time building their businesses and being at home with their families.

As the member for Werriwa said in her speech, Western Sydney airport is going to bring so many opportunities for our whole community of Western Sydney. Our $5.3 billion investment in Western Sydney airport and $2.9 billion infrastructure investment will improve connectivity in surrounding road networks. Our Western Sydney Infrastructure Plan includes the new M12 motorway, which will be the main access road to the airport. We're also delivering the Werrington Arterial Road upgrade and upgrades to Bringelly Road, which are already underway, and the Northern Road. In addition to this, we're providing a $200 million package for local road upgrades.

In my electorate of Lindsay—and I fight for the people there every day, to get what I need for my community—we're delivering 23 kilometres of railway through St Marys, Orchard Hills and Luddenham and two stations at the airport. The rail link, which will connect from St Marys to Western Sydney airport and Badgerys Creek aerotropolis, will be built in time for the airport's opening in 2026. The ability to connect our community will mean that business owners, students, researchers and so many more people in our community will have access to reliable transport, which will unlock even more opportunities for people right across Western Sydney.
Sydney and deliver real long-term benefits to people in Western Sydney, our economy and our community.

With an expected benefit-to-cost ratio of over 1.8, this is over $1.80 to the economy from every single dollar invested. By 2063, the Western Sydney airport is expected to generate $1.5 billion annually. That is delivering opportunities for the people of Western Sydney. This investment and the important infrastructure and road upgrades our community needs will increase access for small businesses in Western Sydney so they can expand, showcasing their products around the state and around our nation. With Western Sydney international airport, it will open new doors and unlock new opportunities and new markets globally.

By backing our small businesses, our manufacturers and our community with record investment to support and create more jobs, we are putting Western Sydney at the forefront of our economic recovery. I've seen this firsthand in my community when visiting a local Australian Made manufacturer who has links right across Western Sydney. Their suppliers are in south-western Sydney, and they're working together to boost our local economy and create more local jobs. Tracy and the team at Plustec make uPVC windows and doors, which are highly energy-efficient as well as resistant to the toughest weather conditions. They've now got the Australian Made accreditation. And when we say 'Australian Made', we know that this means high quality and local jobs. She told me how hard they'd worked to get that accreditation. She also told me that they've been using the Morrison government's instant asset write-off. With the extended write-off they're trying to purchase a new upstroke cut saw, but they've also already purchased four pieces of equipment, including a laminator, a crane and a glazing table, and this is all using the Morrison government's instant asset write-off scheme. This is creating opportunities for local business in Western Sydney and creating more local jobs. We've extended this instant asset write-off, and now 99 per cent of Australian businesses will be able to write off the full value of eligible assets, helping more businesses in Western Sydney to achieve.

These are just a few examples of how we're helping people in our community get ahead in opportunities in Western Sydney. (Time expired)

Mr CRAIG KELLY (Hughes) (11:08): I'm pleased to speak on the motion moved by my good friend the member for Werriwa. However, as to this motion, I think she's actually living in a little bit of a parallel universe when she talks about Western Sydney as somehow missing out on its share of infrastructure funding. Let's just have a look at a few things underway in Western Sydney at the moment. We'll start with the Liverpool Hospital. A $790 million upgrade will see a new integrated cancer centre, an expanded emergency department and enhanced neonatal and intensive care, maternity and critical care wards. It will be both a health and academic precinct—$790 million. And that's just Liverpool Hospital.

In addition, a $632 million upgrade to Campbelltown Hospital is already underway. On top of the upgrade to Liverpool Hospital and the major upgrade to Campbelltown Hospital, there's also a $1.3 billion upgrade to Bankstown hospital. They're all underway now by the New South Wales state government in cooperation with the coalition federal government.

Then we come to what is probably Australia's biggest infrastructure project at the moment, Western Sydney airport. It's a $5.3 billion project. I would encourage anyone who hasn't been out there to go out there and have a look at the massive amount of land works currently underway. We've got something like 4,000 construction jobs during the construction phase.
When it's finally opened, we will be looking at something between 20,000 to 30,000 direct and indirect jobs at Western Sydney airport. But, of course, Western Sydney airport, like all airports, is put at risk by some of the reckless policies that we see, such as the rush to zero emissions. Until someone can explain to us how airplanes are going to work with zero emissions, all these airport developments are at risk.

We also have, not only the Western Sydney airport by itself but also an $8 billion rail project underway in Western Sydney. That's 23 kilometres of new rail line, which will create six new stations. We'll have an airport metro rail line running between the airport and the new stations at Luddenham, Orchard Hills, St Marys and the new airport business park. From this we expect another 14,000 jobs. So, to the idea that Western Sydney is missing out, the facts are the exact opposite. To anyone who wants to have an idea of the development going on with Western Sydney infrastructure, I encourage them to look at the new development at Edmondson Park, with the new railway line, the new roads, the new infrastructure and the new school. I would encourage everyone to have a look out there and see the massive development. It's slightly outside my electorate, but I go through that area maybe once or twice a year, and when I drive through it now I am always shocked at areas I thought I knew reasonably well. With the amount of development that is going on in that area, it is hard to recognise.

If we want to encourage business growth, ultimately the government can only do so much, and we're seeing that in Western Sydney with billions of dollars spent on new hospitals, new railway lines, new road construction and new airports. Ultimately, it comes down to businesses prepared to take the risk—that is, to put their own capital on the line. There must be a risk reward ratio in there that encourages people to innovate, try new business ideas and experiment. That is what we need to encourage in our society. With that, we need lower taxes, less red tape and less government regulation to take the weight off the shoulders of Australian businesses. That is the only way we're going to get the economic growth that we need. And we face a new playing field. The Chinese advised on the weekend that they are prepared to double their economy by 2035. That is what we have to compete with in this nation. (Time expired)

Dr FREELANDER (Macarthur) (11:14): I gladly speak on this motion and second this motion put forward by my friend and colleague the member for Werriwa. I want to thank the member for Werriwa for bringing this matter before the House. She is a staunch advocate for her community and for the greater south-western Sydney community. She truly understands the needs of the people of south-west Sydney. Much like the good people of Macarthur, the people of Werriwa are being let down by this tired, third-term government. The member for Werriwa understands this, and her community is fortunate to have such a strong and passionate representative in this place to stand up against the Morrison government's failings.

The coalition government does not understand the needs of my community of Macarthur, in south-west Sydney. Far from governing in the interests of all Australians, the Morrison government looks after the interests of the privileged few. Under the coalition's tenure, we've witnessed rampant pork-barrelling, dodgy deals, austerity cuts to our hospitals and, indeed, to the ABC, and very little substance in terms of policy. This is a government that would have people believe that responsible economic management is defined as throwing away taxpayers' money on subsidising the operations of billionaire Rupert Murdoch's Foxtel while starving my
community of investment and on spending millions of dollars paying to developers 10 times the cost for land in south-west Sydney. The Morrison government's contempt for my growing community has been demonstrated once again in its recent budget.

My community is experiencing exponential growth. The coalition government knows this, and it is, in fact, by their design. This is their design for development in south-west Sydney, yet they're failing to provide adequate infrastructure. There's no rail link to Western Sydney airport from my electorate of Macarthur. My electorate of Macarthur is the electorate that is growing the fastest and has the highest population increase, yet there is no rail link, and, in fact, the corridor that was previously preserved for a rail link has been built over. There is a rail to Leppington that could easily connect to Western Sydney airport. The government has completely ignored this. It's an absolute disgrace. All those new suburbs of Gregory Hills, Oran Park and Arcadian Hills have been left without public transport links to Western Sydney airport. This is a tragedy that is opening up in front of our eyes, yet this government is doing absolutely nothing.

Koala habitat in south-west Sydney is being destroyed as we speak, yet this government is doing nothing in the electorate of Macarthur to protect the only disease-free urban population of koala bears in the country. They're doing nothing. My sports club of Eagle Vale, which doesn't have adequate change rooms for boys or girls, was denied funding in any of the sports grants and any of the community grants. Hornsby council got over $70 million to turn a quarry into a park, yet my sports clubs can't even get change rooms. It's disgraceful. This government is content with allowing Macarthur and south-west Sydney to be transformed into money-producing organisations for their developer mates, but they are not putting in adequate infrastructure. We have one school in my electorate, Oran Park, that has over 40 temporary classrooms—over 40 classrooms stacked one on top of the other. The people of Macarthur deserve better.

There is a moral imperative here on the government to provide infrastructure in the most rapidly developing community in Sydney, yet they're doing nothing. It's staggering that the government is not planning on leaving a legacy for future generations in south-west Sydney with proper public transport, with proper schools, with proper hospitals and with proper educational facilities. Our local economy is crying out for investment. We need local jobs and we need our local businesses to feel supported and to grow. Families in my community are feeling the highest levels of mortgage stress in the country, yet what this government and what the state government does to them is put increasing tolls on roads that they need to travel long distances on to get to work. It is a disgrace. This government has misused taxpayers' money at the expense of the quality of life of those in south-west Sydney. (Time expired)

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Zimmer): The time allocated for the debate has expired. The debate is adjourned, and the resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

Rabin, Mr Yitzhak

Mr SHARMA (Wentworth) (11:19): I move:

That this House:

(1) notes that:
(a) 4 November 2020 marks 25 years since Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated at an anti-violence rally in support of the Oslo peace process;

(b) a condolence motion for Prime Minister Rabin was moved in this House on 23 November 1995 by the Prime Minister, Mr Keating, and seconded by the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Howard, reflecting the deep sense of loss and shock all Australians felt at the news of Mr Rabin's assassination;

(c) Yitzhak Rabin served as Israel's Prime Minister on two separate occasions, from 1974 to 1977 and then again from 1992 until his death in 1995, in addition to being a decorated general who led Israel's armed forces during the 1967 Six Day War and served as Israel's Ambassador to the United States; and

(d) Prime Minister Rabin promoted peace and co-existence in a turbulent time and region, concluding the Oslo Peace Accords with the Palestinians in 1993, for which he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, and the Israel-Jordan peace treaty in 1994; and

(2) affirms Australia's ongoing commitment to Mr Rabin's vision of a peaceful two-state solution to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, mutually negotiated and agreed by the Israelis and the Palestinians.

It was on 4 November 1995 that Yitzhak Rabin, Israel's 11th Prime Minister at the time, was assassinated at a rally. He had come to address a peace rally in support of the Oslo peace process at a square which was then known as the Kings of Israel Square in Tel Aviv. When the rally ended and he was walking down the steps to his car, he was shot at close range by an assassin. He was taken to the Ichilov Hospital but died on the operating table.

Like many traumatic political events, I remember where I was at the time. I was a student of 20 studying in the United Kingdom. It was a Saturday and I don't think I heard the news until the following morning, the Sunday. As ignorant as I then I was of the Middle East and of Israel, I had a sense that something profound and shocking had taken place, an event whose reverberations would echo across the decades. Indeed, during the four years I spent as Australia's ambassador to Israel, from 2013 to 2017, the scar that this shocking crime left on Israel, its body politic and its society was still highly visible to me.

Rabin was a phenomenal individual. He led a phenomenal life. He was born in the early state of Israel, the Yishuv, in 1922. He joined the Haganah, Israel's early Jewish defence forces, in 1936 and then the specialist Palmach section of the Haganah. He fought alongside the Allies in World War II, assisting in the Allied invasion of Lebanon, then controlled by Vichy France, in 1941. At the end of the war, in 1945, he was arrested by British colonial authorities for supporting the Israel cause and spent several months in jail. In the 1948 War of Independence he fought in Jerusalem and also in the Negev. The high-water mark of his military career came in 1967 with the Six-Day War and Israel's lightning triumph over the assembled armies of invasion from Egypt, Syria and Jordan.

Rabin went on to serve as ambassador to the United States from 1969 to 1974. He was elected to the Knesset and became Prime Minister from 1974 to 1977. He was elected as Prime Minister again in 1992, and it was during this term that he was assassinated. Rabin's career was a remarkable and continuous career of public service and sacrifice dedicated to building the state of Israel. And the Israel of today—modern, successful, secure and vibrant—is built upon the foundations that Rabin and others like him put in place.

Rabin was of course assassinated by a Jewish nationalist, someone opposed to his efforts to reach peace with the Palestinians. I was in a conversation last week with an individual whose brother-in-law was serving as one of Rabin's security detail at the time. He told me that the...
Shabak, Israel's security services, were on the lookout that night for Palestinian nationalists, Arab nationalists—the normal causes of concern for Israel's security services. At the time, they didn't think Rabin would be assassinated by one of his own—but, of course, he was.

Despite Rabin's modern incarnation as a peacenik, he was anything but. He was a hard-nosed general and a patriot who nonetheless recognised that Israel's ultimate security was better served by peace with its neighbours rather than continual armed struggle. This is what led him to recognise the Palestine Liberation Organisation as a political actor, notwithstanding the fact that the PLO's campaign of terrorism had killed hundreds of Israelis. It was for this that he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. And though Rabin of course supported Oslo—was an architect of Oslo—he was very much a realist. He recognised that Israel's ultimate eastern security barrier would lie in the Jordan River Valley. He recognised that any Palestinian entity would be an entity that was less than a state or demilitarised. Rabin cared very much about preserving a Jewish democratic homeland in Israel. This is what motivated him throughout his career. He worried about a bi-national reality—a reality of Israel ruling over the lives of another people who lacked the rights of their own citizens.

And this worry is just as pertinent today as it was in Rabin's time. Rabin undoubtedly would have applauded Israel's recent progress in its relations with the Arab world, because it speaks to the deep security which only recognition and normalisation can achieve for the state of Israel. I affirm Israel's ongoing commitment to an Israel that is secure and at peace with its neighbours and our continued support for a two-state solution on this 25th anniversary of Yitzhak Rabin's death.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Zimmerman): Is the motion seconded?

Mr Leeser: I second the motion and reserve my right to speak.

Mr Burns (Macnamara) (11:24): I rise to support the motion and commend the member for Wentworth on his fine words and his work in bringing this motion to the House. Between 1993 and 1995 the then chief rabbi of the Commonwealth, Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, wrote to the then Prime Minister of Israel, Yitzhak Rabin, outlining his concerns of divisions within Israel about the peace plan that the Prime Minister was putting forward. The rabbi was worried about the rising tensions within Israeli society. He commented that he didn't receive a response at the time. However, on 4 November 1995, Rabbi Jonathan Sacks heard that the Prime Minister had been assassinated at a peace rally. He immediately flew and attended the funeral in Jerusalem. On returning to London the next day, Rabbi Sacks visited the then Israeli ambassador to tell him about the funeral. On a post on his Facebook only last week, Rabbi Sacks said:

... the ambassador handed me an envelope. "This has just arrived for you in the diplomatic bag." It was Yitzhak Rabin's reply to my letter—perhaps one of the last letters he wrote.

In his long and detailed and heartfelt response, Rabin wrote to the rabbi:

Yet I know that there is no long-term answer to our security problems, and to our co-existence with our neighbours, other than peace. For the sake of our children and grandchildren we cannot forfeit this historic opportunity.

Sadly, Rabbi Jonathan Sacks passed away on Saturday morning. I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge a giant not just of the rabbinical world but of Britain, the UK and the wider world. He was a man of giant intellect and of a great moral compass. In this place I
mark Australia's thanks for all of his work and his dedication to a better and more peaceful world.

It was 25 years ago last week that Prime Minister Rabin was assassinated. As the member for Wentworth correctly outlined, these were events that shocked Israel, shocked the Jewish people, shocked Australia and shocked the world. As this motion notes, Prime Minister Paul Keating moved a condolence motion in this House on 23 November 1995, which was seconded by then opposition leader John Howard and carried with bipartisan support. Prime Minister Keating also flew to Israel and attended Prime Minister Rabin's funeral, an act that reflected not just Australia's and Israel's deep friendship at the time but Australia's genuine sadness and admiration of the character of Yitzhak Rabin. As Prime Minister Keating said to this House:

Yitzhak Rabin was a remarkable individual.

... ... ...

... Mr Rabin came to the view cautiously—almost reluctantly, but I believe irresistibly—that the cause to which he had committed his life, that is Israel's survival and security, was now best served by a sustained effort to negotiate a settlement with the Palestinians.

This did not represent any change in his fundamental beliefs. But he had the imagination and the courage to recognise that military superiority alone could not deliver lasting security for Israel.

Yitzhak Rabin was indeed remarkable. He was one of Israel's most decorated military generals, serving as Israel's chief of operations during the 1948 war of independence and rising to Chief of the General Staff of the Israeli defence forces during the Six-Day War. When he entered politics, joining and quickly leading the Israeli Labor Party, he was a hard-headed defence hero. Whilst his first stint as Prime Minister in the 1970s ended after just three years, with the Labor government losing to the conservative Likud party for the first time, he would go on to serve as defence minister in the subsequent unity governments of Yitzhak Shamir and Shimon Peres.

Elected leader of the opposition in 1992, Rabin took a big gamble. He ran on a platform of making peace with Israel's enemies and he won, becoming Prime Minister and serving for over three years until his tragic death. In that time, he signed the landmark Oslo Accords with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, a road map towards what he planned to be a historic and lasting peace with the Palestinians. It saw them share the Nobel Peace Prize with Shimon Peres. He also signed a peace treaty with Jordan, another long-term enemy of Israel, which created a peace which still thankfully holds today. Rabin was a giant. He fought and stood against not just those who opposed him but those who were on his side. May his memory be a blessing.

Mr LEESER (Berowra) (11:29): 'Yitzhak Rabin's story is the story of Israel.' That was a comment made to me by Ron Weiser, the former President of the Zionist Federation of Australia, recently, and the truth of that statement is absolute. Rabin's life had been about making peace for Israel, first as a general and then as a statesman.

People came to admire Rabin for leading Israel's forces to victory in the Six-Day War, when Israel's Arab neighbours simultaneously attacked the fledgling Jewish state. For those of us not alive to witness those events, it's difficult to appreciate the impact of the threat to Israel's very existence in awakening the consciousness of Jews throughout the world. The member for McNamara rightly mentioned Jonathan Sacks, the recently deceased former chief
rabbì of the Commonwealth, who, as the member rightly says, was a towering figure not just of theology but also of Jewish and global religious leadership. He was a student at Cambridge at the time, and he captured the atmosphere. For those of us not alive at that time, it's hard to appreciate. I just want to quote from him:

The State of Israel was exposed to attack on all fronts. A catastrophe seemed to be in the making. I, who had not lived through the Holocaust nor even thought much about it, became suddenly aware that a second tragedy might be about to overtake the Jewish people.

It was then that an extraordinary thing began to happen. Throughout the university Jews suddenly became visible. Day after day they crowded into the little synagogue in the centre of town. Students and dons who had never before publicly identified as Jews could be found there praying … Everyone wanted to help in some way, to express their solidarity, their identification with Israel's fate … the same phenomenon was repeating itself throughout the world … Jews were riveted to their television screens and radios, anxious to hear the latest news, involved, on the edge, as if it were their own lives that were at stake. The rest is history. The war was fought and won. It lasted a mere six days, one of the most spectacular victories in modern history … Collectively the Jewish people had looked in the mirror and … felt part of a people, involved in its fate, implicated in its destiny, caught up in its tragedy, exhilarated by its survival.

In the centre of those events in the Six-Day War was Yitzhak Rabin, the chief of staff of the Israel Defence Forces.

Rabin knew war and never shirked from the responsibilities of defending his state or its people, but he also understood that to realise the full potential for the benefit of humanity Israel could not live in a perpetual state of war and existential crisis. He showed courage in seeking to find peace no matter how unsavoury the partner or how great the challenge. As Prime Minister, Rabin undertook negotiations with Yasser Arafat, the leader of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, that culminated in the 1993 Oslo accords. Rabin captured the mood the day he signed those accords when he said:

… today, is not so easy neither for myself, as a soldier in Israel's wars, nor for the people of Israel, nor to the Jewish people in the Diaspora who are watching us now with great hope, mixed with apprehension … Let me say to you, the Palestinians … We say to you today in a loud and a clear voice: Enough of blood and tears. Enough. We have no desire for revenge. We harbor no hatred towards you. We, like you, are people, people who want to build a home, to plant a tree … to live side by side with you in dignity, in empathy, as human beings, as free men. We are today giving peace a chance, and saying again to you: Enough. Let us pray that a day will come when we all will say: Farewell to the arms.

We wish to open a new chapter in the sad book of our lives together a chapter of mutual recognition, of good neighborliness, of mutual respect, of understanding. We hope to embark on a new era in the history of the Middle East.

That day, Israel officially recognised the PLO and agreed to gradually implement limited self-rule for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In exchange, the Palestinians renounced violence and officially recognised Israel as a state. Sadly, the violence returned with the Second Intifada. In 1994, Rabin won the Nobel Peace Prize. Later that year, he also signed a momentous peace treaty with Jordan.

The territorial concessions made by Rabin aroused intense opposition in Israel. On 4 November 1995, Rabin attended a mass peace rally in Tel Aviv which was held to muster support for the Oslo accords. The rally ended in tragedy when Rabin was assassinated by a
Jewish extremist. The fact that Rabin was killed by a person who shared his faith and his homeland was a particular tragedy.

Rabin had this idea that you don't wait for peace to come; rather you make peace. On the night he was killed people were chanting: 'Don't say the day will come; bring the day.' That is the legacy of Yitzhak Rabin, and, although the Middle East peace process has stalled until recently, the changes in the environment between Israel and its neighbours as a result of the Abraham accords and as a result of Sudan announcing the normalisation of its relations with Israel well and truly honour the memory and legacy of this remarkable leader.

Mr DREYFUS (Isaacs) (11:35): Yitzhak Rabin was one of Israel's greatest Prime Ministers. He stands in the same company as renowned Labour leaders like David Ben-Gurion and Golda Meir. Not only that, Rabin's courage and integrity in that role make him stand out as one of the great global leaders of the past generation. In today's world in particular, Rabin's legacy of leadership is clear: during his time as the Prime Minister of the State of Israel, Rabin provided a compelling example of what national leadership looks like when the role is embraced by a person of courage, integrity and a commitment to facing the unvarnished truth of the challenges before them. In all these matters, Rabin demonstrated national leadership that is the polar opposite of the example provided by the ideologically-blinkered and populist rulers of many nations today.

Rabin knew what it was to fight for his country. As a young man, he fought for the Palmach in the years leading up to the establishment of modern Israel and then he fought on as a member of the Israel Defense Forces, rapidly rising through the ranks until finally serving as IDF Chief of Staff during Israel's greatest military victory in the 1967 war. Yet the same man who helped Israel take the Occupied Territories also understood that they would need to be relinquished in the interests of peace. In 1993, in the context of the Oslo peace process, Rabin had the courage to tell his former enemies in the PLO, as well as the nation that elected him to lead them:

We, the soldiers who have returned from battles stained with blood; we who have seen our relatives and friends killed before our eyes; we who have attended their funerals and cannot look in the eyes of their parents; we who have come from a land where parents bury their children; we who have fought against you, the Palestinians—we say to you today, in a loud and a clear voice: enough of blood and tears. Enough.

Rabin's leadership as a courageous soldier for both war and then peace was recognised around the world. His role as a peacemaker was acknowledged with the Nobel Peace Prize that he was awarded in 1994. It also formed the foundation of the deep friendship that he formed with US President Clinton as they took the bold actions they understood would be necessary if Israel and the Palestinians were to bring to an end their long history of blood and tears.

Rabin's legacy seems even clearer today than it did at the time of his murder 25 years ago. One of his great strengths was his willingness to face the truth of the world and the challenges it posed for Israel. It wasn't that he didn't want a larger state incorporating all the lands mentioned in the Torah; it was that Rabin had the courage to face the reality that another nation, the Palestinians, held a yearning for those same lands and not only that but justice required their claim to be accommodated too. It was that Rabin had the courage to tell his nation that painful compromises were necessary, a message that was particularly difficult for the Israeli settlers to accept because their ties to those territories were both genuine and deep.
Rabin had the courage to truly lead rather than to merely follow. Tragically for all, Rabin was cut down by the bullets of an extremist Jewish settler before he could implement his vision for peace, and the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians continues to the present day. We cannot know what Israel would look like today if Rabin had lived on to lead his country towards peace.

I am proud that support for the State of Israel as a vibrant and democratic nation and for Rabin's vision of a just and enduring peace with the Palestinians remain areas of bipartisanship in Australia's often bitterly divided parliament. I never had the honour of meeting Prime Minister Rabin but, as a friend of Israel and as a friend of peace, on this 25th anniversary of his death, I echo the words of President Clinton, who farewelled his dear friend with the simple but resonant shalom, chaver—goodbye, friend.

Debate adjourned.

Nuclear Weapons

Mr JOSH WILSON (Fremantle) (11:39): I move:

That this House:

(1) notes:

(a) 6 and 9 August 2020 will mark, respectively, the 75th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki;

(b) by the end of 1945, it is estimated that 213,000 people had died in those communities, and the legacy of chronic and terminal illness, stillbirths, birth defects, survivor discrimination, and acute environmental harm and contamination continues to the present day;

(c) 2020 also marks the 50th anniversary of the coming into force of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty;

(d) the ongoing work of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, an initiative founded in Australia that received the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize for advancing a Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons; and

(e) since 2017, 81 countries have signed and 38 have ratified the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which will enter into force after the 50th ratification;

(2) further notes with concern:

(a) a number of recent developments that weaken the international system of weapons monitoring, impair progress towards nuclear disarmament, and undermine agreements to prevent nuclear proliferation and explosive testing;

(b) the fact that the hands of the Doomsday Clock have been moved to within 100 seconds of midnight, representing the greatest yet marked risk of nuclear conflict; and

(c) a 2019 report by the United Kingdom Parliamentary Committee on International Relations that warns the risk of nuclear weapons is now as great as it was during the height of the Cold War; and

(3) calls on the Government to:

(a) voice its concern about the deterioration in the multilateral framework for achieving nuclear disarmament and for minimising the risk of nuclear conflict;

(b) voice its concern at indications the United States:

(i) intends to withdraw from the Treaty on Open Skies;

(ii) may allow the START agreement to expire in February 2021; and

(iii) has abandoned the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty; and

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(c) increase our diplomatic focus and the resources needed to play a greater role in global efforts to reduce conflict, build regional and international cooperation, resist the further proliferation of nuclear weapons, and progress their ultimate elimination.

In this extraordinary year we are 75 years on from a whole series of historical events, because, of course, 1945 was itself extraordinary. It saw the end of the most awful conflict in human history, but, unfortunately, the awful punctuation point of the war signalled the beginning of the nuclear age. On 6 and 9 August 1945 the United States dropped atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Those cities were not decisive military targets; they were urban centres full of civilians. Nothing justified that action. As President Truman's chief of staff, Admiral William Leahy, said, in dropping those bombs the US 'had adopted an ethical standard common to the barbarians of the Dark Ages.' The explosions resulted in the deaths of more than 200,000 civilians by the end of 1945. In the aftermath survivors staggered through the streets, hair and skin gone, in many cases scorched to the bone, crying out for something to drink. It is appropriate and heartbreaking that above the Nagasaki peace memorial hall there is a basin always brimming with water.

We've travelled in time 75 years away from those nuclear events, but there is a risk that we assume such catastrophes are now safely in the past when in reality we may be travelling towards the next one. The truth is no-one watching recent developments in relation to nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation could feel optimistic. No-one watching North Korea or watching as the US considers a resumption of nuclear testing or as Russia openly develops new tactical nuclear weapons can be sanguine about the state of the world when it comes to our nuclear safety.

So what needs to be done? We absolutely must be engaged as citizens in the cause of peace and disarmament to be, as the Australian poet John Forbes said, a spanner in the works of death. We cannot allow matters of military policy procurement and engagement to be areas of assessment and decision-making that are preserved for some insider security elite. One of the principles of liberal democracy which I think we've all had cause to consider over the past few weeks is that a defence and security apparatus must always be at the service of and subordinate to civilian government. We must defend and uphold that vital principle of democratic structure and culture at every turn.

While we take nothing away from Australia's high-calibre agencies and personnel, it should never be the case that any person in the broader community, let alone any person in this place, feels hesitant to question defence or security policy, orthodoxies and decisions. The idea that those matters should be left exclusively to defence and security insiders, especially inside government, without proper scrutiny is dangerous. Australia has made wrong and harmful decisions of that kind. We allowed the British to explode nuclear bombs in this country without any proper parliamentary process. We went to the war in Iraq on the basis of faulty intelligence and through unchallenged decisions of the executive that ignored evidence provided in our own intelligence assessments. It's always worth remembering with regard to so-called military solutions that to the person with a hammer every problem looks like a nail.

In the time since this motion was lodged, the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons has received its 50th ratification, which means it will come into force in January. At a time when the multilateral framework for disarmament and nonproliferation has frayed, any prospect of taking normative and practical steps towards the elimination of
nuclear weapons should be welcomed with open arms. Australia has a strong tradition of leading work to limit the danger of nuclear weapons. Traditions need to be maintained and renewed. Diplomatic efforts on that front should be more purposeful and better resourced. We should regain our position as a country that is prepared to be out of step with the status quo in the cause of peace.

I continue to support the consideration of a war powers act to better shape and constrain how this country decides to be involved in military conflict where Australia is not directly under threat. I am glad that Labor's position is to sign and ratify the nuclear weapons ban treaty through work to address its interaction with the NPT and to build wider international support.

In 2016, I had the privilege of meeting Taniguchi Sumiteru in Nagasaki, with a group of his fellow 'hibakusha'—nuclear survivors. As a teenager, Mr Sumiteru was blown from his postal delivery bike by the blast. A photograph of his back, stripped of flesh, became one of the signature images of the bomb. Until his death in 2017, he was an unstinting anti-nuclear activist and in his memoir he writes:

Let Nagasaki be the last atomic bombed site; let us be the last victims. Let the voice for the elimination of nuclear weapons spread all over the world.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr S Georganas): Is the motion seconded?

Ms Kearney: I second the motion and reserve my right to speak.

Mr CONNELLY (Stirling) (11:45): I thank the member for Fremantle for bringing this motion because it enables me to speak more broadly about Australia's position regarding nuclear technologies. In 1970, Australia decided to forgo the possible pursuit of nuclear weapons, by agreeing to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty. However, we want the world, including Australia, to enjoy the positive benefits of nuclear technologies. But in Australia we are being held back by an outdated ideology that seeks to paint nuclear technology as inherently evil. The reality is that Australia has the largest reserves of uranium in the world, which we have been mining since 1954. We have a nuclear reactor at Lucas Heights in Sydney, operational since 1958, where we undertake cutting-edge medical and industrial research, producing radio isotopes for the detection and treatment of cancers. Australia already produces and manages low and intermediate level nuclear waste. Acknowledging that Australia is already a mature participant in the global nuclear industry, let's have a mature conversation about additional opportunities.

In the year of my birth, 1978, the average price of household power was about 4c per kilowatt hour, and by 2018 that had ballooned to 33c per kilowatt hour. Electricity is a non-discretionary purchase for Australian homes and, when the price increases, this decreases real incomes. Unless we want only the rich to have high living standards we must address cost-of-living pressures as we transition towards carbon-neutral energy. The cost of energy also deeply impacts our international competitiveness. Again, back to 1978, the average Australian electricity price was half that of France and Japan and much lower than the US, the UK and South Korea. Australian electricity is now more expensive than in any of those countries, and we compete with those countries, and energy is one of our biggest costs, making our goods far less competitive. If we are serious about being competitive in manufacturing—especially post coronavirus—we need to be serious about affordable, reliable energy.
The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change considers nuclear energy comparable to renewables, such as wind and solar, in terms of carbon emissions. Nuclear power plants are also a reliable source of energy, while solar and wind are intermittent and do not always produce power when homes and businesses need it. There may also be enormous potential for nuclear energy to contribute to the production of hydrogen as an environmentally friendly fuel. There are genuine concerns about the safety of nuclear power, so we must understand the actual risks and how these can be mitigated. Nobody is proposing that we build a first-generation, second-generation or even third-generation reactor here in Australia. The first-generation reactor in Chernobyl melted down and three second-generation reactors in Fukushima melted down following an earthquake and two tsunamis that knocked out the safety systems. Since these terrible events, engineering designs have reduced or removed many of the risks. So Australia should now consider the newer, safer Gen III+ and Gen IV small modular reactors.

Whilst nuclear waste is toxic, there's much less of it than from other power generation sources which can also be toxic. For example, a coal plant produces about 300,000 tonnes of ash a year. Solar panels, windmills and batteries, full of toxic metals, are currently placed in landfill at the end of their useful life. Nuclear energy is a complex undertaking and any project would be decades in the making, which is why we must start a conversation now by commissioning an independent assessment of the economic viability; an assessment of the regulation and the skills required for a safe nuclear industry in Australia; and an expert body to manage independent community engagement. And no project should go ahead without the free, prior and informed consent of impacted communities.

The Labor Party has deliberately decided to dissent from last year's report into the potential for nuclear energy in Australia, saying that this was 'a costly and wasteful distraction'. Nuclear policy should continue to be bipartisan, so I encourage the Australian Labor Party to be courageous enough to participate in the consideration of nuclear energy in Australia. We cannot afford to allow outdated ideologies to threaten the recovery of Australia's future in this complex world. Success is not assured. Rather, it depends on the maturity and the courage of all Australians to make reasoned and bold decisions in the national interest.

Ms KEARNEY (Cooper) (11:50): I rise to second the motion of the member for Fremantle, which is on the prohibition of nuclear weapons. We've just passed the anniversary of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki nuclear blasts. Hundreds of thousands of people died as a result of those bombs, including Australian prisoners of war and troops sent in immediately after VP day. Of course, the testing of nuclear weapons, whether in Western Australia, at Woomera or in the Pacific, also led to many deaths from radiation-induced disease. Nuclear weapons are weapons of mass destruction and should not be present on the face of the earth.

Australia has a proud history of opposing such weapons, especially those which are used on civilians. Out of the ashes of the war we led the way, through Doc Evatt and the Labor Party, in establishing the United Nations in the 1940s. We led the way in negotiating and ratifying conventions against chemical weapons in 1972 and against landmines and cluster munitions in more recent times. Gough Whitlam ratified the nuclear non-proliferation treaty in 1973 and that treaty is still important in stopping the spread of nuclear weapons. However, the nuclear non-proliferation treaty does not say that possessing nuclear weapons is
unacceptable. Its sole purpose is that weapons shouldn't spread from those already possessing them—the 'nuclear club'—to those who seek to acquire them.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was concluded in July 2017 with the support of 122 states. Unfortunately, Australia was one of those few countries that did not vote for that treaty. Under this government, we didn't even participate in the negotiation of the treaty, and we voted against the 2016 UN General Assembly resolution that established the mandate for negotiations. It isn't a proud record. Despite that, only a few days ago, the treaty reached the 50 ratifications needed to bring it into force. I, for one, argue in this place that Australia should work towards signing and ratifying the treaty. It sends a message to the world, including our powerful friends, that possession of nuclear weapons is not acceptable. I congratulate Nobel Prize winners the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons or ICAN, an Australian-initiated NGO, on the wonderful work they've done in initiating this treaty and getting the necessary ratifications to bring it into force.

The ALP has committed to working toward the ratification of the treaty. The ultimate environmental and human disaster would be a large-scale nuclear war. I'm horrified about the spread of nuclear weapons. I note the ramping up of Cold War rhetoric between the US, Russia, China and other countries, behaviour not seen for several decades. The Morrison government needs to show the leadership that ICAN has shown. We need to show leadership in a less rational world. Labor at our national conference in 2018 committed that Labor in government will sign and ratify the treaty, after taking into account the need to ensure an effective verification and enforcement architecture, to ensure the interaction of the ban treaty with the longstanding non-proliferation treaty, and to work to achieve universal support for the ban.

Critics of the treaty say that ratification will affect our strategic alliances, especially the US alliance. The US alliance is very important to Australia and to the Australian Labor Party. Ratifying this treaty as a sovereign state should not affect our relationship with the incoming Biden administration. Any issues should be able to be worked through. We should be able to continue our military alliances and at the same time express our opposition to nuclear weapons. I believe that support for this treaty will not affect our ability to host or participate in exercises or affect our capacity to host bases, whether listening posts or military bases. These are separate questions. But what our support will do is indicate that Australia can stand on its own two feet. We can stand on the right side of history with those who don't have nuclear weapons and say that the possession of nuclear weapons is no longer acceptable. New Zealand took a strong position on visits by US nuclear armed warships 35 years ago. That action did not impede their capacity to be part of the ANZUS alliance or to be a strong voice on international issues. I strongly support the motion.

Mr HASTIE (Canning) (11:55): In 428 AD, St Augustine, the father of just war theory, wrote to Count Darius, who was a court official sent to Africa to negotiate with a rebellious general by the name of Boniface. He wrote in this letter:

But it is a higher glory still to stay war itself with a word, than to slay men with the sword, and to procure or maintain peace by peace, not by war. For those who fight, if they are good men, doubtless seek for peace; nevertheless it is through blood. Your mission, however, is to prevent the shedding of blood. Yours, therefore, is the privilege of averting that calamity which others are under the necessity of producing.
How true are these words for political leaders, especially in the nuclear age and especially today in a far more fraught strategic environment. Our mission should always be to avert war and to seek peace through peace.

I want to thank the honourable member for Fremantle for this motion, and I acknowledge that it comes from a spirit of goodwill. However, I don't think it's realistic, and that's my position today. I want to acknowledge the terrible suffering that the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki experienced in 1945 with the dropping of the atomic weapons on those two cities. I also want to acknowledge the many civilians who suffered during the Second World War. I think of the 410,000 German civilians who died through Allied air raids, particularly those in Dresden, where, over a two-day period, 25,000 perished through bombing. The single most deadly bombing raid in history, in fact, is the firebombing of Tokyo on 9 and 10 March 1945. One hundred thousand people died in that raid and one million people were left homeless. So, whilst nuclear weapons remind us of how bad war can be, we often forget the cost that comes from conventional military conflict.

The truth of the matter is that war is inherently escalatory, so it's no surprise that, in total war, World War II gave rise to nuclear weapons, and I don't think there's a chance of those nuclear weapons disappearing any time soon. Our task is to manage the nations with those nuclear weapons and avert war at all costs. We've seen how mankind has managed to find ways to kill more efficiently since the advent of gunpowder. So Australia's role will always be to broker peace, to act in a neighbourly way and to bring nations together rather than pull them apart, and we do a good job of that through the multilateral institutions of which we are part, including the United Nations.

I want to focus very quickly on the motion and where it asks the government to raise its concern to the United States over its abandonment of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, which was negotiated by the last General Secretary of the Communist Party in the USSR, Gorbachev, and President Reagan. It took a long time to get to there, and it was a good initiative, and of course we support it in its historical context, but the world has moved on. President Obama in 2014 wrote to President Putin about the testing of nuclear weapons on cruise missiles, and just recently the United States through President Trump has withdrawn from that. I can understand why. The development of militarised reefs and atolls in the South China Sea by the PRC has meant that the strategic environment has changed. Russia is in violation of the treaty itself.

Of course, our closest security partner is the United States, and we want the United States to be strong and be able to do its job in the Indo-Pacific, where it currently does an excellent job. The Indo-Pacific, though, is a very dangerous part of the world. We have India with nuclear weapons, we have China with nuclear weapons, we have North Korea with nuclear weapons, we have Pakistan with nuclear weapons and we have the US with nuclear weapons. We have France; there is a French submarine alongside in Western Australia today. We have the United Kingdom with nuclear weapons and, of course, we have Israel. Fundamentally, this government will always take a realistic approach to these problems, we'll always seek peace and we'll always seek to avert the great tragedy that will come with nuclear conflict.

The SPEAKER: The time allotted for this debate has expired. The debate is adjourned, and the resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.
QUESTIONS TO THE SPEAKER

Social Services and Other Legislation Amendment (Coronavirus and Other Measures) Bill 2020

The SPEAKER (12:00): I wish to make a brief statement in response to a question I received from the Manager of Opposition Business at the end of last week. On the last sitting day I was asked a question by the Manager of Opposition Business about the impact on the potential interpretation of an act of a summing up speech by the Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction during debate on the Social Services and Other Legislation Amendment (Coronavirus and Other Measures) Bill 2020, which the Manager of Opposition Business said was about a different bill. The Manager of Opposition Business made the point that a minister's second reading speech is of importance for statutory interpretation by the courts. He is correct in saying that and, indeed, *House of Representatives Practice* makes this point in several places.

This use of the second reading speech is provided for in the Acts Interpretation Act 1901. Specifically, section 15AB of that act provides expressly for this potential interpretive use of a minister's second reading speech. Even though that section also provides more generally for the use of extrinsic material in the interpretation, it is the minister's second reading speech which is the most important. The speech to which the Manager of Opposition Business referred was not the second reading speech but, rather, the summing up on the second reading, and there is an important and critical difference—that is, the court would look to the second reading, not the summing up.

I've provided this response because I thought it was in the interests of members to clarify matters. I do have to point out that in doing so, and having considered the matter, I also want to make it clear that I'm not the arbiter on these matters. Indeed, there's no role for me in checking whether correct speeches are made on bills. I hope this clarifies matters for the House. After question time I'll make another statement on the subject of ministerial statements, but I won't do that now.

BUSINESS

Days and Hours of Meeting

Mr MORTON (Tangney—Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister and Cabinet) (12:02): by leave—I move:

That so much of the standing orders be suspended as would prevent the following from occurring in the Federation Chamber to facilitate the consideration of Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2020-2021 and two related bills:

(1) on Tuesday, 10 November the Federation Chamber to meet from 12.15 pm to 1.30 pm for government business in addition to its scheduled hours of meeting, there to be no constituency statements by Members or grievance debate and an adjournment debate to commence at 7.15 pm and conclude at 7.30 pm;

(2) on Wednesday, 11 November the Federation Chamber to meet from 11.45 am, with government business, from then until 1 pm, 4 pm to 4.45 pm and 7 pm to 7.30 pm, and constituency statements by Members to take place from 4.45 pm to 6 pm, followed by a grievance debate until 7 pm;

(3) on Thursday, 12 November government business to have priority over all other business and the Federation Chamber to adjourn at 1 pm without debate; and
(4) any variation to this arrangement to be made only by a motion moved by a Minister.

Mr BURKE (Watson—Manager of Opposition Business) (12:04): The opposition supports the motion. The consideration in detail process in the Federation Chamber is an important part of how the parliament operates. I would remind members that, even though sometimes speeches take the form of questions, it follows the protocol of debate, not the protocol of question time, which means that, if a speech is given by the opposition and the minister then responds directly, in an alternating call, the next speech would go to the opposition side. Sometimes we've had a view that the minister's speech doesn't count in the alternating call, which is a similar process to question time. That's not how consideration in detail operates. Normally, most weeks we get one blow-up where that process starts to fall apart, so I thought it was worth referring to it specifically in the chamber at the exact time that this motion is going through.

Question agreed to.

BILLS

Social Services and Other Legislation Amendment (Coronavirus and Other Measures) Bill 2020
Consideration in Detail

Consideration resumed.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr S Georganas) (12:05): The question is that this bill be agreed to.

Bill agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr MORTON (Tangney—Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister and Cabinet) (12:06): by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

The Social Services and Other Legislation Amendment (Coronavirus and Other Measures) Bill 2020 includes a number of beneficial measures that are primarily directed at supporting people who have been impacted by the economic consequences of COVID-19. The bill provides additional assistance through two further economic support payments of $250 to around five million payment recipients and cardholders in the lead-up to Christmas and the new year, as part of the Australian government's response to COVID-19.

From 1 January 2021, amendments are made so that the six-month period between 25 March 2020 and 24 September 2020 will automatically be recognised as contributing to existing workforce independence criteria for youth allowance. This measure supports young people whose path towards demonstrating independence through work has been disrupted by the economic impacts of COVID-19. The same concession will be available to Abstudy recipients through changes to the ABSTUDY Policy Manual. The bill also creates temporary incentives in the income support system to encourage young Australians to undertake seasonal agricultural work to help address concerns across the agricultural sector about immediate workforce availability for the upcoming harvest season. From 1 March 2021, the new criteria will recognise a person who earns at least $15,000 through employment in the agricultural industry between 30 November 2020 and 31 December 2021 as independent for
the purposes of the youth allowance (student), subject to a parental income threshold. The same concession will be available for Abstudy through changes to the ABSTUDY Policy Manual.

The bill will also introduce the revised paid parental leave work test period for a limited time for people who access paid parental leave pay and dad and partner pay who do not meet the current work test provisions because their employment has been affected by COVID-19. This will enable most individuals with a genuine work history prior to the pandemic to qualify for payments under the paid parental leave scheme. The bill also makes amendments to address inconsistencies in payments in relation to newborn children available to families affected by stillbirth and infant death by aligning the amount that eligible families are able to access after a stillbirth or a child's death shortly after birth or within its first year. These amendments also remove discrepancies within the payment system in respect of multiple instances of stillbirth or infant death within the same family.

Lastly, the bill makes technical amendments to child support law to allow for alternative figures to be used in place of the male total average weekly earnings trend figure and average weekly earnings trend figure for the purposes of child support assessment calculations. From May 2020, the Australian Bureau of Statistics has temporarily suspended publications of trend estimates for all average weekly earnings series, due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the labour market. Child support law does not currently permit alternative trend figures to be used.

I commend the bill to the House.

Mr BURKE (Watson—Manager of Opposition Business) (12:09): I think it's important for the House to appreciate what's happening right now and why. That's the first time in a very long time that we've heard a speech from the minister at the table on the motion that the bill be read a third time. It was very well delivered. It was a good speech, I say to the assistant minister. There's a reason why that just happened, and it's that the minister for energy, when it was time to sum up the second reading debate, gave a speech about a completely different bill. The ruling that the Speaker gave a few moments ago was about the debate that we are now in. As I explain these issues, I would say: 'By all means, if you want to take a relevance point of order, go for it.' But no-one took one on the minister, and he was completely irrelevant to the Social Services and Other Legislation Amendment (Coronavirus and Other Measures) Bill 2020 when he was talking.

What the minister for energy did does say something about the minister for energy, and it does say something about the entire government. It's a point that needs to be made. Because, after the minister for energy had given a speech about a different bill—and, might I add, not only was that an odd thing to do; it was a speech summing up the debate. Therefore, it meant he had a speech to sum up a debate that had not occurred. The debate hadn't occurred, and yet, fully written, there was a speech summing up the points that had been made in the debate that hadn't been. That's the way this government now treats the parliament.

Some people have rushed around saying, 'Who's to blame?' And some people have referred to who handed him the speech and things like that. Can I say: the government's to blame. It's as simple as that. There are many parliaments around the country—and, not too recently, this used to be one of them—where, when you had a piece of legislation, the relevant minister would come into the chamber and move it, would be here for some chunk of the debate and

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would come in at the end to give the summing up speech on their own bill. Throughout the course of the debate, they would have had members of their personal staff sitting in the adviser's gallery and taking notes on what was said. And then, when they came up to give the summing up speech, they in fact summed up a debate that did occur, not an imagined debate that was summed up by the minister for energy.

What's behind the minister for energy making an error like this? We're told that he was handed the speech. We haven't been told that he downloaded this one. This is a speech that never appeared on the City of Sydney council website. This is a speech that, in some way, was handed to him. But here's the question: why is it, on the social services legislation, that it's the minister for energy who the government sends in here? Why is it that, on legislation of fundamental importance, this government now doesn't care who is in the chamber for legislation that they are meant to have personal carriage of? If we had a full separation of powers system, like, for example, the United States, we wouldn't get the ministers in the legislature, but here we do. We have the system of responsible government. The concept of that is meant to be that the government is responsible and that the ministers are responsible for the legislation that they deal with. In so doing, the ministers are also responsible for debating that legislation.

This government has just given up on that completely. It's yet another way that the government has decided that the parliament doesn't matter. It's yet another way that a prime minister who doesn't like people disagreeing with him in public—or, I am told, in private—has found to try to make debate as irrelevant as possible, to the point where the minister for energy gave a speech completely irrelevant to the debate he was summing up. Their approach, to make sure that debate is irrelevant, is to debate in an irrelevant way. That's where they've landed. But I've got to say that—and the government should think about this—if you work on the basis that what happens at that dispatch box is simply that someone hands you a script and you read it out, that's a joke. That's not a parliament, that's just a joke. It's a joke if whoever you might employ in your office is responsible for every word you say. You don't care which minister reads it out; whatever they get handed, like a trained seal, they will read those words and no other words will come from their lips. They will sum up a debate that has not occurred, but it doesn't matter because, hey, it's only the parliament.

What happened in this debate when the parliament last sat is without precedent, extraordinary and embarrassing. It's just embarrassing to be a country where the government no longer cares not only which minister deals with the legislation but even whether they're speaking on the right legislation. So I say to those opposite and to the chamber itself: it should not have been the case that a speech summing up debate had to wait for a couple of weeks and for it to come from an assistant minister—

Mr Morton interjecting—

Mr BURKE: No, I said you delivered it well. I've never heard you that passionate before. But the minister responsible should be the one in here debating it. That should be the case for every bill. We don't just have to look at when Labor was in government; Peter Costello used to take a whole lot of pride in moving his own legislation. You accept the Treasurer won't always be here to sum up the debate. You get the call that it's time for your debate to be summed up, you would make sure to get down here and you would sum up a debate that occurred on a bill that mattered to you. You were the person who dealt with the department to
get it drafted, who would take it through the cabinet process and bring it to the parliament and see it through to the final vote. That's the job of a minister. It's not the job of a staffer to just hand you words so you'll act like a trained seal.

So I remind members—we're not going to move motions but, I'll tell you what, we're going to make a point—that this government is treating the parliament as a joke. As a result, they have embarrassed themselves. If an error were to be made, if a mistake were to occur, it's a reasonable presumption that it would have been the Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction who would have done it. That's sort of been a bit of a pattern. But on this one the truth is it could have been any of them, because it is rare now for the minister responsible to take any interest or any responsibility for their own legislation. So, those opposite, have a think again about whether you actually wanted to be members of parliament, because if your ambition were to write speeches and contribute to debate, it sounds like you'd be better off being staffers because that's how you get your words onto Hansard with this government. That's the way to make it happen. If that's the way to get power in the Morrison government, good luck to you; you can all go off and get jobs as staffers. But don't occupy seats in this chamber unless you have some intention of making the speeches, taking the responsibility and doing your job.

Mr BUTLER (Hindmarsh—Deputy Manager of Opposition Business) (12:18): First of all, in addressing this matter, I want to pay tribute to the assistant minister at the desk. He is veritably the Winston Wolfe of this government. He's had to come in and clean up yet another mess, the complete mess that the Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction has made of the Social Services and Other Legislation Amendment (Coronavirus and Other Measures) Bill 2020. Why on earth anyone with authority decided to let the minister for energy do anything outside of his own portfolio, which is he is very busy messing up himself, is utterly beyond me and utterly beyond all of those on this side of the House.

But there are some serious issues, as my colleague the Manager of Opposition Business set out. They go to the accountability of ministers to this parliament. It doesn't take a Rhodes scholar to pick up the right speech. There are a couple of speeches before you and a few options to deliver, but it doesn't take a Rhodes scholar to pick up the right summing-up speech for a second reading debate and deliver it to the parliament. But if you don't pick up the right speech—I've never seen it in my time; I haven't been here as long as the member for Watson has, but I don't think he has seen this happen before either—and if you don't realise you are delivering a speech that is completely unrelated to the bill before the House, at least have the courage and the honesty and the fortitude of character to come back to the House and admit your mistake. Don't send in the Winston Wolfe of the Morrison government to fix up this mess; come in yourself and show courage. This is the problem with this minister for energy: he makes mistake after mistake in his own portfolio; every now and then, he is allowed to mess up someone else's portfolio; and he refuses to come into this House and fess up. We've seen over the last week or 10 days, through the freedom-of-information process, WhatsApp messages from the minister's office around the dodgy documents scandal that the minister was involved in. We now know from those WhatsApp messages that even the night before the publication of the dodgy documents in The Daily Telegraph the minister's office had realised they got it wrong. They realised that, at some stage on that afternoon, after The Daily
Telegraph contacted them and then an office member or a member of staff of the minister went back to the website—

A government member interjecting—

Mr Butler: I think you should take a point of relevance then. Given that the minister's summing up speech was about another bill, I think it will sound rather ill in your mouth, Assistant Minister, to take a point of relevance on this. Anyway, the staff members realised that they had read the wrong document, that they had been led astray, and that was about to be published the next day. One of the staff members sends a WhatsApp message to another staff manager that says, Am I reading this right? They've realised it is not a few thousand dollars, which is the actual figure on the website. They've told The Daily Telegraph that $1.4 million was spent by 10 people on domestic travel in 12 months. Again, it doesn't take a Rhodes scholar to do some pretty rudimentary maths and work out that that is $28,000 of domestic travel per person every week for 50 weeks of the year, which is about 20 return flights, every week, per person, from Sydney to Melbourne—and also, if you can find some time between those flights, six or seven flights from Sydney to Perth every single week. But no, they didn't realise that! So the staff member sends a WhatsApp message to the minister—again, before this has ever broken, at a point where they could have pulled it back if they had had the fortitude of character to do so—and says: 'Boss, just a heads up for tomorrow: it's a bit messier than we'd hoped.'

This is a minister who makes a mess of every single thing he touches. There's a lesson from this: do not let this minister touch another portfolio; he's already busy enough messing up his own. And it's not just other colleagues that have to fill in for his mess; we now seen Matt Kean, the New South Wales energy minister, to his credit, having to fill in because this Commonwealth minister is completely incapable of putting together an energy policy that will pull through the investment in renewable energy that the state of New South Wales needs with its fleet of ageing and increasingly unreliable coal generators. Again, a New South Wales Liberal government has had to step in. It's been able to pull together the National Party, the Liberal Party and the Labor Party in New South Wales and put together a very impressive energy policy that will fill a space left by this minister's complete ineptitude.

What really grates with us on this side, though, is not just the minister's ineptitude, his inability to add up, his inability to pick up the right speech; it is the lack of moral fortitude. Any reasonable person would come into this chamber and say: 'I got it wrong. I apologise for the inconvenience to other members of this House for having to come back and do this all over again'—for the Winston Wolfe of the Morrison government having to clean up his mess again. But he just hasn't got it.

Ms Burney (Barton) (12:24): My colleagues the member for Watson and the member for Hindmarsh have made extremely good and pertinent points about the energy minister. I don't want to dwell on that—I think the points have been made—except to say that the minister responsible for social services on that side of the House is Minister Robert. That might explain a few things!

It would have been sensible, as the member for Watson has pointed out, for Minister Robert to be here in the chamber responding, not the energy minister, who happened to be around at the right time. Unfortunately, the bill that he was referring to had not been debated; that was the next bill in the House. The remarkable thing is that he got through his whole
speech without realising it was the wrong speech, which just astounded me. We just couldn't believe what was happening.

But let me address the amendments that Labor moved. We are very disappointed that our amendments, which were modest and which would have meant a lot to many hundreds of thousands of people, were not supported. Our amendments were about considering not only pensioners who are on the age pension but also carers and people on DSP, the disability support pension. Those people have been left behind by this government, as have the 300,000 unemployed Australians over the age of 55, who experience the greatest difficulty in getting work. They've been left behind by this government, and the almost one million Australians on unemployment support, who are excluded from the hiring subsidy, have been left behind. The Prime Minister constantly says we're all in this together. Well, if we're all in this together, the government would have supported the very modest amendments that Labor put forward in this debate. Apart from the energy minister getting the wrong speech and making the wrong speech, it was a complete ignoring of the needs of the groups that I've outlined. Our amendments were modest, they were thought through, and they were not anything that the government should not be considering or that Labor hasn't consistently argued during this pandemic.

I endorse the comments from the member for Watson and the member for Hindmarsh, but I also make very clear to the House that the amendments that the government have rejected are amendments that would have supported many hundreds of thousands of Australians who are experiencing great difficulty, including increased costs, because of this pandemic. When the Leader of the Labor Party spoke, he made the point that prior to the pandemic pensioners did not have to buy hand sanitiser or masks. They did not have to have the PPE that we all know is so critical to addressing this pandemic. That is an extra cost. We know that health costs have gone up. We know that food costs have increased. We know that many people are absolutely struggling, and our amendments went to those people who are finding it most difficult. This side of the House understands those needs. Clearly, the other side of the House is ignoring the needs of the many hundreds of thousands of people that I've articulated.

In closing, can I say that the disregard shown by this government is epitomised by the minister for energy giving the wrong speech in the closing comments on the Social Services and Other Legislation Amendment (Coronavirus and Other Measures) Bill 2020. It just goes to the heart of the lack of attention, the lack of care and the lack of consideration for those people who are going to miss out because the government have not adopted the very modest amendments that Labor has moved.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Fair Work Amendment (Improving Unpaid Parental Leave for Parents of Stillborn Babies and Other Measures) Bill 2020

Second Reading

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr Burke (Watson—Manager of Opposition Business) (12:29): I rise to express my party's support for the Fair Work Amendment (Improving Unpaid Parental Leave for Parents
of Stillborn Babies and Other Measures) Bill 2020 before the House right now. This legislation amending the Minimum Employment Standards within the Fair Work Act to provide equal, unpaid parental leave entitlements to parents who experience stillbirth is long overdue and will make a significant difference.

It's difficult and it's painful to imagine the grief of parents who have this terrible experience. Sadly, it's all too often a tragedy suffered in silence, and that's why I stand in admiration of all those who've campaigned tirelessly on this issue. The legislation before us is the result of many years of hard-fought advocacy led by the Stillbirth Foundation and other organisations alongside parents who have suffered stillbirth as well as many MPs across the political spectrum who have championed this issue. The Select Committee on Stillbirth Research and Education, chaired by Senator Malarndirri McCarthy, was the first national inquiry to report on the impact of stillbirth on Australian families and the economy.

Six babies a day are stillborn in Australia, a number significantly higher than other comparable countries like New Zealand or the United Kingdom. Further, while the rate of stillbirth in other countries has dropped over the last 20 years, in Australia it's essentially remained the same. There were 2,173 stillbirths in 2017; that means every year over 2,000 families experience the trauma of stillbirth. For women from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, the rate is double that of other Australian women. I will say that again—we are in NAIDOC week, so let's not lose this point: for women from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, the rate is double that of other Australian women. Women from non-English speaking backgrounds also experience higher rates of stillbirth, and we know that perinatal mortality rates follow disadvantage.

While there's still much that is unknown about stillbirth, with a paucity of data and research as to why stillbirth occurs, we do know the impact on the parents and on the families who suffer this tragedy, mostly in silence. Support, as always, is essential to assist parents and families working their way through their grief in the way that will work best for them. For many parents, going back to work after experiencing stillbirth is extremely difficult. Having to go back before they are ready can be really detrimental to their personal health, to their wellbeing and to their productivity when they are at work. It may ultimately then cost them their job, an outcome that helps no-one. Employees who return to work too early after a stillbirth will be prone to absenteeism and presenteeism. One study found the mother of a stillborn baby who returns to work too early will only be performing at 26 per cent of her normal rate of productivity in 30 days, so the early return before someone's ready is in no-one's interest.

The Select Committee on Stillbirth Research and Education investigated the current legislative provisions relating to parental leave. Evidence was received from parents, who provided compelling testimony about their experiences of having been recalled to work before they were ready. Although the current minimum standard is a guaranteed six weeks of unpaid parental leave in the event of stillbirth, if a stillbirth occurs before unpaid parental leave has commenced, an employer can request the employee to return to work at any time. One witness gave evidence that her employer forced her to return to work just 11 days after she experienced a stillbirth.

The changes enabled by this legislation will give effect to part of the first recommendation of the Senate select committee, which suggested the Australian government reviews and
amends the Fair Work Act and its provisions relating to stillbirth in the National Employment Standards. This is addressed in schedule 1 of the bill, which will have the effect of equalising unpaid parental leave entitlements for families of stillborn babies. The bill before us also introduces other welcome flexibility measures to the minimum standards for unpaid parental leave that are contained within the Fair Work Act and the National Employment Standards. The bill provides that, where a baby remains in hospital or is hospitalised immediately following birth, the employer and the employee can agree to the employee returning to work while the baby is still in hospital and recommencing their unpaid parental leave when the baby is discharged. That's a sensible amendment that will allow parents who want to use it a way to maximise their time with their baby when the child is able to be brought home from hospital.

Sadly, there are many circumstances where this situation may arise, but it's particularly relevant to babies who are born premature and who spend several months in hospital following birth. Currently, parents in this situation would have to use up their unpaid parental leave entitlements and, therefore, have less time to spend with the child at home. The bill also allows employees who are eligible to take unpaid parental leave to take up to 30 days of their 12-month entitlement to unpaid parental leave in a flexible way. This means employees will be able to take flexible unpaid parental leave, including on a single day at a time basis within 24 months of the birth or adoption of a child. These amendments to the Fair Work Act align it with recent changes to the Paid Parental Leave Act made by the Paid Parental Leave Amendment (Flexibility Measures) Act 2020. This amendment will allow parents to transition back to work in a way that suits their individual needs and is a positive change.

In summary, the bill will make a significant difference to Australian families, particularly those parents and families who experience stillbirth—six families a day. However—and as my second reading amendment, which I will move in a moment, indicates—while this bill makes a difference in respect to unpaid parental leave, it only partly addresses the bipartisan recommendation to the Senate select committee on stillbirth. The committee recommended that laws be changed to ensure that paid parental leave is provided to parents of stillborn babies, regardless of whether they work in the public or private sector. So, while the government's changes on unpaid parental leave are welcome and positive, there is still unfinished business for parents of stillborn babies in relation to guaranteed equal access to parental leave.

I want to congratulate all the senators who were part of the Senate select committee. We wouldn't be here today were it not for their work, and I've had many conversations over the years on this issue with Senators McCarthy, Keneally and Bilyk. I thank all those organisations who have worked tirelessly to get to where we are today. There's more work to do to ensure we can prevent stillbirth and save thousands of families every year the grief of those who have experienced stillbirth.

Finally, I want to pay tribute to all those parents who have shared their sad and very personal stories of stillbirth, including parliamentarians in this place. For many people, for very understandable reasons, it's easier to keep these stories private but, in sharing their stories, they have got us to a point where they will now be helping many, many other families because of the changes that the parliament's dealing with today. Their decision to speak out on this all-too-silent problem has got us to where we are today, and I want to thank them and...
acknowledge them. I move the second reading amendment which has been circulated in my name:

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

"whilst not declining to give the bills a second reading, the House:

(1) notes that the Government has only partially responded to the first recommendation of the bipartisan Senate Select Committee on Stillbirth Research and Education, and has not responded to the substantial issue of equal access to paid parental leave for all parents;

(2) further notes that until parents of stillborn babies are guaranteed access to paid parental leave, many will be forced to return to work in exceptionally short time frames, in some cases just days after giving birth to a stillborn baby; and

(3) calls on the Government to fully implement the first recommendation of the bipartisan Senate Committee and ensure equal access to paid parental leave for all parents".

Mr Bowen: I second the amendment and reserve my right to speak.

Mr SIMMONDS (Ryan) (12:39): I rise to speak in support of the amendments contained in the substantive bill, Fair Work Amendment (Improving Unpaid Parental Leave for Parents Of Stillborn Babies and Other Measures) Bill 2020, today. They will better support parents who experience the absolute tragedy that is stillbirth and infant death. Heartbreakingly, as the previous member pointed out, six babies are stillborn every day in Australia, making it the most common form of child mortality. I cannot even begin, as most members in this place, to imagine the profound pain that parents and families experience at the loss of a child through stillbirth and infant death. I want to start my remarks this morning by extending my support and comfort, whatever we can provide, to every couple and family in their own electorate who has gone through this kind of tragedy and is working through that grief.

Parents affected by these tragedies must be supported in every single way that we can, with bereavement payments in particular to take time off to grieve and to be with their loved ones. This is such an important part of what is an incredibly difficult process. I cannot speak from personal experience in this regard, as other MPs have, but I have spoken previously in the House about my journey and my wife's journey when it came to fertility, what was involved in that and the grief that was involved in that. Too often couples do just try and push through and not talk about it, to simply continue on. If there is a reflection that you could make, it would be that it is important for couples and families to step back and take some time to deal with these things together as a family and to process through what is a very, very natural feeling of grief when these things occur.

It is incumbent on all of us in this place, and certainly incumbent on the government, to commit all they can to support parents going through that process. It is why, following the recommendations of the Select Committee on Stillbirth Research and Education, the government is now going to establish the National Stillbirth Action and Implementation Plan. They've called on government agencies, advocacy groups and members of the public to submit their recommendations and personal experiences to help formulate this plan and to better support parents in the future. I look forward, as I'm sure other members of the chamber do, to being a part of the process that shapes that National Stillbirth Action and Implementation Plan for Australian families.
The Fair Work Act 2009, which we're looking to amend with this bill today, does not go far enough to support families who experience stillbirth and infant death. The unpaid parental leave entitlements in this situation are unclear and rigid at a time of absolute extreme grief and heartbreak, when they need to be focused on themselves and their family. The current framework simply adds further stress to parents. The amendments contained in this bill will guarantee 12 months of unpaid leave for all eligible new parents, including those who have experienced stillbirth and infant death. Under the current legislation, parents of children who are stillborn or who died during the first 24 months of life can be directed by their employers to return to work from unpaid parental leave early, with just six weeks notice, or employers can completely cancel any upcoming parental leave that they had planned. Most employers are doing the right thing, and I want to recognise that in this place, but I think that although most employers would be doing the right thing, it's very important for these families to know that they have that certainty there so that they're not worrying about this when they're going through a particularly difficult time and so that they don't feel the need to have to negotiate with an employer at a time when their mind is clearly elsewhere. They will know that it is simply there as a requirement.

You cannot—and I'm sure all members of this House would find it unacceptable—force parents who have not yet come to terms with their grief when something like this happens back into the workplace. Their mental health, their relationships and their overall wellbeing must be put first, and this government puts them first. The amendments contained in this substantive bill will remove the ability for employers to issue such directions, compelling them back to work in that 12-month period completely. It will ensure the parents of stillborn babies have access to the same unpaid parental leave entitlement as any other parent. Treating them on that same level is very, very important to them. Additionally, parents on unpaid parental leave who go through stillbirth or infant death will have access to compassionate leave following this horrific experience.

Further amendments contained in this bill—and I think this is particularly important—will permit flexible arrangements to be made between parents and their employers if their child is immediately hospitalised following birth. These arrangements will allow an employee to pause their unpaid parental leave so that they can go back to work, if they choose to do so, while their child is in hospital. Then of course they can resume their unpaid parental leave when their baby goes home. Why is this important? It's because of the practicalities of situations like this. I can only imagine the pain of having your child hospitalised so soon after birth for an extended period of time. But the reality of this kind of situation that families find themselves in is that you have not only the horrible situation of your child being in hospital, and the stress that comes with that, but also the added financial pressure of hospital fees and other costs that can add to and compound this situation. This is simply about flexibility. Some parents want to continue their leave, and that leave will enable them to be with their child full time in the hospital. But other parents will make the choice to use this flexibility to earn an income while their child receives treatment in hospital. There is no right or wrong way to deal with a situation where your child is in hospital for an extended period of time, and families have to be enabled to make the choice that best fits their family. At the end of the day, the people who know their family and their family's situation the best are those families, not the government, and it's not up to us to constrain their options. We should be making this as flexible and as stress-free as possible.
As I've said, many workplaces go above and beyond to support their employees who experience stillbirth and infant death. In acknowledging them, I want to encourage those employers who offer leave and entitlements that go beyond this minimum safety net to continue to provide the support which is so, so important to Australian families.

The amendments of the Fair Work Act in this substantive bill work together with the amendments to the social services legislation that I've spoken about previously in the House, and those amendments will remove the discrepancy in the rates of stillborn baby payments for first and subsequent stillborn children and align the stillborn baby payment with the rates payable to families who experience an infant death. Changing these payments is important. Of course we recognise that all the money in the world, frankly, could not numb the pain of this horrible experience. But at least the leave payments, combined with the guaranteed unpaid leave in these amendments, give families the opportunity to take the time to grieve and process their loss together and to work on their relationships coming out of it.

This package of bills—this one and the payments one—is a very important improvement to how we deal with and, more importantly, how we support families who experience stillbirth or early infant loss. It is so important to the families of Australia. I know, because I've had many, many conversations with him about it, that the Attorney-General, Christian Porter, is personally dedicated to extending and enhancing support for parents who experience this kind of tragedy, and his work and Minister Ruston's work have been important in bringing these bills to fruition, so I really want to commend them for that work.

I obviously commend the amendments contained in this substantive bill to the House. I know they will assist families and parents in the Ryan electorate who experience the heartbreak of stillbirth and infant death. I want them to know that we support them and we care for them, and that, as a member of the government—as I'm sure other members in this House will say as well—I won't stop fighting to ensure that they have even more support and as much support as we can possibly provide to these families.

Mr BOWEN (McMahon) (12:49): I rise to associate myself very briefly with the remarks of my friend the shadow minister for industrial relations, the member for Watson, and with the Fair Work Amendment (Improving Unpaid Parental Leave for Parents of Stillborn Babies and Other Measures) Bill 2020.

We all understand in this House, I'm sure, that no amount of leave and no payment will make grief go away. It never will. But the important thing that this bill achieves, and which the other omnibus bill achieved in the equation of payments, is that it recognises that this is real grief—that a stillbirth is a death to be grieved. It is exactly equal in the amount of grief to any other death in any other circumstance. That is what this bill recognises, that's what this House must recognise and that's what every Australian must recognise, because this has not been the case. The difference between government treatment of stillbirth and treatment of deaths after a breath has been taken reflects societal views that, somehow, this wasn't real—that this was not a real grief. It must be remedied, and this bill remedies it.

This bill has been inspired, as other speakers have said, by the Senate Select Committee on Stillbirth Research and Education. I thank Senator Keneally, who instigated it; Senator McCarthy, who chaired it; and Senator Bilyk, who participated with senators from the other side—particularly Senator Molan, who shared his personal experiences. They heard from grieving families about these inequities, and this was important work.
Previously, I shared my experience in this field. I am one of four brothers, only two of us still alive. My mother went to hospital four times to give birth and only came home with a baby twice. She feels, and felt, that her grief wasn't recognised by the system. And she was right; it was not. I'm not going to share with the House all the details, but she was told by doctors that there was nothing to grieve, that there had been no birth and that she could have more children.

When I shared this story, I thought, 'Well, this happened a long time ago'—many decades ago in my mum's case. But I was struck by people who contacted me to say, 'I feel exactly the same way, and the stillbirth in my family occurred just a few years ago in Australia.' Medical professionals, who should know better, didn't recognise the grief. Employers told grieving mothers—and not just mothers but also fathers, siblings and grandparents—to get over it and move on: 'Get back to work; you can have more children later.' That's all completely beside the point. My point is that in partially equating the leave, as the other bill did in equating the payments, this bill recognises that real grief and tells the grieving mothers and fathers, siblings and grandparents that they are understood. Their grief is understood and is something to be respected; the lost little life is to be mourned.

Of course, what we ultimately hope for is that there is less need for grieving—that we actually reduce the amount of stillbirth in Australia. It has been stubbornly high for 20 years; it's higher than in comparable countries and is particularly high among our First Nations. One of the things we need to deal with is birthing on country, to support and respect birthing on country. I'm not saying that's a panacea, but it's among the many initiatives that can get these rates down.

The Senate inquiry recommended a national stillbirth plan to reduce the stillbirth rate by 20 per cent. Of course we want to see it at zero, but let's at least have the objective of reducing it by 20 per cent. Six stillbirths occur in Australia every day, which is more than the road toll and roughly analogous with the national suicide toll, both of which have achieved plenty of attention from governments over the last few decades. Stillbirth has not. We know that if we don't aim to reduce stillbirth rates then we simply won't. So it's good that now we have a draft action plan. The Labor Party has provided feedback, and we look forward to seeing the final plan and, importantly, to seeing it funded in future budgets. Stillbirth rates must come down in Australia if we are really serious about reducing the grief of so many of our fellow Australians.

It's grief that stays with you forever. My mum turns 83 in a couple of weeks and she still grieves for her two sons every day, all these years later, as our whole family does, as every family that's been touched by stillbirth does. Those families who have been touched by stillbirth need to know that this House stands as one with them in recognising that their grief is real and it is very, very deep. We hope that this recognition of that grief goes some small way to assuring those families that they are understood in this parliament.

Dr ALLEN (Higgins) (12:55): I'd like to associate with the comments made by the member for McMahon and thank him for sharing those very deeply moving comments. So many women across Australia and around the world, so many parents and so many families, have been affected by this condition. There are stories that we could all share, I'm sure, but it's very significant that he shared these very personal statements with us here today. It is also pertinent that this bill is being debated this week because this week is PANDA Week. No,
we're not talking about cute pandas from China; this is Perinatal Anxiety and Depression Action Week. I would like to acknowledge the great work of PANDA in this very, very important area, and also to congratulate the chair of PANDA, Nicole Batagol, on being elected this week to the Stonnington council, which is in my electorate of Higgins. I look forward to working with Stonnington council and Nicole on different issues of advocacy, particularly for issues regarding women and supporting them in their time of need.

PANDA Week is a week across Australia to recognise the pain and suffering and difficulties women and families face around the birth of a child, whether that child be a live birth or a stillbirth. I'd like to make recognition of the comments made by the member for McMahon about recognition of stillbirth. I would like to declare, as a paediatrician who's worked for many years with families in their time of grief and loss, that it is not until you are actually personally affected, or know somebody who is personally affected, that it becomes much easier to understand the loss that comes from stillbirth. That is because the opportunity to see and touch and experience the birth of a child is a very transformative moment in the life of a mother and the family and those that are expecting this birth. But in a stillbirth that opportunity is snatched.

It wasn't until I experienced a stillbirth through a very close personal friend that I understood that the loss of a stillbirth is the loss of ongoing opportunity. It was about 15 years ago. My husband and I were sharing a Bastille night celebration with a couple. The woman, who was a dear friend, was heavily pregnant—28 weeks pregnant—with twins. On that night, as two couples, we were sharing the fact that they would also become parents of four children. My husband and I have four children—two boys and two girls—and this couple already had two girls and they were about to have two boys. We were celebrating the fact that she was 28 weeks pregnant with twin boys and her life was about to transform. That night she went into labour and she lost first one twin and then the second twin to twin-to-twin transfusion, which is where one child has the blood supply and the other child is starved from the blood supply. I remember the shock and horror of that night and the terrible grief that that family was obviously going through but also the whole school community was going through, because we'd all been excited about the birth of her twins. But the pain didn't just stop in those days and weeks and months that followed for her and for the community. Every year you would think about the absence of the opportunities of those boys and what they might have grown into. That grief is something that is carried by that family, by that mother, by that father, by those siblings for the rest of their lives.

I've heard so many stories over time of that happening many decades ago or many years ago, but it does continue today. That is why a bill like this is so incredibly important; it recognises the pain and suffering and the loss of opportunity that a family feels when a stillbirth does occur. So I'm very proud to be part of a government that understands the requirement for an update to a bill and important amendments that are going to be passed. Once this bill is passed, it will help to deal with the pain and suffering in those difficult days, weeks, months and years that occur after a stillbirth.

The Fair Work Amendment (Improving Unpaid Parental Leave for Parents of Stillborn Babies and Other Measures) Bill 2020 will provide clear and consistent minimum standards of support for parents, making it easier both for the employer and for employees to understand their obligations. The bill, born out of the report of the Senate Select Committee on Stillbirths...
Research and Education, will amend the unpaid parental leave provisions and complement the government-funded paid parental leave pay changes. Being provided with the same entitlements of unpaid parental leave as they would have if their baby had survived will be a real reassurance for grieving parents. The changes mean that employers cannot recall parents to work. Can you imagine if you've just been through delivery of a stillbirth? It's a time when you need to be with your family, your friends, your supporters. It's a time to be together, with those who love you and whom you love, not only to potentially grieve but also to arrange funerals.

This bill also encourages employees and employers to work together, depending on certain needs and circumstances of the family. These amendments to the bill will allow parents of premature babies and newborns who require hospitalisation immediately following the birth to pause their unpaid parental leave until the child is at home, where they are able to resume their leave. This is a very pragmatic support measure, and I very much welcome this aspect of the bill. In response to the report of the 2018 Senate Select Committee on Stillbirth Research and Education, the Morrison government agreed in principle to all recommendations made by the committee, including agreeing to the development of a national stillbirth action plan to reduce the rate of stillbirth and to improve quality of care in relation to stillbirth. Those affected by pregnancy and infant loss should not suffer alone.

The Morrison government recognises the devastation that the loss of a pregnancy or an infant has on families. That is why we are taking pragmatic steps to invest in supporting these families through our $52 million perinatal service and support package. Having time to grieve and work through what has happened is important in order to ensure that proper support services are well funded and accessible to all. This investment includes $43 million for a new perinatal mental health program to support the mental health of expectant and new parents in Australia and provides support for families who are experiencing grief following stillbirth, miscarriage or infant death. Further, it includes a $7 million investment for stillbirth measures, including a stillbirth education and awareness program, research to minimise preventable stillbirth, and investment in the Safer Baby Bundle project, a new initiative to reduce Australia's high rate of stillbirth.

I recently spoke at a UNICEF and WHO Global Reduction in Stillbirth Zoom meeting, which was an international collaboration for assessing how to decrease stillbirths globally. I was very happy to represent the Minister for Health on that occasion. It was interesting to note that in an international context we have very good levels of preventing stillbirth in this country, but, unfortunately, disadvantaged women and families are at greater risk. That includes those from an Indigenous background, those from an immigrant background and those from rural and remote parts of Australia.

So there's much work to be done to improve stillbirth outcomes here in Australia. The investments will provide an improved and targeted intensive support service for families who are vulnerable. This includes those preventive measures that we know can reduce stillbirth, including targeting smoking, diabetes and infections such as HIV and hepatitis. These are all risk factors for stillbirth, and we need to work across the community, particularly in vulnerable communities, to decrease these risk factors in order to improve outcomes in relation to stillbirth. The Morrison government has also committed $7.6 million to ensuring that all eligible families who experience a stillbirth or the death of a child under 12 months of age have access to appropriate support services.
age will receive a payment of $3,600 to support them during that terrible time. This provides additional support for around 900 families each year.

The loss of a child is beyond devastating. As I said in my first speech, the words 'orphan', 'widow' and 'widower' describe a loss, but there is no word for the loss of a child. In fact, there is no word I know in any non-English language, either, for the loss of a child. It is an unspeakable grief. I am very proud that both sides of this House know the importance of this, and I'm very pleased that the opposition have been supportive of the amendments to this bill. Such matters are above politics and partisanship. I commend this bill and these amendments to the House.

Mr THISTLETHWAITE (Kingsford Smith) (13:05): This is an example of parliament at its best: both sides of the chamber coming together to work on a solution for a problem that in many respects has been a silent trauma for too long and something that has taken a huge emotional toll on many in our community. This bill, the Fair Work Amendment (Improving Unpaid Parental Leave for Parents of Stillborn Babies and Other Measures) Bill 2020, provides unpaid parental leave entitlements for families dealing with the trauma of stillbirths, infant deaths and premature births. The changes are long overdue and they're hard fought for, and I want to pay tribute to the many brave parents who gave evidence to the Senate committee and have campaigned for reforms such as this over previous decades. I certainly commend and support this bill.

Labor called on the government last November to change bereavement payments to ensure that all parents are treated equally, whether their child's heart beats once before death or their baby is stillborn, and we welcome the fact that the government is changing the stillborn baby payment for a second or subsequent stillbirth as well. Labor had highlighted the inconsistency that parents who had a subsequent stillborn baby were receiving a lower payment than for their first stillborn child, and the government's changes will equalise the payments for families in these tragic situations.

Parents of stillborn babies are parents, yet for years they have not received the same supports as parents whose babies died after a live birth. A mother who gives birth to a stillborn baby has to recover physically. Both parents have to recover emotionally and also attend to their parenting responsibilities, including an autopsy, a funeral, a cremation or burial, medical evaluation and counselling, including grief counselling. Access to financial support can go some way to helping those families when they need it most.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2,419 lives were lost due to stillbirth or newborn deaths in 2018, and the majority of those deaths were stillbirths. Six babies a day are stillborn in Australia, and, despite medical advancements, stillbirth rates in Australia have not changed in two decades. The rates of stillbirth and newborn death are significantly higher for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. This is one area where we're beginning to see more research into the causes and, hopefully, prevention where possible of stillbirths in Australia. It's one of the biggest causes of infant death in Australia, and the rate of death from stillbirth is still higher than the nation's road toll, in itself a shocking statistic.

For many parents, going back to work after experiencing stillbirth is extremely difficult. Having to go back before they're ready can be detrimental to their personal health and wellbeing and has a major impact on their productivity. Ultimately, in some circumstances, it may cost them their job, and that's an outcome that helps no-one. Research was commissioned
by the Stillbirth Foundation to support this. In 2016, the PwC report commissioned by that foundation found that stillbirth cost the economy $681 million between 2016 and 2020. Further, it found that an employee who returns to work too early after a stillbirth will be prone to absenteeism and difficulty concentrating when they do get back into the workforce and, further, that mothers of stillborn babies, when returning to work early, performed at only 26 per cent of their normal rate of productivity after 30 days. We know that the grief has been made more difficult by the COVID pandemic, with family separated due to social-distancing requirements and people removed from their usual support networks. At a time when people do need support, when they're at their most vulnerable and when they're suffering such loss, we must continue to make all possible efforts to reduce the rate of stillbirths and infant loss.

The scale of this tragedy must spur Australia into a concerted effort, including support for those impacted by higher rates of pregnancy loss and infant death, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and those in remote communities. The Senate Select Committee on Stillbirth Research and Education produced the first national set of recommendations to drive down that stillbirth rate in Australia. The draft National Stillbirth Action and Implementation Plan is currently under development, and I congratulate those on that Senate committee for coming up with those important recommendations and, as I said earlier, those that gave evidence. This bill will make a significant difference to Australian families, particularly those parents and families who experience stillbirth—six families each day that have that additional support to ensure that they have the time to recover properly and to seek and get the necessary emotional support so that a return to the workplace can be done as sensitively and as productively as possible.

Labor remains committed to elevating the prominence and priority of reducing stillbirths and infant loss, as we continue to support Australian families, friends and loved ones who've endured this incomparable grief. I want to congratulate those senators that were part of the Senate select committee—particularly Senators McCarthy, Keneally and Bilyk—for the work that they did. I thank all of those organisations that have worked tirelessly to ensure that government listened to them and to get us where we are today. There's certainly more work that needs to be done to ensure that we can prevent stillbirth and save thousands of families every year the grief of those who've experienced stillbirth. Yet this bill does go some way in providing that support from government, and, importantly, it represents government listening to the appeals of those who've suffered this inconsolable loss. Lastly, I pay tribute to all the parents who've shared their sad, personal stories of stillbirth, including many MPs and senators in this place.

Dr HAINES (Indi) (13:13): I rise to speak in favour of the Fair Work Amendment (Improving Unpaid Parental Leave for Parents of Stillborn Babies and Other Measures) Bill 2020, which makes sensible, compassionate changes to the Fair Work Act to protect the rights of parents experiencing the most unimaginable of tragedies: the death of an infant.

Six babies are stillborn in Australia every day—2,000 a year. It's the most common cause of child mortality. For most cases, we don't know the cause. Under current legislation, parents on unpaid parental leave who experience a stillbirth or the death of their child in the first 24 months of life can be recalled to work by their employer with just six weeks notice. Parents on adoption related unpaid parental leave whose child dies in the first 24 months of life can be recalled to work by their employer with just four weeks notice. For parents experiencing this
most profound grief, these rules are cruel. They are unworthy of the decent country that we are, and it is so right that they be changed. This bill will give parents of stillborn babies access to the same unpaid parental leave entitlements as other families—a guaranteed 12 months of unpaid parental leave. For an employee whose child dies during the first 24 months of life, the bill will ensure that their employer will no longer be able to cancel any upcoming unpaid parental leave they might have, or, if they're already on leave, require them to return to work earlier than they may wish to. The legislation will also give more flexibility to parents of premature babies or babies that require immediate hospitalisation after birth by allowing those parents to go back to work while their child is in hospital, if they choose to, and then recommence unpaid parental leave when their child comes home. These are structural changes which will never dampen the pain, but they will recognise it.

Thursday 15 October was Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day. Leading into that day was a story of such loss by Sophie Aubrey in The Sydney Morning Herald. It was the story of Victoria and Danny Liston and their baby daughter, Kiera, who died soon after her birth. Baby Kiera was born at full term after an uneventful pregnancy and birth, but her condition deteriorated rapidly and she was whisked from her mother's arms into the neonatal intensive care unit, where the staff tried to save her. Victoria and Danny said of Kiera's life:

"It's not just those five hours after she was born, and not just those few days in hospital after— when they could keep her and hold her—"

"It was actually from the moment we found out we were pregnant"

"Victoria says they have devoted their lives now to keeping their little girl present, saying, 'She will be part of our family forever and, when we have future children, they will know about her.'"

"This story was a powerful trigger to me of the many experiences I've had as a midwife, caring for parents who've suffered miscarriage, stillbirth and infant death. The scene of the intensive care unit—noisy, intense, pressured. The shock. The desperate faces of parents. The longing for a miracle from the skilled hands of the paediatricians, midwives and nurses. But also there were other times, when a couple were admitted, knowing their little baby had died in utero. The sombre and quiet preparation for the birth. The grief, the fear, and the gossamer thread of hope that all of this was just some terrible mistake and their little baby would be born alive. Then came the birth itself. It was always the sound of silence at the birth that struck me. No cry, no sounds of life. The quiet movements of the midwife as the little baby is lifted to his mother and respectfully wrapped. The respectful confirmation that a longed-for heartbeat was indeed silent. The stillness. A sacred moment of a different type. It wasn't always so. The opportunity for parents to hold and keep their stillborn baby close with them after the birth is relatively recent. Common wisdom was to spare the mother the pain of seeing the child in order to help her get over it. I have cared for elderly women in the last days of their lives who recounted the grief and the still unbearable loss of a baby who had died many decades earlier who they never held and often never named."

"This brings me to research. On 27 March 2018, the Senate established the Select Committee on Stillbirth Research and Education to inquire into, and report on, the future of stillbirth research and education in Australia. That committee tabled its report on 4 December 2018. I refer the House to an important submission to that committee from a colleague of mine, Professor Caroline Homer AO, Distinguished Professor of Midwifery at the Centre for"
Midwifery, Child and Family Health at the University of Technology Sydney, and now Director of Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health at the Burnet Institute. She highlighted strong research from around the world, half of which is collected in Australia, that midwifery continuity of care is a model that can make a real difference in the prevention of stillbirth. The evidence base, she said, is clear: if women see the same few midwives throughout their pregnancy, they will know those midwives and those midwives will know those women during labour and birth. We find from that evidence that there are fewer preterm births and these women are less likely to lose their babies and will have a much more positive experience. But this is not happening across the country. There are pockets of exemplary practice, and indeed there is policy that the state level, but we have no national-level policy for continuity of midwifery care.

The submission from the Australian College of Midwives made a similar call, stating the need for:

… a universal approach to stillbirth research and education across Australia that includes:

- Greater consistency and transparency of data collection between states and jurisdictions so that research and education can be informed by accurate and up to date national data
- Resourcing of continuity of midwifery care implementation research, so that every woman in Australia has access to a known midwife …
- Working to provide culturally appropriate care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, as well as refugees and migrants which comprises access for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander midwives and healthcare workers

I'm pleased that the Australian government responded to that Senate report with an investment of $7.2 million in initiatives designed to reduce stillbirths. The Centre of Research Excellence in Stillbirth is one such funded initiative. It has grown from the work of the Perinatal Society of Australia and New Zealand, who it maintains a very strong linkage with.

The Stillbirth CRE recognises that stillbirth has enormous economic and psychosocial impacts for women, parents, families, communities and the health system; that there has been little reduction in stillbirth rates for over 20 years; that women from disadvantaged backgrounds have a greater risk of stillbirth than the average population; and that families whose child is stillborn often receive suboptimal care. The stillbirth rate in Australia is approximately 35 per cent higher than those of the top-performing countries globally. In up to 50 per cent of stillbirths, deficiencies in care are identified, and in around 20 to 30 per cent the death is avoidable due to these factors. That's shocking.

In partnership with health departments across Australia, a 'bundle of care' to address the priority evidence practice gaps in stillbirth prevention has been developed and implemented. Similar care bundles in England and Scotland have shown a 20 per cent reduction in stillbirth rates. So the goal here in Australia is to implement these bundles after 28 weeks gestation and reduce our rate by 20 per cent. The Stillbirth CRE has led the development of these bundles of care to address the priority evidence gap, and the Safer Baby Bundle consists of five elements designed to reduce stillbirth rates after 28 weeks gestation: firstly, by improving the awareness and care of women with decreased fetal movements; secondly, by doing pregnancy risk assessment and ongoing monitoring for fetal growth restriction; thirdly, by supporting women to stop smoking; fourthly, by providing advice for pregnant women on maternal
sleeping positions; and, fifthly, by supporting shared decision-making around timing of birth for women with high risk factors for stillbirth.

There are some moments in this place where we actually get to do something good, and this legislation is one of them. It comes from such good work that came out of our Senate committee. I join with others in this House to congratulate our members in the Senate who brought this important work to our attention and enabled legislation such as this to be made. In conclusion, given the year that we have had, the isolation of the pandemic has exacerbated the grief and loneliness felt by parents who have experienced a stillbirth or infant loss this year. I encourage people to reach out to bereaved loved ones and friends, not just at the time of that death but long into the future, because that grief never goes away. The lifetime of loss is one of love and longing. I commend this bill to the House.

Mr HOGAN (Page—Assistant Minister to the Deputy Prime Minister) (13:23): I thank all members for their contributions to the debate on the Fair Work Amendment (Improving Unpaid Parental Leave for Parents of Stillborn Babies and Other Measures) Bill 2020. The government is pleased to be delivering on its commitment to provide improved support for families who experience stillbirth or the death of a child in the first 24 months, and to be introducing much-needed flexibility into the unpaid parental leave provisions. This bill marks an important step in unpaid parental leave entitlements, which are just as important during the COVID-19 pandemic as they were before.

These are sensible and measured reforms. While continuing to implement the specific measures to support families impacted by COVID-19, the government is progressing these important reforms to unpaid parental leave as part of our ongoing commitment to parents and families. Clear and consistent minimum standards in relation to leave entitlements, with improved support for families who experience stillbirth, are some of the actions this government is taking under the National Stillbirth Action and Implementation Plan.

Every day in Australia six babies are stillborn, affecting over 2,000 families each year. Parents whose baby is stillborn or dies in the first 24 month of life should not be required to return from leave earlier than they would like. While we know most employers support their employees in tough times, the changes in the bill will provide certainty to parents who experience stillbirth by ensuring their unpaid parental leave entitlements under the Fair Work Act would be the same as if their baby had lived. This means that, for an employee whose baby is stillborn or dies in the first 24 months of life, the bill will ensure that the employer will no longer be able to cancel any upcoming unpaid parental leave they might have or, if they are already on leave, require them to return to work earlier than they may wish to.

While not all parents will want to remain on unpaid parental leave for the full 12-month period, it is important that the option is available to them. The bill will also provide better and clearer access to compassionate leave in relation to stillborn babies. Parents on unpaid parental leave will be able to take compassionate leave if the child to whom the parental leave relates is stillborn or dies. Unfortunately, there are also children who are hospitalised immediately after birth. For these parents, the law shouldn't hinder sensible agreements at the workplace level. We've heard from parents that the current Fair Work Act is too rigid in situations where a baby is hospitalised immediately after birth, which is particularly concerning for parents of babies born prematurely. Many parents would like to be able to work while their baby is in hospital and preserve their unpaid parental leave for when the
baby comes. The bill will allow parents in such situations to agree with their employer to effectively put their unpaid parental leave on hold, work while their baby is hospitalised and resume their unpaid parental leave when their baby is discharged. This will give parents the ability to work while their baby is in hospital, if it suits them and their employer, and have more of their 12-month leave entitlement to spend at home with their child.

The bill also increases the flexibility of the unpaid parental leave provisions complementing the flexibility improvements in the government's Paid Parental Leave Scheme. Introducing greater flexibility into how parents can take unpaid parental leave will help participation and productivity. Under the new flexible component of the Paid Parental Leave Scheme parents can claim up to 30 days of their 18-week parental leave entitlement for periods as short as one day any time before the child turns two years old. The Fair Work Act changes will provide complementary flexibility to the existing 12-month unpaid parental leave entitlement by providing the capacity for parents to take up to 30 days of the existing unpaid parental leave entitlement flexibly within two years of the child's birth or adoption.

Employees will need to give their employer appropriate notice of their intention to use some of the 12-month entitlement flexibility before actually taking flexible unpaid parental leave, aligned with the existing notice provisions for unpaid parental leave in the Fair Work Act as far as possible. This will assist employers with supporting their employees, who are now parents, while managing their operational requirements for the broader workforce. Greater flexibility for employees and employers will be vitally important to the economic recovery from the crisis wrought by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In conclusion, the amendments in the bill are compassionate reforms that will provide parents with more support and clarity around their unpaid parental leave entitlements if they experience a stillbirth or the death of a child in the first two years of life, ensuring these parents can take the leave they had planned to take. The amendments in the bill are sensible reforms that will provide parents with more flexibility when their baby is hospitalised following birth and when making decisions about how to organise work and caring commitments. The measures in the bill are an important package of reforms that provide parents with improved support and greater choice and flexibility to combine care and work responsibilities. Finally, I want to recognise and thank all the parents who gave their time and shared their stories. I pay tribute to the precious children they lost. I commend the bill to the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Gillespie): The original question was that this bill be now read a second time. To this the honourable member for Watson has moved as an amendment that all words after 'That' be omitted with a view to substituting other words. The question now is that the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question.

Question agreed to.

Original question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Mr HOGAN (Page—Assistant Minister to the Deputy Prime Minister) (13:29): by leave—I move:

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

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Petition: Media Ownership

Dr LEIGH (Fenner) (13:29): I table Petition EN1938 on a strong and diverse news media.

The petition read as follows—

Our democracy depends on diverse sources of reliable, accurate and independent news. But media ownership is becoming more concentrated alongside new business models that encourage deliberately polarising and politically manipulated news. We are especially concerned that Australia's print media is overwhelmingly controlled by News Corporation, founded by Fox News billionaire Rupert Murdoch, with around two-thirds of daily newspaper readership. This power is routinely used to attack opponents in business and politics by blending editorial opinion with news reporting. Australians who hold contrary views have felt intimidated into silence. These facts chill free speech and undermine public debate. Powerful monopolies are also emerging online, including Facebook and Google. We are deeply concerned by: mass-sackings of news journalists; digital platforms impacting on media diversity and viability; Nine Entertainment's takeover of the Melbourne Age and Sydney Morning Herald; News Carp's acquisition (and then closure) of more than 200 smaller newspapers, undermining regional and local news; attempts to replace AAP Newswire with News Corp's alternative; and relentless attacks on the ABC's independence and funding. Professional journalists further have legitimate concerns around unjust searches, potential prosecution, whistle-blower protection, official secrecy and dispute resolution that should be comprehensively addressed. Only a Royal Commission would have the powers and independence to investigate threats to media diversity, and recommend policies to ensure optimal diversity across all platforms to help guarantee our nation's democratic future.

We therefore ask the House to support the establishment of such a Royal Commission to ensure the strength and diversity of Australian news media.

from 501,876 citizens (Petition No. EN1938)

Petition received.

Dr LEIGH: The principal petitioner is former Labor Prime Minister Kevin Rudd. It is also signed by former Liberal Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull. Begun just a month ago, this is the largest e-petition in our parliament's history, and I thank each of the 501,876 people who signed it. We, in this parliament, are the servants of the people, and a vital part of our job is to table the views of citizens.

Yesterday, Joe Biden called on his country to 'marshal the forces of decency and the forces of fairness'. Essential to this is media accuracy and diversity. Yet Biden has faced forces like Fox News, which has downplayed coronavirus, touted hydroxychloroquine, perpetuated climate change denial and called refugees 'an invasion'. There's nothing 'fair or balanced' in the way they have treated politics.

In Australia, the media is shrinking and extremely concentrated. From 2006 to 2016, the number of journalists fell nine per cent. Health reporting is down 30 per cent. Science reporting is down 42 per cent. Hundreds of local newspapers have closed. Yet the Morrison government is cutting the ABC. There are now over 20 'news deserts' in Australia, which weakens the community and raises the risk of corruption going unchecked. Diverse choices of reliable, accurate and independent news are fundamental to our democracy. (Time expired)
COVID-19: Mental Health

Dr ALLEN (Higgins) (13:31): Although restrictions are lifting, the lasting effects of the COVID crisis continue for many as they face an uncertain future. That is why the Morrison government is rolling out a COVID-19 mental health campaign—'How's your head today?'—to urge people to prioritise their mental health, raise awareness about how to identify when something is wrong and encourage people to seek help. The campaign will be launched on TV and radio and in shopping centres and venues online and through social media, and will continue into next year.

The message is simple but effective. With the world turned on its head, many of us aren't feeling like ourselves. But what happens in your head doesn't have to stay there. There are things we can do to feel better, like staying connected, keeping busy and being active. How's your head today?

Strengthening access to vital mental health services is something that I'm passionate about, not only as the member for Higgins but as a doctor and as a mother of four children. I encourage all Australians to seek help if experiencing mental ill-health. Talk to your GP, reach out to Beyond Blue or Lifeline, or visit the website for information, advice and professional support at headtohealth.gov.au. This website has information, advice and links to free and low-cost phone and online mental health services.

Thank you to those who are caring for others. But, please, don't forget to take care of your own health too.

NAIDOC Week

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler—Leader of the Opposition) (13:33): We would normally have been marking NAIDOC Week in July, but, as with so many important events in this year of coronavirus, it has had to be adjusted. It is a year that has brought loss. But, increasingly, it is bringing victories. Among the successes has been the Indigenous health sector, which has done so much to keep this insidious virus from gaining a foothold in communities. It could have been a wave of devastation. Those health workers saw to it that that never happened, and I pay tribute to them.

That is a victory of the spirit of self-determination that illuminates the Uluru Statement from the Heart. Labor's support for the Uluru statement, in all of its parts, is strong and committed. We support having the voice enshrined in our Constitution. It is no more than a modest but gracious request: that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples be consulted about issues and policies that directly affect them. The voice must be followed by truth-telling, because, until we acknowledge the reality of our history, we are shackled to its demons. And truth must be followed by a makarrata commission. Makarrata is about conflict resolution, justice and, crucially, self-determination. It's a path to a national treaty that acknowledges the pre-existing rights of people in a land where sovereignty was never ceded and acknowledges that we are on what is Aboriginal land—always was, always will be.

Child Abuse

Mrs ARCHER (Bass) (13:34): It's getting close to that time of year when you can't go anywhere without hearing Christmas songs. 'Do they know It's Christmas?', released over 35 years ago, featured the biggest music artists in the world and raised over $20 million for famine relief in Ethiopia. Today I'm proud to highlight a new Christmas charity single,
written, produced and performed in my electorate of Bass. Seeking to support children in need after what has been a really tough year, a group of award-winning musicians and producers in Northern Tasmania came together to record 'Light a Candle'. It's a Christmas single, with the proceeds going towards Act for Kids, an Australian charity supporting children and families who've experienced or are at risk of child abuse and neglect.

The partnership between Act for Kids and Jam Mountain Music, the producers of the single, was inspired by the strength of the community banding together for the greater good. Those involved in this incredible local project include: Matt Gower; Leigh Ratcliffe; Daniel Priest; William Bowden; Richard Gower, multi-platinum composer and lead singer of seventies iconic band Racey; The Voice's tattooed tenor Matthew Garwood; Juliane Di Sisto; Denni Sulzberger; Shanice Osita Chuku; Matt Fell; Nathalie Gower and The Buzz; and many more incredible artists from our region. Even the biggest Christmas Grinch can get behind a Christmas song that supports charity. I encourage everybody to head to Jam Mountain Music on Facebook to find out more.

**Climate Change**

Ms THWAITES (Jagajaga) (13:36): Yesterday morning, like many people, I exhaled a massive sigh of relief at the news that Joe Biden will be the next US president. I cried tears of joy and relief as I listened to Kamala Harris say that while she might be the first female US Vice President she won't be the last, because every little girl will now see the opportunity. But the main reason I felt this relief was that, by promising genuine action on climate change and the commitment to net zero by 2050, Joe Biden's election changes the trajectory for all of our futures. It provides challenges and opportunities for us here in Australia, particularly for the Morrison government's missing climate change policy.

There are opportunities for a refresh in what is our most stale, tired and dangerous political debate, which falsely suggests getting serious about tackling climate change is something only people living five kilometres from the centre of a major CBD care about. They're challenges, because, if this government can't change course and policy, Australia will miss out on the jobs and opportunities of the future. Japan, South Korea, the UK and the EU all committed to net zero emissions by 2050, and China by 2060, and now the US commits, leaving Australia in limited company, locked out of the markets and opportunities we need to secure our future. We are all suffering because Scott Morrison is so beholden to his backbench ideologues that he puts their crusade above the jobs that our country needs. I've said it before and I'll say it again: he's not a leader and he's selling us short. *(Time expired)*

Foley, Dr Cathy, AO, PSM

Ms BELL (Moncrieff) (13:37): Today I welcome the appointment of accomplished physicist Dr Cathy Foley AO as the Chief Scientist of Australia. In Moncrieff young women tell me that great role models like Dr Foley matter at every stage of their journey into STEM careers. You cannot be what you cannot see. Girls in Moncrieff studying early secondary science look up to the senior girls who earn university places and to scientists at a national and international level.

At university, young women tell me that those they meet on campus, perhaps postgraduate students and their lecturers, provide encouragement by their words and their presence. They can see that academic success is achievable, even when their studies seem difficult. In the
workplace, women starting STEM careers, again, find the example, and the words of women more advanced in their careers can make a big difference to their confidence to establish their own careers. Young women and men in Moncrieff agree that role models in STEM not only influence the confidence of women and girls but also contribute to men and boys having positive perceptions towards women in STEM.

Congratulations again to Dr Foley on her appointment today. Congratulations to the many scientists, men and women, who have supported her journey so far. To the girls and women in Moncrieff: pursue your STEM studies with confidence. You are supported and your achievements are celebrated across Australia with the great studies that you do in STEM. The Morrison government supports women in STEM.

**NAIDOC Week**

**Mr THISTLETHWAITE** (Kingsford Smith) (13:39): 'Always Was, Always Will Be' is the theme for this year's NAIDOC Week celebrations. I have the enormous privilege of representing the La Perouse Aboriginal community, the saltwater people, the Bidjigal people, whose ancestors were the first to encounter British colonialists from the shores of Gamay, or Botany Bay. I recognise their connection and I pay tribute to them for their storytelling and their connection to the land and the waters of Gamay. I thank them for nurturing that land and those waters and for the lessons that they've taught me about their importance, their connection to land, their culture and their country. They are the storytellers, the historians, the custodians of their culture and the source of truth about what really occurred at Gamay, or Botany Bay, in 1770 and beyond. That is their land and their waters; always was, always will be.

If we respect their connection to that land and those waters, if we respect those First Australians, then this parliament will support the Uluru Statement from the Heart in full. I fully support the Uluru Statement from the Heart, a constitutionally enshrined voice to the parliament, makarrata and truth-telling. If this land always was and always will be First Australians' land, then this parliament must support, in full, the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

**Dawson Electorate: Tourism**

**Mr CHRISTENSEN** (Dawson) (13:40): Few industries have been impacted more by the pandemic than tourism. My electorate boasts the most spectacular tourism destination in the Whitsundays, yet state and international border closures have pushed many local tourism operators to breaking point. Were it not for measures by the Morrison Liberal-National government, we could have seen tourism in the Whitsundays vanish completely. JobKeeper kept people in paid employment so that, when tourism businesses could get back to business, key staff were there and will be there. The government backdated the waiver of the reef tax, the environmental management charge for the Great Barrier Reef to the start of the year, which saved Whitsunday tourism businesses millions of dollars. The regional tourism recovery package gave a $3½ million boost for tourism marketing in Mackay and the Whitsundays, on top of $100 million allocated specifically to regional tourism projects from the Building Better Regions Fund.

As we look to recover from this pandemic, we're going to have to get behind new, innovative tourism projects, such as the Whitsundays sky rail, a really spectacular project that
will connect Airlie Beach to the Conway Ranges, with a scenic cable car ride overlooking the Coral Sea and the Whitsunday Islands. It will be fantastic. But most of all, we all need to get behind tourism businesses in our regions. I want to say thank you to all the tourism workers and tourism businesses in the Whitsundays and beyond, that have kept pushing forward so that we’ll have a strong tourism economy to help drive our recovery in the Mackay and Whitsundays region.

United States Presidential Election

Mr BANDT (Melbourne—Leader of the Australian Greens) (13:42): Hate and climate denial have been defeated at the ballot box in the United States this week. Congratulations to Joe Biden, Kamala Harris and the thousands of activists who helped get rid of Donald Trump. This result is a win for people power, and it’s a win that gives our climate and our civilisation a fighting chance. Joe Biden has committed to rejoining Paris, delivering zero carbon electricity by 2035 and investing $2 trillion with a green new deal to tackle the climate crisis. This result is a mandate from the world’s largest democracy that it’s time for urgent action to tackle the climate emergency. And the establishment parties here must learn the right lessons from this result. No longer can they spin the lie fed to them by their donors in the coal and gas lobby that climate denial wins elections. Joe Biden has won more votes in this election than any candidate in US history and he’s done so with stronger climate targets than either Liberal or Labor. Liberal climate plans will leave Australia behind and put lives at risk, but Labor’s letting them off the hook by going weak on 2030 targets. We are in a climate emergency, but the establishment parties are out this very day saying that they want to burn more coal and gas, dangerously lifting global heating. If we continue delaying climate action, Australia will be at risk and we will miss the incredible economic opportunity that we have to lead the world in green energy. This is the critical decade. What we do in the next 10 years will decide the future of our planet, and I say to the government, listen to the voices of the millions at home and abroad—(Time expired)

Diwali

Australia-India Relations

Mr CONNELLY (Stirling) (13:43): This Saturday, 14 November, marks Diwali, the Festival of Light, celebrated during the Hindu lunar solar month, Kartika. Here in Australia, it will be celebrated by our vibrant Indian community, including in my electorate of Stirling. Diwali provides us an opportunity to share in the rich cultural music, dance and food that always accompany Indian celebrations, as well as the opportunity to reaffirm the Australia-India relationship.

Under the leadership of prime ministers Scott Morrison and Shri Narendra Modi, Australia and India have secured a comprehensive strategic partnership. Along with shared membership of multilateral fora, such as the Quad and this month’s Exercise Malabar, this enhanced bilateral relationship lays out a shared view of the world and how we will cooperate on science, technology and research; economic development; the securing of an open and inclusive Indo-Pacific that operates according to the rules based order; and defence cooperation. From the highest levels of government, through to the most local friendships, Australia and India are finally coming together as partners. I’d like to thank the local Indian
communities and individuals in Stirling and in WA, including my friend Jim Seth, for playing such a vital role in bringing our two nations closer together in respect and in friendship.

**Solomon Electorate**

Mr GOSLING (Solomon) (13:45): It's great to be back in Canberra again after a huge week in Darwin in my electorate, hosting not only Labor leader Anthony Albanese, and deputy leader and shadow defence minister Richard Marles, but also shadow minister for agriculture and resources Joel Fitzgibbon. What a massive week. We didn't waste a moment. We spoke with industry, the gas sector. We spoke to the growers, the producers, the business chamber. We spoke to Team Territory, childcare centres, traditional owners. And all the way we were talking about jobs in this post-COVID era. It's all about getting the economy going again, the recovery, and getting people back to work. We spoke about what's worked and what's fallen short.

One quick example of what's fallen short is the mostly forgotten mango industry. The federal government has done next to nothing for this industry. Some workers have come from Vanuatu, and we appreciate them coming to give us some assistance. But, when we talked to mango growers, they had the same questions that they had four years ago. This government is in its eighth year.

This morning I attended Labor's First Nations caucus committee meeting in Narrabundah with my parliamentary colleagues. Kakadu needs to be fast-tracked, and tourism is a brilliant way to supercharge First Nations tourism. So, in NAIDOC Week, I say to the government: get some funding into tourism. *(Time expired)*

**Murray-Darling Basin**

Mr DRUM (Nicholls—Chief Nationals Whip) (13:47): This season in the Goulburn Valley and across most of eastern Australia we've had fantastic rainfalls, creating incredible inflows into our storages. But now is not the time to become complacent or to relax when it comes to water policy. We have to continue to look at the Murray-Darling Basin Plan and the plan that was put in place at 2,750—the amount of gigalitres that need to be taken out of agriculture for the environment. A 605 gigalitre adjustment mechanism has been put in place so that the states can find projects that are going to deliver environmental outcomes that can be delivered via engineering and by maintenance works, as opposed to simply being delivered by throwing vast amounts of water down the river. These projects are known as the 605s—the adjustment mechanism projects. We must make sure that the states, who are responsible for getting these projects up and about, get their skates on. There is a time limit on the completion of these projects. We need to make sure that the 605 gigalitres is catered for. There are 14 projects still experiencing delays. This is both in Victoria and in New South Wales. Both of those states have to get their skates on and get these projects finished. *(Time expired)*

**NAIDOC Week**

Ms CLAYDON (Newcastle) (13:48): NAIDOC Week is an important week in our national calendar. It's a time to acknowledge and celebrate Australia's rich cultural identity. Our ancient lands are home to the world's oldest continuous living cultures, and that is something we should all be enormously proud of in this nation. We have much to learn from the 65,000-plus years of First People's knowledge and connection to this country.
This year, NAIDOC Week will again bring communities from across Australia together in the spirit of solidarity to listen and learn. In addition to celebrating the many extraordinary achievements of First Nations people, we must also face squarely the brutality of colonisation and its lasting impacts. This year's theme, Always Was, Always Will Be, reminds us of the contested nature of our histories and that sovereignty was never ceded. The battle for justice, recognition and respect is far from over, and NAIDOC Week demands that we reaffirm our commitment to change and reform.

That's why Labor reiterates our support of the Uluru statement in full. Our position has not changed. We have never wavered in our support of an Indigenous voice to the parliament enshrined in our Constitution. We have never wavered in our commitment to establish a Makarrata commission to supervise an agreement and treaty-making process between governments and First Nations, and Labor is 100 per cent behind a national process for unvarnished truth-telling— (Time expired)

Carter, Mr Norris

Mr ENTSCH (Leichhardt) (13:50): I'd like to take the opportunity to pay tribute to a former North Queensland Airports CEO, Norris Carter, who recently stepped down from this role. For the past four years, Norris's exemplary leadership in overseeing Cairns and Mackay airports has been without question. Norris's stewardship saw Cairns Airport named the 10th best airport in the Australia and Pacific region in the Skytrax World Airport Awards in 2019, the first time Cairns Airport has been recognised in the Skytrax World Airport Awards. Last year, Cairns Airport also topped the ratings, for the third year in a row, for the most punctual airport in Australia and New Zealand.

One of Mr Carter's legacies has been overseeing a $55 million transformation of the domestic terminal to make it one of the best in the country. The project saw T2 Terminal expand to 10,000 square metres, with additional seating; improved layout and simplified navigation for passengers; and an additional 2,000 square metres for dining and retail. More recently, in the post-COVID world, the Brisbane to Cairns route became the busiest in the nation, while Mr Carter was instrumental in securing new direct flights to the Sunshine Coast, Canberra and Perth.

I'd like to take this opportunity to extend my most sincere thanks to Norris Carter for his contribution to our community. It has been absolutely outstanding, and I wish him well and all the very best for his future endeavours.

Brand Electorate: Kwinana Refinery

Ms MADELEINE KING (Brand) (13:51): In a devastating blow to my local community across Rockingham and Kwinana, BP announced that it will close the Kwinana fuel refinery. After 65 years of refining fuel for aviation, for agriculture, for the largest naval base in the nation and for the use of all Western Australians, BP has decided to cut and run. After 65 years as an integral part of the local community, BP has decided to shut down within a few short months and put 650 locals out of work.

Only eight weeks ago, this Morrison government promised a fuel security package, acknowledging that maintaining a viable domestic refining industry will support Australia's economic recovery from COVID-19—but not if you're a BP worker in Kwinana, Western Australia. Oh, no—no help for you from this government! Six hundred and fifty jobs will be
lost—good, highly skilled, well-paid fuel-refining jobs, gone within eight weeks of this government promising to help. As ever, the Morrison government is always there for the photo op and never there for the follow-up.

In a few short months, 650 families across Rockingham and Kwinana will now have, for the most part, their principal breadwinner out of work. BP have failed these families, BP have failed their workers and, if the Morrison government don't step up and deliver on their promise to have fuel refining in Western Australia, they will have failed 650 families across Rockingham and Kwinana, and it will rest on their heads forever.

**Mackellar Electorate: Northern Beaches Cancer Care**

Mr FALINSKI (Mackellar) (13:53): 'You have cancer' are three words every one of us fears, and the grim reality is that more than 145,000 Australians will receive this message this year. That grim statistic moves me today to commend the commitment of Northern Beaches Cancer Care, whose dedicated health providers work tirelessly to uphold their fine reputation as a high-quality, patient-centric healthcare provider with a focus and passion for providing the best possible outcomes for every patient within their care.

Northern Beaches Cancer Care first opened their doors in 2017, determined to provide a very positive cancer treatment experience for the community—one devoid of unnecessary hassle or stress. The doctors within Northern Beaches Cancer Care are well aware that cancer treatment is far from pleasant, which is why the managing doctors ensure that the centre remains a state-of-the-art radiation oncology facility. At the very least, all the patients' medical needs are met under one roof. While the physical health aspects of cancer treatment are obviously critical, the cancer care centre goes further, appreciating that patients' mental health must also be protected during such trying times. Which is why I stand today to express my sincerest gratitude to the Northern Beaches Cancer Centre for protecting lives and supporting the emotional wellbeing of some of the most— (Time expired)

**Gender Equality**

Ms MURPHY (Dunkley) (13:55): My wonderful electorate is named after a woman who fought for gender equality, for the value of work and for the transformative power of collective action. Louisa Dunkley achieved an equal pay provision in the Commonwealth Public Service Act 1902, but her legacy is so much more. It is inspiration for girls and women across my electorate and, I hope, our country, to stand up for equality, for fairness and for community. Her legacy is proof of what can be achieved through a committed, persuasive, inclusive and a progressive approach to politics.

This year, particularly this last week, Australians were introduced to another woman committed to fighting for those principles: the first, but not the last, female Vice-President of the USA, Kamala Harris. Let us all harness this moment of positivity and joy in world politics. Let's use the transformative power of collective action to achieve the future that every young girl and boy in Australia deserves. Let's commit to and achieve net zero emissions by 2050. Let's have a sustainable economy with good jobs, a growing economy and a healthy environment, and let's honour the women who have gone before us and the men who have joined their crusade to say that equality is something that we don't just hope for but we demand.
KinderGym

Ms FLINT (Boothby—Government Whip) (13:56): This year marks the 40th birthday of KinderGym, which was pioneered in South Australia by Dr Carole Pinnock. KinderGym started in Unley with 47 children. Today, it operates around Australia, helping 40,000 children under the age of five develop socially, cognitively, emotionally and physically. KinderGym provides children with the building blocks they need for fundamental movement patterns and physical development. KinderGym is also enormous fun. I know this because I've had the privilege of visiting my very popular local KinderGym at the Seacliff Recreation Centre, seeing children and their parents, grandparents, carers, staff and volunteers having a wonderful time. On my many visits, long-term KinderGym coach Clare Moase has told me how much she loves her job and her part in helping children learn and grow. It was therefore fitting that Clare accepted the award for meritorious service to the community on behalf of Seacliff KinderGym last week. At the same ceremony, Marilynn Rayner was recognised for meritorious service to the community for her almost four decades of volunteer service to Seacliff KinderGym, and I want to thank and congratulate Marilynn for her incredible contribution. Another one of our wonderful local volunteers, Graham Dodd, was recognised for his decades of work for KinderGym with a meritorious service award for strategic administration and promotion of KinderGym. As is so often the case with local volunteers, they never just give to one cause, and Graham is also an active volunteer with the Hawthorn Bowling Club. Congratulations to Clare, Marilynn, Graham and the Seacliff Recreation Centre, for their tremendous service.

NAIDOC Week

Ms BURNEY (Barton) (13:58): NAIDOC started 60 years ago; it is not a recent thing. The theme for NAIDOC Week this year, which started yesterday, is 'Always Was, Always Will Be'. That was the saying that was born of the civil rights and the land rights movements. The rest of that saying is 'Always was, always will be Aboriginal land'. I want to reiterate what our leader said this morning: Labor's commitment to the Uluru statement—and I hope people upstairs are listening to this—is absolutely rock solid. Our commitment is to a constitutionally enshrined voice to the parliament. Our commitment is to a makarrata commission that will oversee agreement and treaty-making. And our commitment is to a national process of truth-telling. That national process of truth-telling is so important to all of us, and it is an endeavour that every single member of this House should be undertaking and can be involved with. It is about recognising what happened in this country. It is about recognising that Aboriginal people, Aboriginal culture and Aboriginal stories bring an extraordinary gift to all of us who share this land. Let me be very clear: there are 65,000 years of history in this country—just think about that—and we're all custodians of that.

The SPEAKER: It being 2 pm, the time for members' statements has concluded.

STATEMENTS ON INDULGENCE

United States Presidential Election

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (14:00): The United States of America is a great democracy—vibrant, passionate, heartfelt, resolute. And the people of the United States have spoken again and elected its 46th President in its 244 years of being a republic. I join with other nations and other nations' leaders and say on
behalf of the Australian government and the Australian people that I congratulate President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris on their election. Almost 150 million votes were cast, possibly more when the final tallies are in—remarkable engagement and participation, and we celebrate that as Australians, as a liberal democratic people.

Australians always do take a deep interest in US elections, in part because of their vibrancy and passion, but more so because of our history and our futures being so closely intertwined. The United States is amongst our oldest of allies and our firmest of friends. The Australian-US alliance is a pillar of our nation's security and the stability of our region, an alliance we have nurtured over nearly seven decades under the ANZUS alliance. As President-elect Biden put it when he visited Australia as Vice President in 2016: 'Thank you for having America's back, and we will always have your back.' He said:

The partnership between Australia and America is at the core of our vision for the region's future. It's not what we can do for Australia. It's what we can do with Australia.

It's always been that way, a true partnership. This is an alliance built on fundamental shared values, the equal and unalienable rights of our people, the supremacy of the ballot box, the rule of law, freedom of the press, the separation of powers, and the free flow of commerce and ideas, market based economies and mutual respect. It's a relationship that transcends partisan politics. Since 1918, it is a relationship that has been built upon and strengthened by 24 Australian prime ministers and 18 American presidents, from right across the political divide. We are all custodians of that relationship, unencumbered by domestic partisanship.

I thank also President Trump, Vice President Pence, secretaries Pompeo and Mnuchin and Esper, and the entire Trump administration for their deep commitment to this relationship over these past four years, and I thank them for the working relationship that we've had and, indeed, will continue to have as the administration transitions. We have worked in partnership to strengthen our alliance and to advance shared interests in our region and all around the world. We have forged new areas of cooperation in space, critical minerals, frontier technologies and more, and this work will go on. And a new chapter will begin on 20 January 2021.

The year 2021 marks 70 years since the signing of the ANZUS Treaty under Prime Minister Menzies and President Truman. ANZUS is the cornerstone of our security, and I look forward to honouring that anniversary at an appropriate point with the US President. I have written to the President-elect inviting him to be in Australia for the purposes of the celebration of the ANZUS alliance. President-elect Biden has been a good friend of Australia over many, many years. There is a shared affinity. President-elect Biden once said this about Australians:

In my view, Australians are defined by their character; by the grit, their integrity, their unyielding resilience …

Having witnessed the President-elect's personal and public journey over many years, I believe we can say the same of him: a man of grit, character, integrity and unyielding resilience.

Australia looks forward to working with him on the many challenges the world faces. We are still in the midst of a global pandemic. The health, economic and geostrategic consequences of that are still being played out. Australia believes in a free and open Indo-Pacific region. We are committed to upholding the rules, norms and standards of our international community. We share views on the importance of multilateral institutions and
strengthening democracies, and on the crucial role that open and rules based trade will play as
the world emerges from the pandemic recession. And, like President-elect Biden, we're
committed to developing new technologies to reduce global emissions as we tackle climate
change.

My message at this time is clear: American leadership, as always, is indispensable to
meeting these challenges. As I said on the White House South Lawn last year, Australia looks
to the United States but we don't leave it to the United States—and we never have; we play
our part, we carry our own. Sir Robert Menzies once said that Australians and Americans are
warmed by the same inner fires, and we are. That's why this relationship has always been
bigger than any one of us. As Prime Minister to the President-elect: we share now in that
special custodianship of a relationship that has endured so long and been so important to the
citizens of both our countries. I have absolutely every confidence that it will continue to go
from strength to strength as we work again with an old friend of Australia, President-elect Joe
Biden.

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler—Leader of the Opposition) (14:06): I join with the Prime
Minister in congratulating Joe Biden and Kamala Harris on their election to the highest
offices in the United States of America. It is indeed an historic victory, one based upon a
platform of decency, honesty and progressive leadership. It is also based upon respect: respect
for science and respect for education but, above all, respect for the American people, whether
they voted for Joe Biden or not.

I'm sure we all took great heart from the President-elect's vow to be a president who seeks
not to divide but to unify. We have seen this already with the hand that he has extended to the
many Americans who had hoped for a different result. And we see it in Kamala Harris's
election as the United States' next Vice President. Her ascension is truly history in the
making. She will be the first woman to hold the office, the first woman of colour and the first
daughter of immigrants. The power of this might not be immediately obvious to all, especially
to those who have been unable to take it for granted—generation in and generation out—that
the halls of power will be filled with people who look like them. This makes it a change; this
is a step closer to a truly United States.

It is what all of us hope in our hearts for a nation that is a dear friend and a valued ally. Our
alliance with the United States is, without doubt, our most important. It sits at the heart of
Australia's security arrangements and it is based upon our common values, at the core of
which is support for democratic principles. Forged by John Curtin when our very nation was
facing our darkest hour, our alliance built on those most fundamental values: the right to vote,
the right to be heard and the right to be free. When the alliance began in the depths of World
War II those values were under threat across the planet from totalitarian regimes. Our nations
fought for those values at great human cost. Those values must be respected. The democratic
process must always be allowed to run its course, no matter how bumpy it can get—and I
suspect there are few people in this chamber who didn't get much sleep, due to the time
difference, watching those results roll in after last week's election.

We are certainly not shrinking violets here in Australia, but when we look to the US and its
democracy we're sometimes struck by the scale and the energy of it. It is robust and it is
fought hard, but even in its occasional untidiness we see a democracy that has survived the
tough tumult of history—a democracy which has passed yet another test. We revel in it, but
we do not take it for granted, which is why we must always speak up in favour of democracy, in favour of having every vote counted. One person, one vote, one value: that's the principle that both our countries hold dear.

And while we witnessed the strength of US democracy, we also see the dangerous circus of conspiracy theories casting shadow and doubt. They should be called out for the nonsense that they are. We need to stand up for democratic values here and abroad. Indeed, this should be the first instinct of anyone who is leader of a democracy. Labor looks forward to the US reprising its leadership role in global institutions. Labor welcomes the incoming president's commitment to engage with our region on critical issues, including climate change, by signing up to the Paris accord and by re-engaging with the World Health Organization. The US has played such a critical leadership role in the world, and we cannot afford for it to retreat from the world or, particularly, from our region.

We are pleased that our great friend and ally will be guided by a president who not only has accepted the reality of climate change but also is ready to pursue new industries and jobs of the future. Joe Biden’s victory means that big players in our region—the US, Japan and South Korea—are committed to reducing carbon emissions, supporting growth in renewables and moving towards net zero by 2050. It gives me great confidence for the future. I know Joe Biden. I’ve had the pleasure of meeting him. I know firsthand that he is a great friend of Australia. I know that he will work with the government of Australia and that he will be a great partner with us—on trade, on a range of issues. Above all, he has shown a remarkable resilience. He was declared elected on the 48th anniversary of his election to the Senate—a remarkable career. He is someone who shows just how passionate and committed he is to his great country. He will bring that experience, that passion, that energy and that commitment to the presidency of the United States and to the world, and that will be a very good thing indeed.

MINISTERIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (14:12): For the information of honourable members, I present a revised list of the full ministry.

*The document read as follows—*

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Commonwealth Government 30 October 2020

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Minister</th>
<th>OTHER CHAMBER</th>
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<tr>
<td>Prime Minister</td>
<td>The Hon Scott Morrison MP</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham</td>
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<td>Minister for the Public Service</td>
<td>The Hon Scott Morrison MP</td>
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<td>Minister for Women</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Marise Payne</td>
<td>The Hon Sussan Ley MP</td>
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<td>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for</td>
<td>The Hon Greg Hunt MP</td>
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<td>The Hon Ken Wyatt AM MP</td>
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<td>Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister and Cabinet</td>
<td>The Hon Ben Morton MP</td>
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<td>Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development</td>
<td>The Hon Michael McCormack MP</td>
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<td>Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts</td>
<td>The Hon Paul Fletcher MP</td>
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<td>Assistant Minister for Regional Development and Territories</td>
<td>The Hon Nola Marino MP</td>
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<td>Assistant Minister for Superannuation, Financial Services and Financial Technology</td>
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<td>Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management</td>
<td>The Hon David Littleproud MP</td>
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<td>Minister for the Environment</td>
<td>The Hon Sussan Ley MP</td>
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<td>The Hon Trevor Evans MP</td>
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<td>Assistant Minister for Forestry and Fisheries</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Jonathon Duniam</td>
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<td>Minister for Foreign Affairs</td>
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<td>Attorney-General (Leader of the House)</td>
<td>The Hon Christian Porter MP</td>
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<td>Minister for Industrial Relations</td>
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<td>Minister for Aged Care and Senior Australians</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Richard Colbeck</td>
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<td>Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash</td>
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<td>Assistant Minister for Customs, Community Safety and Multicultural Affairs</td>
<td>The Hon Jason Wood MP</td>
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<td>Minister for Education</td>
<td>The Hon Dan Tehan MP</td>
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<td>Minister for Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business (Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate)</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash</td>
<td>The Hon Karen Andrews MP</td>
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<td>Minister for Decentralisation and Regional Education</td>
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<td>Assistant Minister for Northern Australia</td>
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<td>Minister for Defence</td>
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<td>Minister for Veterans' Affairs</td>
<td>The Hon Darren Chester MP</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Linda Reynolds CSC</td>
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Minister for Defence Personnel (Deputy Leader of the House)  
The Hon Darren Chester MP  
Senator the Hon Linda Reynolds CSC
Minister for Defence Industry  
The Hon Melissa Price MP  
Senator the Hon Linda Reynolds CSC
Assistant Defence Minister  
The Hon Alex Hawke MP  
Senator the Hon Linda Reynolds CSC
Assistant Minister for Children and Families  
The Hon Michelle Landry MP
Assistant Minister for Community Housing, Homelessness and Community Services  
The Hon Luke Howarth MP
Minister for Families and Social Services (Manager of Government Business in the Senate)  
Senator the Hon Anne Ruston  
The Hon Stuart Robert MP
Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme  
The Hon Stuart Robert MP  
Senator the Hon Anne Ruston

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 can be two departments in one portfolio. The title of a department does not necessarily reflect the title of a Minister in all cases. Ministers are sworn to administer the portfolio in which they are listed under the 'Minister' column and may also be sworn to administer other portfolios in which they are not listed. Assistant Ministers in italics are designated as Parliamentary Secretaries under the Ministers of State Act 1952.

Mr MORRISON: I also inform the House that the Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs will be absent from question time today and for the remainder of the week. The Minister for Population, Cities and Urban Infrastructure will answer questions on his behalf as the acting minister.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Climate Change

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler—Leader of the Opposition) (14:13): My question is to the Prime Minister. I refer to the fact that now more than 70 countries have committed to net zero emissions by 2050, including Japan, Korea, France, Germany, Canada, the UK and New Zealand. And now the United States, under President-Elect Joe Biden, will support net zero by 2050, or perhaps even better. Why is the Prime Minister leaving Australia behind by refusing to support net zero by 2050?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (14:13): I thank the member for his question. I welcome the fact that the United States will be rejoining the Paris accord. Australia never left—and not only did we not leave; we continued to meet and beat the commitments that we have had in this area: meeting and beating Kyoto 1 and meeting and beating Kyoto 2, and we will meet and beat 2030 as well. When we said that about Kyoto 1 and Kyoto 2, those opposite mocked us. They said that the plan wouldn't work and that we wouldn't be able to achieve it, but they were proved wrong. They were proved wrong on two counts. We are committed to reducing emissions, consistent with our agreements, and to meeting those commitments. So when I say to the Australian people what our government will do and how we will do it, Australians have confidence in that because
they understand our track record of performance and delivery when it comes to meeting these challenges.

When it comes to the matter of net zero by 2050, Australia would like to meet that as quickly as possible and as quickly as is able, and that is why the Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction has set out the technology roadmap, which is the way that that can be achieved. But, until such time as we can be very clear with the Australian people about what the cost of that is and how that plan can deliver on that commitment, it would be very deceptive to the Australian people and not honest with them to make such commitments without being able to spell that out to Australians. I'll give another guarantee: Australia's policies will be set in Australia and nowhere else, for Australia's purposes, and consistent with our national interest. You can always guarantee that, when it comes to a coalition government, we will always act in Australia's interests.

We have our 2030 target, that we have signed up to under the Paris accords, but I note the Labor Party has not. The Labor Party would rather talk about something 30 years from now than something 10 years from now. And there may be a reason. The Labor Party has signed up to net zero by 2050 without qualification. Unlike in New Zealand, where they have omitted methane, which means agriculture and forestry sectors are not included in their net 2050 commitment, the Labor Party hasn't done that. Some simple linear analysis will tell you that, for a net zero 2050 based on what the Labor Party is saying, that would require a 43 per cent emissions reduction target in 2030. So why won't the Labor Party tell the Australian people what their 2030 target is? (Time expired)

NAIDOC Week

Mr THOMPSON (Herbert) (14:17): My question is to the Minister for Indigenous Australians. Will the minister please update the House on the Morrison government's commitment to empowering Indigenous Australians and the importance of NAIDOC Week—

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Can the member pause for a second. The Leader of the Opposition, the Minister for Health, The member for McEwen—can the member for Herbert begin his question again.

Mr THOMPSON: My question is to the Minister for Indigenous Australians. Will the minister please update the House on the Morrison government's commitment to empowering Indigenous Australians and the importance of NAIDOC Week in celebrating and recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture?

Mr WYATT (Hasluck—Minister for Indigenous Australians) (14:18): I want to thank the member for Herbert for his ongoing advocacy in this important and key area. NAIDOC Week is an opportunity for all Australians to celebrate and engage with history and the achievement of Indigenous Australians. It's a time for us to reflect on and understand our nation's shared history and how we can learn from practices reaching back 65,000 years to better inform our actions of today. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were the first of many: Australia's first explorers and navigators, first scientists and engineers, and first astronomers and artists. The Morrison government acknowledges this, and that's why we are working to empower all Indigenous Australians and ensure that we utilise Indigenous knowledge in developing programs and policies that better all Australians.
Last week, the Minister for the Environment, the minister for agriculture and I announced the opening of a $2 million grants round to strengthen and share traditional knowledge and practices in respect of Indigenous fire and land management practices. This builds on the findings of the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements, which called for all governments to further engage with Indigenous owners to explore the role Indigenous land and fire management practices can play in improving Australia’s resilience to natural disasters and the management of public land.

Empowering Indigenous Australians goes beyond the work of our government. We are a partner with the Indigenous Australians and state and territory governments through the priority reforms we are implementing in programs and policies that address the refreshed targets in a national Closing the Gap agreement. Indigenous Australians must be seated at the table in this decision-making. But we know Indigenous Australians are more than capable of excelling in their own right. This morning I was honoured to visit DXC Technology here in Canberra to launch their reconciliation action plan—a practical and tangible example of how businesses are investing in Indigenous Australians and creating opportunities for individuals to reach their potential.

Our role is to enable an environment where Indigenous voices are heard, Indigenous knowledge is accepted and Indigenous enterprises are supported. A practical example of this is the government’s Indigenous Procurement Policy. Empowering Indigenous people in key decisions on how businesses are run or projects are implemented is critical to improving the broader economic outcomes. From 1 July 2020 the Commonwealth’s value based target will rise from one per cent to 1.2 per cent. This will sit alongside the existing three per cent volume based targets and they will increase the opportunities post COVID. Our culture is as important today as it was 65,000 years ago, and their involvement in shared decision-making is a strength that our government will take forward. Thank you.

Climate Change

Mr BUTLER (Hindmarsh—Deputy Manager of Opposition Business) (14:21): My question is to the Prime Minister. Why won’t the Prime Minister commit to net zero by 2050 when it is supported by every state and territory government, the Australian Industry Group, the Business Council, the National Farmers Federation, AGL, BHP, Rio Tinto, Santos, Telstra, Origin, Energy Australia, the Property Council, the Aluminium Council and the Commonwealth Bank, among many others?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (14:21): As I just responded in answer to the question from the Leader of the Opposition, the government has a very clear target for 2030, just as we had clear targets for 2020—which were not just achieved but beaten. Our performance in this area speaks loudly—

Mr Hill interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Bruce.

Mr MORRISON: It shows that, since 2005, emissions in this country have fallen by 14 per cent. That compares to an OECD average of nine per cent—

Mr Georganas interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Hindmarsh.
Mr MORRISON: and zero per cent in Canada and only one per cent in New Zealand. So Australia continues to achieve when it comes to reducing emissions. We are signatories to the Paris Agreement and we have put in place measures that will ensure we will meet that commitment. It's important, I think, that there is a bipartisan commitment to the targets that have been set. Those opposite have no commitment to any target in 2030 at all. They have walked away from a target in 2030 because they wish to speak about something 30 years from now—something which, if they were to occupy the Treasury bench, they would have some responsibility for achieving.

As a share of the National Electricity Market, our generation from wind and solar is 18 per cent. The OECD average is two-thirds of that, at just 11 per cent, and the global average is 6½ per cent. Australia is achieving when it comes to reducing emissions and ensuring that renewable energy technologies are becoming a lasting and permanent feature of our energy mix here in Australia. But we're doing it through technology, not taxes.

I note this: of the many countries that have stated something about net zero by 2050, only four countries, through nationally determined contributions—that is the proper process for actually having a binding commitment with the overseeing accountabilities—have submitted that through the process internationally. Other countries may seek to do that. There are some 34 that have set out some longer-term strategies. But I note this: our government will always be up-front with Australians about their plans and policies. At the last election we were, and at the last election the Labor Party's policies, and the costs, were exposed. Our government will enact the policies that we took to the last election and which were supported by the Australian people. What we will also do, through a $1.9 billion investment in new technologies, is ensure that we meet all the challenges ahead. (Time expired)

COVID-19

Mr STEVENS (Sturt) (14:25): My question is to the Prime Minister. Will the Prime Minister outline to the House how, by taking a uniquely Australian approach to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Morrison government has acted to protect the health of Australians, mitigate the economic effects of the COVID-19 recession and build a recovery plan that will get Australians back to work and our economy growing again?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (14:25): I do thank the member for his question and I apologise for the delay. On few occasions has Australia achieved as much as Australians have achieved this year. In the face of one of the greatest set of challenges, both from the health pandemic globally and the global recession that follows from the COVID-19 recession that has been visited upon Australia now, we have not seen in this country, for many generations, a year of achievement in the face of adversity as Australians have been able to demonstrate this year. We thank Australians for that. We thank all of those who have worked together—governments of Australia, health workers, emergency service workers, teachers, nurses—right across this country to ensure that we have met the challenges and the tests that have come upon Australians in this year of adversity.

On the health front, we mobilised early the national health system, together with our states and territories, the workforce, the Australian Defence Force, and the best medical experts in the world here in Australia to advise us on our process. I particularly congratulate Professor Brendon Murphy on his nomination as Australian of the Year for the ACT. He has done an outstanding job for this country. We called the pandemic on Professor Murphy's advice, two
weeks clear of the World Health Organization. We acted to shut the borders and we formed
the national cabinet to coordinate the health actions and response of the states and territories.

Some $18.5 billion has been invested in the health response, which means that today,
again, we can say there are zero cases by community transmission here in Australia as there
were yesterday, a new milestone in our path back, in the comeback for Australia from
COVID-19. That compares terribly when you think about overseas countries: the United
States, some 110,000 cases a day; France, 60,000 cases a day; Italy 39,000 cases a day; the
United Kingdom, 24,000 cases a day. These are calamitous impacts in other parts of the
world, but Australia stands amongst a small group of nations that have been able to ensure we
have the health response right and we have the economic response right.

Our comeback is underway. Australia is opening again, Tasmania is opening up again,
South Australia is opening again, and this is happening in accordance with the three-step plan we have set out. This government has put a lifeline out there to the Australian economy and it is now time, as we graduate from those lifeline
measures, that we see our economy strengthen, recover what was lost and build for the future.

**Child Care**

**Ms THWAITES** (Jagajaga) (14:28): My question is to the Prime Minister. In Senate
estimates, the department of education said that it expected childcare fees to increase by 5.3
per cent this financial year. Why will families face a further increase in childcare fees in the
middle of a recession when wages are flatlining?

**Mr TEHAN** (Wannon—Minister for Education) (14:29): I thank the member for her
question. It's a very important question because the Morrison government is investing in the
childcare sector. Not only is it investing in the childcare sector through the reforms that we
introduced two years ago but it is driving down pressure on fees and pressure on parents' out-
of-pocket expenses. Let's go to Senate estimates and look at what the department said. Out-of-
pocket expenses are 3.2 per cent lower than what they were two years ago when our reforms
were introduced. That is what the department said: 3.2 per cent lower than what they were
two years ago when our reforms were introduced. Not only that, we are continuing to invest in
the childcare sector, and our investment goes up from $9 billion this year to over $10 billion
over the forward estimates.

I'll tell you what we won't be doing on this side—because we don't hear much about it from
those opposite. We still don't know what their policy is when it comes to the childcare wage
subsidy—

**Mr Albanese interjecting—**

**Mr TEHAN:** And the Leader of the Opposition laughs! Let me remind you what Bob
Carr had to say about it: 'One policy was simply bad. A government subsidy for'—

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

**Ms Rishworth interjecting—**

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Kingston. The Leader of the Opposition on a point of order?

**Mr Albanese:** As strange as this answer is—

**Mr Dutton:** What's the point of order?

**The SPEAKER:** No—
Mr Albanese: The point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Minister for Home Affairs will cease interjecting. I've called the Leader of the Opposition on a point of order. That means I'm going to hear the point of order.

Mr Albanese: It was a very specific question about one issue: the 5.3 per cent increase in childcare fees, which is what the minister's department said would happen this coming year—nothing else. I'm not quite sure how Bob Carr comes into anything, to be frank.

The SPEAKER: I call the minister. The Leader of the Opposition has made his point. I'll call the minister again. This question did not ask for alternative policies. So, no matter how much he might like to talk about them, he can't in this answer. The minister has the call.

Mr TEHAN: What the member has failed to comprehend is the full statement that was made by the department in Senate estimates.

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Members on my left.

Mr TEHAN: For instance, what they said over the decade when that number was quoted was that in the last couple of years it's actually underneath that, so underneath what the cost hikes were by those opposite. Not only that he has failed to go to the final point, which is that 3.2 per cent out-of-pocket expenses have come down in the two years since those reforms have been in place. So why did you leave off that part of the statement by the deputy secretary, Ros Baxter, in Senate estimates? Because it did not suit your argument. You will not comprehend or understand that they've been in place for two years and have led to 3.2 per cent reduction in out-of-pocket expenses. If you're being honest, you should have quoted the full statement.

Mr Rob Mitchell interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Member for McEwen.

Mr Rob Mitchell interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for McEwen is warned.

Climate Change

Ms STEGGALL (Warringah) (14:33): Truth and facts matter. We are not meeting and beating our emissions—

The SPEAKER: No. The member for Warringah will resume her seat. This is question time. You have to say at the outset who the question is directed to.

Ms STEGGALL: To the Prime Minister. I'm sorry, Mr Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Well, you need to say that. I'll let you start again and we'll start the clock again.

Ms STEGGALL: To the Prime Minister: truth and facts matter. We are not meeting and beating our emissions. They've gone up by 0.7 per cent over the last four years. You've said you will not be pushed to stronger climate policy by Boris Johnson or President-elect Biden. The Australian Medical Association, the Australian Council of Social Services, the Australian Council of Trade Unions, the Planning Institute of Australia, the Property Council of Australia, the Business Council of Australia, the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia, the Australian Energy Council and over 100 other leading organisations and businesses have
all signed up to support the private member's bill that I introduced this morning with a net to legislate net zero by 2050 with five-year emission reduction budgets. Over 70 per cent of our trading partners—will you debate it?

The SPEAKER: The member's time has expired, and I don't believe there was a question.

**COVID-19: Transport**

**Mr DRUM** (Nicholls—Chief Nationals Whip) (14:34): My question is to the Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development. Will the Deputy Prime Minister inform the House how the McCormack-Morrison government's plan for a safe and dependable transport network has underpinned Australia's unique response to the COVID-19 pandemic?

**Mr McCORMACK** (Riverina—Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development and Leader of the Nationals) (14:34): It's alright, Scott; I've got your back! I would like to thank the member for Nicholls for his question. He understands how important transport is, coming from a regional electorate. All regional members know how important our truckies are and we want to thank our truck drivers for doing the job that they've done.

When the pandemic first hit, it was important to get a national freight code so that our truckies could go across borders unfettered, so that they could keep those supermarket shelves stocked and so that they could deliver the important personal protection equipment—facemasks and respiratory devices—that our hospitals needed and that our communities absolutely so desperately required. So we should thank our truckies at every step of the way for doing the job that they have done for and on behalf of our nation.

And there has been some good news in the last 48 hours. Indeed, Victoria has had no cases for 10 days and no deaths, and that is very, very good news. Tasmania is now open to all jurisdictions except Victoria and has announced that it will join the repatriation efforts, as well as the trans-Tasman arrangements, and that is good news. New South Wales, of course, will be open to all states and territories when it opens its borders to Victorians on 23 November—and that is good news too.

So I say to people out there: be positive but test negative. If you have flu-like symptoms then go and get tested. It's so important that you do so. We want Australians to be their best selves and we want Australians to stay well. That's why we've put in place measures to help our economy and measures to put health outcomes first and foremost. On an international scale we've done very well in that regard.

Aviation is making great progress on the comeback. It has been so hard. Planes in the air mean jobs on the ground, and aviation was hit first and hit hardest. We have protected, backed and supported our aviation sector. Late last week—on Thursday, in fact—I went to Kingsford Smith airport and had a look at the red- and green-lane provisions that Geoff Culbert, the CEO there, is putting in place to help our repatriation efforts and to help our domestic flights. More than 374,000 Australians have returned since 13 March, of whom 29,000 have come home on our Commonwealth facilitated flights. Through regional airline network support and domestic aviation network support we were able to establish an essential domestic network. That is good and that is important, and we'll continue to support our aviation sector. We'll...
continue to support our transport sector. I've done that at the behest of and with the cooperation of the state and territory transport ministers. That's what we're doing. That's what a good government does: it gets behind and backs our economy, it backs our nation and it supports those workers who need every bit of help. *(Time expired)*

**Morrison Government: Cabinet**

Mr MARLES (Corio—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (14:37): My question is to the Prime Minister. Can the Prime Minister confirm that in August 2018 he established a cabinet committee in charge of delivery of announcements? Can he also confirm that on 30 October this year he announced a new cabinet committee in charge of delivery to replace his old delivery committee which didn't actually deliver?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (14:38): The Policy Implementation Committee of cabinet has been established to work alongside the Expenditure Review Committee and the National Security Committee. These three important subcommittees of the cabinet are designed, obviously, to focus the cabinet's attention on important national security measures that Australia deals with on a daily basis. Obviously, the Expenditure Review Committee looks forward to the preparation of budget measures that will come forward and, if necessary, which will be handed down later this year in the midyear statement and of course in the budget next year. And the Policy Implementation Committee has been established particularly because of the extensive number of measures that have been incorporated in this year's budget, in particular to ensure that they're being implemented as quickly as possible because they relate to pandemic responsiveness.

Those opposite may want to jeer and make light of these things. But the Australian people are dependent upon this government, which has had their back from the start of this crisis, as we have responded in a way that Australians have never seen before from a government, with the scale of economic lifeline support and health support of some $18½ billion. These are measures of scale that governments in this country have not known, and that has meant that our cabinet has been, again, upping the work rate to ensure that these measures hit the ground, whether it's the JobKeeper or the JobSeeker commitments, the JobTrainer arrangements, the manufacturing strategy, the technology road map or the work that is being done on resilience and recovery to ensure that Australia is in a position to ensure that, with the impacts of climate change on this country—the royal commission noted that for the next 20 years the challenge will be there—we build our resilience. All of this is essential to continue to deliver on the ground, as this government does. If those opposite want to make light of that process, that reflects on them, not the government.

**COVID 19: Economy**

Mr LEESER (Berowra) (14:41): My question is to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer explain to the House how the Morrison government's uniquely Australian approach to responding to the COVID-19 recession will help create jobs, rebuild our economy and secure Australia's future? Is the Treasurer aware of any alternative policies?

Mr FRYDENBERG (Kooyong—Treasurer) (14:41): I thank the member for his question and acknowledge his experience in the higher education sector and local government and his strong advocacy on the issue of mental health. The member for Berowra understands, as we on this side of the House understand, that the Australian economy has been hit by a once-in-a-
century economic shock. One point three million Australians either lost their jobs or saw their working hours reduced to zero early on in this pandemic. Around 600 million people globally have lost their jobs through this pandemic, and the global economy is expected to contract by around 4.4 per cent this calendar year compared to just 0.1 per cent during the GFC.

The government's economic support has helped get people back into work. Consumer confidence has been up nine weeks in a row. Consumer sentiment has had its biggest jump in a budget month, at 11.9 per cent, since the series first began in 1974, and our AAA credit rating has been reaffirmed. Last week, the Governor of the Reserve Bank made some important announcements about lowering the cost of borrowing and targeting bond yields.

But the ink was barely dry on the RBA statement before the member for Rankin hopped on his bike—training wheels and all, I have to add—pedalled as fast as he could, and went to do a press conference before the Governor of the Reserve Bank had even spoken. This is what the member for Rankin said:

… the Reserve Bank has obviously concluded that the Morrison government has not done enough in their Budget …

So to the Governor of the Reserve Bank, at his press conference, was put exactly that accusation by the member for Rankin, and this is what the Governor of the Reserve Bank had to say: 'No, that's not what we're saying,' and:

The government's strategy is the right one … it would be completely incorrect to draw the conclusion that this is a judgement on the government's fiscal strategy … the government's on the right track …'

What a slap-down! The member for Rankin would be best advised to leave his bike in the shed, unless he can learn to ride it without training wheels!

Mr MARLES (Corio—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (14:43): My question is to the Prime Minister. Can the Prime Minister confirm the Priorities and Delivery division in his department, which he announced in August last year, lasted around six weeks, and can he confirm his Priorities and Delivery deputy secretary lasted the same number of weeks, demonstrating the Prime Minister can't even deliver a delivery division in his own department? Is the Prime Minister noticing a pattern here?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (14:44): The only pattern I'm noticing here is the juvenile nature of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. The government will make arrangements through the Secretary of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet to support the policies of the government.

On the matter that the member raised earlier, the earlier committee that he referred to did not have the purpose that he set out. The policy implementation committee was of a completely different purpose to the one he misrepresented earlier. If the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has nothing better to do than engage in these sorts of childish cheap shots, he should look for another job.

Mr ENTSCH (Leichhardt) (14:45): My question is again to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer outline to the House how the Morrison government's JobMaker hiring credit and
other economic supports are providing incentives to support Australian jobs and drive Australia's economic recovery?

Mr FRYDENBERG (Kooyong—Treasurer) (14:45): I thank the crocodile farmer for his question—an insurance clerk, a real estate agent, a member of the RAAF and now a hardworking member in the parliament, supporting the constituents of Leichhardt. He understands that the Australian economic recovery is now underway, and 446,000 jobs have been created in the last four months. As I said, consumer confidence has been up for nine weeks in a row; consumer sentiment has been up and our AAA credit rating has been reaffirmed.

Programs like JobKeeper have supported more than 3½ million Australian workers, being a critical economic lifeline helping to keep that formal connection between employers and employees. JobSeeker effectively saw a doubling of the safety net, with two $750 payments to millions of pensioners, including nearly 15,000 in the electorate of Leichhardt. And, of course, the cash flow boost has put money in the hands of small and medium-sized business owners, helping them to have the working capital to get through this economic crisis.

When we approached the budget, we recognised that we needed to move to the next stage of our economic recovery plan, and that's why we passed through the parliament legislation to bring forward our tax cuts by a full two years, and 11½ million Australian taxpayers are getting a tax cut early as a result of this side of the House, including around 70,000 taxpayers in the member for Leichhardt's electorate. Of course, we have also backed business, recognising the importance of the private sector to the economic recovery, with an expanded instant asset write-off and the loss carryback.

In this budget there's a key economic measure to support young people move from unemployment and into work. That's the JobMaker hiring credit, which Treasury has said will support around 450,000 jobs. And that JobMaker hiring credit will see the government provide an incentive to businesses who take on people aged 16 to 35 who have previously been on JobSeeker. If they're 16 to 29, the business will get $200; if they are 30 to 35, the business will get $100 per week from the government in order to get those people into work.

We recognise, by looking at previous recessions in Australia, particularly in the eighties and nineties, that it took a long time to move people from the unemployment queue and into work. In the 1990s it took a full 15 years to get those unemployment rates for younger people back to the levels that they were. So this government is focused on jobs, jobs and creating more jobs, and the JobMaker hiring credit is a key part of our economic response. (Time expired)

**Australian Bushfires**

Ms McBAIN (Eden-Monaro) (14:48): My question is to the Prime Minister. Can I draw your attention back to bushfires. Last year the Morrison government announced an annual $200 million recovery and mitigation fund to help communities prepare for and recover from natural disasters. Can the Prime Minister confirm not a single dollar was spent from this fund in the last financial year and still not a single dollar has been spent from this fund in this financial year, despite Australia already entering the fire season? Why does this Prime Minister not deliver on his photo ops?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (14:49): I'll ask the minister to add further to this answer. One of the arrangements for that fund is that,
when there are other funds that are available to be acquitted for those purposes, then those funds are the funds that are done first. That's why we established the $2 billion National Bushfire Recovery Fund, of which more than a billion dollars has been applied to the purposes the member has asked. When you're responding to a crisis, the only thing that matters is that people are getting the support that is needed. They don't look to see what envelope it comes in. What they want is what this government has delivered, and that has been the case through the drought, through the floods, through the fires, through the pandemic. On every single occasion, this government has responded in a way we have not seen from governments in a very, very long time—delivering on the ground, delivering what was needed, to see people through. That may not be convenient for the political objectives of those opposite, but the reality on the ground is that Australians know we have their back. I will ask the minister to complete the answer.

Mr LITTLEPROUD (Maranoa—Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management and Deputy Leader of the National Party) (14:50): The Prime Minister is correct. As part of the legislation—and it should be no surprise to those opposite; they voted for it—within the $200 million there is $150 million that can be used to rebuild after a catastrophic event. That can be used only after other mechanisms have been exhausted; hence the $2 billion in immediate recovery that has been put forward for bushfire recovery. The department has given advice that that should not be utilised, because there is $2 billion available. The $150 million will not be utilised.

Those opposite in fact voted for that piece of legislation. Either they did not read the legislation when they voted for it or they are playing politics rather than looking after the people who deserve it. There is $50 million of that $200 million that can be utilised for building resilience. There in fact have been applications made by a wide range of communities that are being assessed by Emergency Management Australia as we speak. It is for them to determine what those projects should be, and we invited all members, no matter their political persuasion, to put forward those programs. But this forms part of the very piece of legislation that those opposite supported yet obviously did not read the detail of, and now they are upset about the fact that they didn't understand how this would be utilised and do not acknowledge that this government has put over $2 billion towards the bushfire recovery alone.

COVID-19

Mrs WICKS (Robertson) (14:52): My question is to the Minister for Health. Will the minister please provide an update to the House on the global status of the COVID-19 pandemic and how Australia's unique response to the pandemic compares? And are there any alternative policies?

Mr HUNT (Flinders—Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service and Cabinet) (14:52): I want to thank the member for Robertson, who, long before the pandemic, expressed a deep interest in immune conditions and respiratory conditions. Sadly, this respiratory condition and this disease, COVID-19, almost unimaginably, is accelerating. It is spreading at a faster rate than at any time before. We now know that the world has passed over 50 million formally diagnosed cases, that 1¼ million people have lost their lives. That means that, around the world, families are suffering, nations are in turmoil and economies are struggling. Every one of the past 14 days has seen over
400,000 cases—some over 500,000 and some, indeed, over 600,000 cases. In the past few days we’ve had the highest number on record for cases and for lives lost.

That makes us stop and look at Australia. Today, as the Prime Minister has said, we’ve had a second consecutive day of zero cases and a fourth day of zero nationwide cases in the past nine days. Against that background, the world is looking to Australia, and what they see is a nation that took early action and approached this, from the outset, by listening to the science, taking action and delivering on the outcomes. In particular, we closed the borders on 1 February on the basis of the medical advice. We took steps to deliver testing results which have now seen Australia having done over 9.1 million tests, with a continuous flow of tests at a time, when so many other nations around the world have struggled with their testing regimes. The delivery of that outcome has been one of the most significant in terms of saving and protecting lives. The contact-tracing around the nation has been overwhelmingly outstanding. Obviously there was a huge challenge in Victoria, but progress has been made, and I welcome that fact. And then we have taken the difficult steps with distancing. But all of these things have been combined with not just flattening the curve but also building the capacity—the delivery of 38 million primary health services through telehealth, the delivery of mental health support services, the delivery of 7½ thousand ventilators. And I can inform the House that, as of today, we now have zero Australians on ventilation as a result of COVID-19. I thank Australians for what they have done, and we recommit to continue this fight.

Emergency Services Workers

Mrs PHILLIPS (Gilmore) (14:55): My question is to the Prime Minister. Home Affairs has confirmed that, despite announcing a mental health national action plan for emergency workers on 12 January this year, at the height of the bushfires, the plan won’t be implemented until halfway through next year. How many more bushfire seasons will have to pass before emergency workers get the mental health support the Prime Minister announced?

Mr LITTLEPROUD (Maranoa—Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management and Deputy Leader of the National Party) (14:56): I thank the member for her question. I am happy to advise the member that $11.5 million has been committed to Fortem Australia and the Black Dog Institute of Australia to support emergency services personnel around, in particular, PTSD. That will complement a range of other mental health initiatives that we have put out. This is not just the federal government’s responsibility. We are working with the states as well.

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Those opposite, who engage and interject, need to appreciate that states have always had the operational management of emergency management. They are the professionals. They have done an exemplary job and we should be proud of them. This is above politics; this is about people. Both state and federal governments are working together to make sure we have a world-class mental health program for our first responders. And we are doing that with those who know best—Fortem Australia and the Black Dog Institute. We will make sure that whatever investment needs to be made with the states continues. That is our responsibility to the states—supporting them and making sure we have a world-class mental health program for our emergency services personnel.
COVID-19: Vaccine

Dr MARTIN (Reid) (14:57): My question is to the Minister for Health. Will the minister update the House on Australia's progress in securing and producing a vaccine for COVID-19 and will the minister outline the importance of such a vaccine for our recovery from this pandemic?

Mr HUNT (Flinders—Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service and Cabinet) (14:57): I thank the member for Reid, who of course comes with a deep commitment to mental health and a deep career in terms of having provided that support both practically and at a policy level.

Taking on board all of the steps which Australia has implemented and delivered in regard to COVID, there is still no pathway completely out of this unless and until we have a vaccine. That's because, as we set out earlier—as the Prime Minister set out, to which I referred also—the world is facing an enormous number of cases on a daily basis. There have been more than 500,000 cases a day, on average, over the last week. That is why a vaccine is a fundamentally important step.

I am very pleased to be able to inform the House that last week the Prime Minister announced that we had secured two additional contracts, advanced purchasing agreements, for vaccines—firstly, for 40 million units of Novavax's adjuvant protein vaccine, for delivery during 2021, commencing in the first quarter; and, secondly, for 10 million units of Pfizer's mRNA vaccine, the first delivery of which is also expected in the first quarter. These vaccines are of course subject to clinical trials and regulatory approvals, but the advice we have from SITAG, the Science and Technical Advisory Group, led by Professor Brendan Murphy and Professor Paul Kelly, is that the immune response for both T cells and antibodies is very positive for all four of the vaccines. What does that mean in practice? It means that our pathway to delivering vaccines for next year is growing and strengthening. We have already put in place acquisition for 51 million units of the University of Queensland vaccine to be produced with CSL—the molecular clamp vaccine. In addition to that, there are 33.8 million units of the AstraZeneca vaccine; 3.8 million will come from overseas but, importantly, 30 million units are to be manufactured here in Australia. Of those 30 million units, the first step of that process begins today. That process of manufacturing vaccines here in Australia begins today.

There are many steps in it, but this is about making sure we have the delivery commencing in the first half of next year with an expectation in the first quarter—most likely in March. That means that Australians have the potential to have a pathway through this over and above what we've done to contain the virus. This will protect and save lives in Australia going forward.

Water Infrastructure

Ms BUTLER (Griffith) (15:00): My question is to the Deputy Prime Minister. I refer to the government's defunct National Water Infrastructure Loan Facility, which was announced 50 times. Can the Deputy Prime Minister confirm that in its last 15 months of operation $615,986 of taxpayers money was wasted on administering this scheme, which did not issue a single dollar in loans before it was shut down?
Mr McCormack (Riverina—Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development and Leader of the Nationals) (15:01): All I can confirm is that we're getting on board with building dams. I can confirm that $2 billion—$2,000 million—was part of the budget and is going to the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund to build dams. And I welcome states and territories of all political persuasions to get on board that journey with me to build on what we've already said we were going to do as far as Big Rocks—oh, here we go! They want to—

The Speaker: The Deputy Prime Minister will resume his seat. The Manager of Opposition Business on a point of order?

Mr Burke: Yes, it's on direct relevance, Mr Speaker. The Deputy Prime Minister is talking about a different scheme to the one that's in the question. He's referring to dams that haven't been built during the time of this government and I'd ask that you would draw him back to the question.

Mr Rob Mitchell: Tell him to—

The Speaker: The member for McEwen can leave under standing order 94(a).

Mr McCormack: We are moving from loans to grants. That's what the states and territories wanted; they wanted the money in grants, preferably, rather than loans, and that's what we're doing. And we're working with the New South Wales government, for Dungowan and Wyangala. Originally, we said we would do those two particular projects as a loans process. The New South Wales government wants it as grants and so we are going to build those dam infrastructure projects with New South Wales as grants. The difference that will make to inland New South Wales is the equivalent of 1.2 Sydney Harbours of inland water for flood mitigation, for water security for towns, for irrigation and to ensure that we can grow agriculture from a $61 billion enterprise to $100 billion—the goal for 2030.

That's what we're doing right through Queensland, whether it's at Emu Swamp Dam in the electorate of the member for Maranoa—and I know how hard Brent Finlay has worked to achieve the money that irrigators have put up for that particular project: $23.4 million of irrigators' own money. And we've put up $48 million, $6 million of which has been enabling roads. And I welcome being able to work with the new water minister in Queensland, given the fact that Anthony Lynham has retired. I look forward to working with the new minister to achieve that dream which has been on the books for way too long. We are building it, because it takes a Liberal-Nationals government to build water infrastructure, and that's what we're doing.

Science

Dr Allen (Higgins) (15:04): My question is to the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology. Will the minister please advise the House how the recent appointment of the new
Chief Scientist will support the development of science as an enabler of industry to help drive our economic recovery from the COVID-19 recession?

**Mrs ANDREWS** (McPherson—Minister for Industry, Science and Technology) (15:05): I intend to take every second of the three minutes available to me today to talk about science because nothing gets me as excited, quite frankly, than talking about science, and we have a fantastic story to sell here. On a very serious note, this year has been one like we have never ever experienced before. We have had to deal with bushfires, we're dealing with the COVID crisis now and, quite frankly, it's hard to imagine a year when Australians have ever been more aware of science and the need to engage with our science communities.

As we drive through this COVID recession, the role of our science community and of our researchers has never been more important. This morning I was absolutely delighted to join the Prime Minister as he announced Australia's new Chief Scientist, Dr Cathy Foley, a very distinguished applied physicist. She spent many years working for the CSIRO and, importantly, given science and technology are such key enablers of industry, she has spent a considerable amount of time working in manufacturing, looking at science and technology, and how manufacturing can be enabled through science and tech. She understands how important it is for science and research to collaborate with industry.

In her role as the incoming Chief Scientist, Dr Foley will be replacing Dr Alan Finkel at the end of this year. We do recognise his work and thank him for the contribution that he has made. Dr Cathy Foley will certainly be doing all that she can to ensure that science is a key part of driving our recovery through the COVID recession. We understand science on this side of the House. We in the government absolutely understand science. Let me say two things: in the budget, we committed an additional $460 million to the CSIRO; and we've also committed $1.6 billion more in funding to our science agencies than when Labor were last in government. Those opposite sit there and they try and make out that they are all for science. Well, quite frankly, I don't even think that they would know how to spell 'science'. (Time expired)

**Infrastructure**

**Ms CATHERINE KING** (Ballarat) (15:08): My question is to the Prime Minister. This government spent less than 20 per cent of its announced Urban Congestion Fund last year but committed $10.6 million to advertise infrastructure promises over the next two years. Will the Prime Minister deliver on this year's announcement on advertising before he delivers on last year's announcements on actual infrastructure?

**Mr TUDGE** (Aston—Minister for Population, Cities and Urban Infrastructure) (15:08): I thank the member for Ballarat for her question. We have 185 Urban Congestion Fund projects, and 90 per cent of those projects will be either completed or well underway by the time of the next election in line with our commitments. I can inform that $182 million has now been paid, 19 projects have been completed already, and a further 15 projects are underway, including four commuter car parks. As I said, we expect about 90 per cent will be completed or under construction over the next 18 months. I know that the members opposite will be particularly interested in some of the projects in their own electorates which are well underway or, in some cases, have been constructed already.
For example, I know the commuter car park at Hurstbridge in the electorate of the member for McEwen is well and truly underway. The commuter car park at Craigieburn in the member for Calwell's electorate is well and truly underway. I know that the member for McMahon is very much looking forward to the $95 million upgrade of the Horsley Drive, which is expected shortly. We've had $73 million go towards the Coopers Plains crossing removal in the member for Moreton's electorate. The business case there is expected to be finished by the middle of next year. Construction will soon be underway.

The $50 million for the Wallan ramp upgrade in the member for McEwen's electorate will be completed in Q1 of 2021. We've also got $115 million for the Torrens Road level crossing removal in Adelaide in the seat of Adelaide. I know the member for Adelaide will be particularly interested in that. We expect that to be well and truly under construction in 2021 Q2 as well. I could continue to go on, but these are projects that we committed to. They're going to make a big difference in those local communities and by and large most of them will be underway or indeed completed within the next 18 months.

**Energy**

*Mrs ARCHER* (Bass) (15:11): My question is to the Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction. Will the minister update the House on how Australia's approach to the development and deployment of new energy technologies will help reduce emissions both here and around the world? Is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

*Mr TAYLOR* (Hume—Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction) (15:11): I thank the member for Bass for her question. As a farmer from Northern Tasmania, she knows how important it is to have affordable and reliable energy as we bring down emissions. Like all on this side of the House, she knows that central to that is the development and deployment of low-emission technologies. That's why we have a plan focused on technology, not taxes, through our Technology Investment Roadmap, which is a plan to invest in future technologies that will bring down emissions by bringing those technologies into line economically with higher emitting alternatives. It will accelerate technologies like hydrogen, like carbon capture and storage, like soil carbon measurement—low-carbon materials like steel and aluminium and of course long duration energy storage. Widespread global deployment of those technologies will reduce emissions or eliminate them in sectors responsible for 90 per cent of the world's emissions—45 billion tonnes.

We have a strong track record when it comes to reducing emissions—on setting plans and getting on with achieving those plans. On 30 June we came to the end of the Kyoto era. We met and beat our Kyoto targets by 430 million tonnes, almost a year's worth of emissions. As we look forward to 2030, we have a clear plan to meet and beat those targets—2030 targets as required by the Paris agreement. But not everyone in this place is committed to 2030 targets. Those opposite haven't, because they don't want to admit that their long-term unconditional target requires a 43 per cent emissions reduction by 2030, which was the policy they took to the last election.

They are paralysed by indecision and division. We heard just a few weeks ago that there was a peace deal inside the Labor Party. But today we read that the member for Hunter has called the member for Hindmarsh 'delusional'. He said, 'Those who want to set Australia on a path to slower economic growth and large job losses are delusional'. So much for the peace deal! If this is peace, I would hate to see war. Members opposite have walked away from their
2030 target. They’ve walked away from their plan for the Paris agreement. While those opposite fight amongst themselves, we get on with the job.

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

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE: ADDITIONAL ANSWERS

Morrison Government: Cabinet

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (15:14): I wish to add to an answer to an earlier question from the member for Corio. I can advise him that the priorities and delivery unit continues to operate. So his information was wrong. Secondly, the standing committee of cabinet in 2018—that purpose was not as was represented by the member. It continues. It was a committee that was also in place under the former Labor government.

DOCUMENTS

Presentation

Mr PORTER (Pearce—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Leader of the House) (15:14): 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.

STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Ministerial Statements

The SPEAKER (15:15): On 29 October, a point of order was raised in regard to the content of a ministerial statement, and I wanted to just make some further comment. I obviously spoke to that point of order at the time, but I wanted to make some further detailed comment on ministerial statements to assist all honourable members. There's a long history of ministerial statements being made. However, in relatively recent times they have occurred less frequently. In the 42nd Parliament there were 126 ministerial statements, for instance, compared to 23 in the 45th and so far 12 in this parliament.

The standing orders are largely silent on ministerial statements. Standing order 34 sets out the order of business, including the period during which they can be made, and standing order 63A, which was adopted in March 2015, specifies:

When the House has granted a Minister leave to make a ministerial statement, the House shall be deemed to have granted leave for the Leader of the Opposition, or Member representing, to speak in response to the statement for an equal amount of time.

House of Representatives Practice, page 501, defines ministerial statements as:

… statements to the House by Ministers announcing or reporting on domestic and foreign policies and other actions or decisions of the Government.

This is an important point to make, as ministerial statements exist to provide ministers with the opportunity to make announcements on policy which they are expressly prevented from being asked about in question time under standing order 98(d)(ii).

As House of Representatives Practice sets out:
The House has always required Ministers to seek leave to make ministerial statements.
This is a practice that dates back to a ruling in the very first parliament in 1902. It's also practice that an advance copy of the proposed ministerial statement is given to the opposition at least two hours prior to the ministerial statement being made. This allows the opposition time to consider whether to support the granting of leave as well as time to prepare a considered response. Indeed, leave has been denied where this courtesy has not been extended. In addition, House of Representatives Practice, page 502, cites an example from 2010 where leave was not granted for a minister to make a ministerial statement. At the time, the shadow minister stated his view, having been provided with an advance copy, that the proposed statement contained political abuse. A suspension of standing orders was then required to enable the minister to make a statement.

I'll conclude by saying ministerial statements are an important opportunity for ministers to inform the House and the Australian people about matters of significance in their portfolio areas. There will always be differences in perspective, of course, but I expect these opportunities to be treated by respect by all who take them up and to be used specifically for the purpose for which they're intended. There are ample opportunities in other political debates during the parliamentary day when ministers can engage in political debate about the opposition. I just wanted to make that statement for clarity for the House.

Mr BURKE (Watson—Manager of Opposition Business) (15:18): on indulgence—

Thanks, Mr Speaker, for that detailed ruling. Given that, can I, for the benefit of the House, just make clear that, if it continues that there's political abuse in statements when we receive copies of them, leave will simply not be granted. It's as simple as that. That's the second ruling today with respect to the Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction, but I just want to make it clear, because it is easier if they're simply prepared in such a way that everything can go through its normal path. But, now that that's been made clear in the way it has by you, Mr Speaker, our practice will be very simple: if they are genuine ministerial statements, leave will be granted in the normal way; if they're statements containing political abuse, leave will not be granted.

COMMITTEES

Road Safety Joint Select Committee

Report

Mr CONAGHAN (Cowper) (15:20): On behalf of the Joint Select Committee on Road Safety, I present the committee's report entitled Improving road safety in Australia.

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

Mr CONAGHAN: by leave—I was very pleased to act as the chair of the Joint Select Committee on Road Safety, and indeed it is a privilege to present this report and its 22 recommendations to the House today. I would like to thank all members of the committee who participated, but, in particular, the Hon. Sharon Bird, the Hon. Matt Thistlethwaite and Senator Glenn Sterle for their input and experience and also for their bipartisan approach to such an important national issue—road safety. I would also like to thank the very diligent research officers and secretary for compiling this report.

Last year, 1,188 people died on our nation's roads. The quantified financial cost of road trauma on the Australian economy in 2016 is estimated to have been over $33 billion. A recent inquiry into the National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020 also found that inaction on
improving the current position will result in 12,000 people killed and 360,000 admitted to hospital, costing the nation in excess of $300 billion over the next decade. And this is only the immediate financial impact. Beyond this is the often silent but far-reaching emotional and social cost of road trauma in the community—and, far too often, in regional and rural communities. Over two-thirds of deaths on our roads occur in regional and rural locations, causing a ripple effect both emotionally and financially. This is imposed on family members and friends. Then, of course, there is the silent pain suffered by those first responders—the police, ambulance, SES and frontline medical workers—who are confronted with the catastrophic and unforgettable scenes of carnage.

In the past, all governments have failed to do enough to ensure that our roads provide safe passage for drivers and vulnerable road-users. This report acknowledges those failures, and, through its 22 recommendations, seeks to implement ideas, practices and policies received from experts, stakeholders, frontline workers and affected family members, to all of whom the committee is extremely grateful for their submissions and their evidence.

The first step in working towards safer roads is a change to the mindset that dying on our roads is tragic yet acceptable. Last year alone, we lost more people on our roads than we have during this coronavirus pandemic. Yet we don't refer to our road toll as a pandemic. We can no longer think that road deaths are an unfortunate consequence of road use. It is also incumbent on all levels of government to work together to collect and share data and report on all issues surrounding road safety. We can no longer consider this a local issue, a state issue or a federal issue. This is a national issue, and it can only be resolved by working together.

It was pleasing to see an additional $2 billion for road safety upgrades and a further $1 billion to help our councils through the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program. Sometimes, the smallest of changes can have the biggest outcomes.

I hope to continue to work with my colleagues in a permanent capacity on the road safety committee to implement these recommendations and to ensure transparency, accountability and outcomes, and to save lives, for all Australians on our roads. I commend the report to the House.

Mr THISTLETHWAITE (Kingsford Smith) (15:24): I too wish to join with the member for Cowper in commending this report to the parliament. I thank the member for Cowper for the great job that he did in chairing this committee and the bipartisan culture that he instilled in the committee and the recommendations that have been made.

That bipartisan approach existed on this committee for this simple fact: far too many Australians die or are seriously injured on our roads every year. As the chair said, 1,188 Australians lost their lives last year. A massive 36,000 people were hospitalised, with a huge cost—over $30 billion—to our nation. The shocking fact is that we, as a nation, continue to tolerate this, when we know that there is technology and there are advances that we can make as a nation to reduce that toll.

Many of those who submitted to the inquiry mentioned the simple things we can do that will have a big effect. Most notably, simply having nationally consistent data across the network about definitions for casualty crashes, for road safety ratings and for speeding will make a massive improvement to policy approaches to fixing some of this problem. There's a recommendation for the national Office of Road Safety to work with the states and territories
on developing these nationally consistent definitions over the coming years and, importantly, on having this data published on a regular basis so that the people who work in this area can make better decisions about improving safety outcomes.

Road design and engineering is vitally important and can make a big difference. Many of the submitters made their approach about the importance of road safety rating systems or star rating systems relating to infrastructural changes, like making changes to the way we build shoulders on roads, putting audible markings on highways, building dual carriageways where we can, putting in anti-collision wires and making the many other changes that can be made around the technology of road design and proper engineering that will have a big effect. There's a recommendation in the report about the importance of the Commonwealth using funding as a mechanism to ensure that we get better outcomes in this area by making sure that, if Commonwealth funding is going to a particular road project, it meets criteria and incorporates the Network Design for Road Safety principles.

We heard about the importance of technology and the changes that have been made, particularly over the last decade, and the improvements that have been made and the effects that those have had. We all know about the introduction of speed cameras and red light cameras, but, more recently, jurisdictions have been beginning to implement mobile phone cameras that indicate when a person has picked up their mobile phone and is potentially distracted, as a driver, whilst in their car. That is providing important data and, of course, an enforcement mechanism to reduce the distraction of drivers. There's the importance of point-to-point speed cameras and how they're making a difference on highways throughout the country. I think that we, as a Commonwealth, should be insisting, in terms of funding going to states, that, where it's possible, funding is contingent upon such technology being built into the road that the Commonwealth is a partner in.

Vehicle safety standards are very, very important. Anti-collision braking, lane-change assist, rear cameras—all of these changes can make a difference to safety. We highlight, through a recommendation, that safety should be paramount in procurement decisions, particularly in government at all levels. We asked for the review of the time frames for mandatory information in respect of safety features.

One of the most important recommendations—and I'll finish on this—is, as the chair said, the committee's unanimous recommendation that this committee become a permanent standing committee of the parliament and that it work with this parliament, with the states and territories and, importantly, with local government and the people who work in this industry, on a permanent basis, to improve the safety standards on Australian roads and, hopefully, reduce that road toll.

I too wish to thank all of the submitters who submitted to the inquiry. Many of them are very, very passionate. Many of those who are involved in this didn't want to be but are, because they've lost loved ones and are campaigning for better standards and changes we can make as a nation. I once again thank the chair and all of the members and senators who participated in the inquiry.

Mr CONAGHAN (Cowper) (15:30): I move:

That the House take note of the report.

Debate adjourned.
Reference to Federation Chamber

Mr CONAGHAN (Cowper) (15:30): I move:
That the order of the day be referred to the Federation Chamber for debate.
Question agreed to.

BILLS

Native Title Amendment (Infrastructure and Public Facilities) Bill 2020
Second Reading

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

Mr DREYFUS (Isaacs) (15:30): In 2010 the Labor government introduced subdivision JA into the Native Title Act 1993. That subdivision is a useful set of provisions that provide a process to assist in the urgent construction of public housing and a limited class of community facilities, including education, health and emergency services facilities and staff housing associated with those facilities. The process is available where the construction of these facilities is by or on behalf of the Crown, a local government body or other statutory authority for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities on Indigenous-held land.

This reformed Native Title Act was introduced by Labor when last in government to deal with situations where there was an urgent need for the construction of public housing or other public facilities on land subject to native title. When introduced the provision included a 10-year sunset, which was to approximate the duration of the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing Labor had put in place. The Native Title Amendment (Infrastructure and Public Facilities) Bill 2020 will extend the operation of these provisions for a further 10 years, and Labor supports this extension.

I take this opportunity to encourage the government to ensure that the subdivision continues to be used only when strictly necessary to facilitate urgent construction and that at all times proper consultations take place with affected communities before, during and after construction is completed. Importantly, the subdivision provides the consultation with affected parties, including periods for comment on any proposed construction. In his second reading speech when this measure was introduced in 2010, Attorney-General Robert McClelland emphasised that the bill ‘also contains important safeguards to ensure genuine consultation with native title parties.’ The new process sets out reasonable and specific periods for comment and consultation and provides flexibility to allow native title parties to choose the level of engagement they feel is appropriate for each individual project. It will be subject to state and territory heritage processes.

The bill also enables the Attorney-General to prescribe how consultations with native title parties should occur, including general guidance on the issues to be included in consultation. This includes the capacity to set more detailed requirements such as face-to-face meetings and provision of interpreters. This requirement for consultation put in place by Labor is a very important part of this legal regime.

In May this year, the 46,000-year-old rock shelters at Juukan Gorge on the traditional Pilbara lands of the Puutu Kunti Kurrama and Pinikura people were blasted to rubble. This outrage occurred while this government sat by, despite warnings and attempts by the
traditional owners to stop the destruction of their ancient heritage. While this disgraceful act occurred in a quite different context to the provisions being extended by this bill, what occurred highlights the importance of respect for the culture and heritage of First Nations communities and the need for those communities to be consulted with and listened to regarding actions that impact their traditional lands.

In the 10 years since these provisions were first introduced, concerns have been raised in some First Nations communities about the need not only for consultation prior to projects commencing but for ongoing consultation to take place to ensure that any facilities built under this legislation are managed in a manner that is appropriate and respectful to those communities. I believe that this kind of ongoing consultation is something that should be practised by the government as a matter of basic respect in its dealings with First Nations people. Unfortunately, that respect is not always forthcoming from this government, and I call on the government to listen to the concerns of First Nations communities regarding the need for ongoing consultation with respect to the management of facilities on land that is subject to native title and to adjust its conduct accordingly. I commend this bill to the House.

**Dr ALLEN** (Higgins) (15:35): I rise to support the Native Title Amendment (Infrastructure and Public Facilities) Bill 2020, which will extend the sunset clause and provide for Indigenous people and their needs. The Morrison government is firmly committed to helping Indigenous Australia realise social and economic security. One of the keys to improving the livelihoods of Indigenous Australians is by unlocking job-creating housing and infrastructure projects which provide a positive public impact. This is particularly important now more than ever, as we pivot to our economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

This bill extends the operation of section 24JAA for a further 10 years. This section provides a pragmatic approach to rapidly delivering essential public housing and infrastructure on land that is subject to native title rights and interests. This section requires that native title holders and registered claimants be notified about relevant public works and may continue to exercise the right to be consulted. The bill has provisions to ensure that this occurs with the support of interpreters and the like. It mandates that this consultation process be completed within four months of notification.

This bill balances the rights and interests of native title holders with pressing community needs. The section has been used to streamline public housing for Indigenous communities, which supports the Morrison government's new Closing the Gap targets for 2031. The section has also been used for emergency facilities, such as women's shelters, fire brigades, police stations, public education facilities and staff housing for teachers and public health employees. Without this section, these important projects can take years, and the negotiation process can take years and in some cases can't be finalised at all. Alternatively, compulsory acquisition is required, which extinguishes native title.

When public and other essential infrastructure is desperately needed for these communities, such delays are unacceptable. At the same time, we should endeavour to avoid the undesirable impact of compulsory acquisition on native title. Therefore, this bill appropriately balances the rights and interests of native title holders and the important infrastructure needs of communities. With this in mind, the section retains its temporary status. The benefit of this is twofold. First, it means that the pressing unmet housing and infrastructure needs of Indigenous communities can be satisfied swiftly over the coming years. What we've achieved
in this space can be reassessed when the provision is due to expire in 10 years time. Second, it maintains a long-term commitment to safeguarding the rights and interests of native title holders.

Since its inception in 2011 under the Labor government, the section has been used 126 times on almost 1,000 residential lots. It is often a last resort for overcoming stubborn impasses. The section has been used 52 times in Queensland and 74 times in Western Australia. It most heavily benefits these states because of their land tenure arrangements and unmet public housing needs. This includes 778 public houses and other facilities in Queensland, as well as 312 public houses and 73 other facilities in Western Australia. These are important projects that deliver better outcomes for our Indigenous communities. As we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, delivering on public housing and infrastructure projects will also support job creation and economic growth, particularly amongst Indigenous Australians.

This bill is part of the Morrison government's broader commitment to empowering and supporting Indigenous Australians, and I note that this week is NAIDOC Week. The theme for this year is 'Always Was, Always Will Be'. This is a very important theme for understanding Indigenous Australians and how we need to partner and walk with them on the solutions that are required to close the gap. The 2020-21 budget delivers investments for Indigenous people in health, housing, education and employment, and places Indigenous organisations and communities in line with communicating in the driver's seat to deliver for their people. This includes the continued commitment to the $5.4 billion Indigenous Advancement Strategy to support programs that will, hopefully, reduce the rates of Indigenous incarceration, youth suicide, and family and domestic violence, and, most importantly, improve health, safety, wellbeing, education, and employment and economic opportunities. It also includes the continued commitment of $4 billion in Indigenous health funding over the coming four years through the Department of Health which includes $975 million in 2020-21.

It is more than 30 years since I spent time in Arnhem Land as a young medical student. There is so much more that we need to achieve to help our Indigenous people close the gap from the non-Indigenous outcomes that we see here in Australia. It's so important that the social and economic security of Indigenous Australians remains a key priority for whatever government sits on this side of the chamber.

This bill is a practical way to ensure a timely response to the emerging needs of Indigenous Australians and promote better outcomes for their communities. It is critical that we continue to work in a bipartisan way on this important work of closing the gap, as well as pivoting to recover from the COVID pandemic as we work together for all Australia.

Mr KATTER (Kennedy) (15:41): For those who are not aware, I was the minister for almost a decade in Queensland. It was very moving when people came up to me during the election campaign and looked me in the eye and said, 'I've got a Katter lease,' and I want to tell the House officially and formally that I had nothing to do with the issue of leases that bear my name. This is not the act of some clever genius. The only clever thing that I did was to go and ask the people what they wanted. Effectively, the state government owned these reserves in Queensland—three million hectares—so I went to each of the areas and said, 'What do you want?' They screamed and yelled, 'We want an inalienable freehold.' And I said: 'Shut up! I've
got this bit of paper saying "the Yarrabah reserve", and I want to know whose name I put on the bottom of it. Do I leave the state government's name on the bottom of it? Do I put the Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council? The council has been set up under self-management, which is much more powerful than local government powers, so do I put the self-management council's name on it? Do I put a tribal name on it? Do I put private names on it, the same as they have in Cairns, Mareeba, Charters Towers or Sydney? Or do you have some other idea, like community ownership? What do you want? After great argument, we visited some 28 communities and held big public meetings, and these alternatives were put to them. Surprise, surprise! Out of over 3,000 people, all of them voted for private ownership, the same as is enjoyed by every other person on earth. Three people voted against it, and all the rest voted for it.

In 200 years, not one single government in this country has delivered that to the people. If I speak with rage then, believe me, I feel that rage. We are the only people on earth, we blackfellas in Australia, that are deprived of the right to own a title deed to our home, and this legislation further deprives us of that ownership.

When the vote was taken by the community councils in North Queensland, even though it included south Queensland communities as well, not one single council voted for the proposal being put forward here—not one. One rat council, which happened to be in my homeland, hid out and did not appear for the vote. They snuck around behind everyone's back and sold their people out to the whitefella government. They were little puppets on a string doing what the whitefella CEO told them to do so he could get all of the house building going, and he gets a percentage of the house building, so he makes a lot of money out of it. But there's going to be no house building, because the state government said, 'We're not building any houses unless we own the land upon which we build the house.' Oh, so the only way we can get a house is for you to thieve the land off us? Is that the way it's going to be? There is a wonderful book out. I recommend anyone interested in this reads that book, by Sarah Maddison. It's called The Colonial Fantasy, and it's about how the whitefellas make all the decisions and, in 200 years, they've never gotten it right.

When I go to the Torres Strait and have people hold my hand and look me in the eye, with tears in their eyes, saying, 'I got a Katter lease,' I don't deserve any credit, because I had nothing whatsoever to do with it. I just went out and asked the people what they wanted. That's my total contribution: asking what they wanted. Then, I suppose, yes, we had a bit of bloodthirsty warfare in delivering. What did we deliver? You walked in off the street, into the council chambers, and you got a piece of paper—one page. You filled out the page, which was just a description of the land you wanted, and said, 'I want that land.' There might be a house upon it. It might be a cattle station block. It might be a market garden block. It might be a block to build a chemist shop in the town. You filled it out, you submitted it to the council, and if the council did not object over a two-month period, which was two council meetings, the title deed automatically issued—freehold, fee simple title, inalienable.

It's not really all that clever. We blackfellas aren't brilliant in coming to this conclusion. Every other country on earth—even communist China—has come to the conclusion of giving people private, freehold ownership of their land. But, no, we have imposed upon us some tribal ownership taking us back 2,000 years. So we're wedged into ploughing with a draft horse instead of a 400-horsepower Caterpillar dozer. We're wedged into the stone age.
this hard to do? No. You filled out the form. No-one objected. I think the application fee was 20 bucks, and, so long as the council did not object, a title deed automatically issued.

There was a terrible mistake made in the United States in the red Indian reserves and only found out many years later: they had not put the inalienability clause. So, where we blackfellas foresaw there was a problem—that it could be flogged off to outsiders—the red Indians or the government of America didn't. Within 27 years, almost every single acre of the Indian reserves in America was gone, because someone would want to buy three horses and he'd borrow money on most of his land and then wouldn't repay it, so he'd lose his land. So the answer is there. Please read The Colonial Fantasy and please read Hernando de Soto's book The Mystery of Capital. He was the senior economist with the World Bank. In that book he explains why Peru, the Philippines and Egypt are the poorest countries on earth. They are the poorest countries on earth because you can't get a title deed. It is an average of 230 legal processes you have to go through, taking an average of six years and requiring on numerous occasions legal advice. People haven't got the money to pay the lawyers, so they don't get to own land in any of those three countries.

I would use the other example of the United States. When no country on earth had private ownership—well, Great Britain did, sort of—they issued their own title deeds to their burgesses. The burgess issued a title deed to a block of land. You'd take it up as a squatter and he gave you a bit of paper saying it was yours. When the King of England decided it wasn't, they got very angry. They had a big fight, the Americans won and Britain was no more on the North American continent.

All we are saying is that surely the First Australians are entitled to own a piece of land. If you want to go to tribal ownership, I will give you the example of what occurs. Two whitefellas—they could never be described as blackfellas—from Sydney with fairly questionable pasts were the traditional owners. No question about it. They had every legal right to own the tip of Cape York. They arrived there with five Chinese nationals with a view to selling the top of Cape York to these Chinese businessmen. The people that lived there were outraged. How can this be? Two whitefellas from Sydney. Well, they were the direct descendants of the original inhabitants and there is no-one else that can prove that they are a better descendant. If we want to go back to the primitive tribal times of 2000 BC, most of Europe and most of Asia had left that concept of tribal ownership and gone to other methods of ownership.

If you want to build an economy, read Hernando de Soto's book, The Mystery of Capital. Let me be very, very specific. We are proceeding to create an authority in one of the First Australian communities in North Queensland. The authority will consist of representatives of the duly elected shire council. It will have representatives of the traditional owners because, after Mabo, we have no way of going around that, whether we want to or whether we don't. Thirdly, there will be a popular vote in the community for two other members to go on the authority. They will issue the title deeds because—and I want to say this fairly unapologetically—you whitefellas in Sydney and Canberra and Melbourne and Brisbane will not tell us whose land it is. It's not yours. It is ours. We have owned it for 40,000 or 50,000 years. You had nothing to do with it. We fought and died to hold on to some of it. That some of it that we're holding on to—we will own it, the same as everyone else on earth owns their land. You will not deprive us of that right.
If the federal government doesn't like it, that's fine, we'll go to the state government. If the state government doesn't like it, we'll go to the federal government. I am quite sure that one of you won't be real happy about watching the other mob get control of the issue or the acceptance of the issue of the title deeds. If I'd been saying this in the most conservative government in Australian history, the Bjelke-Petersen government—not a single person thought I was going to be able to do it. I think there were five features on 60 Minutes on the tenacious battle we had to get what we were after. Within five years we were able to issue 800 title deeds in spite of fights about who owned what and who didn't own what and all the other fights. We still managed to get out nearly 1,000 title deeds. So those people own that little block of land forever, the same as anyone else on earth, except they can't sell it to outsiders. Whether that went too far or not, you can take it up and argue it with the blackfellas that made the decision because there were no whitefellas involved in the decision-making. I can't help but single out the late Lester Rosendale and Eric Law, who were the heads of the department; Noel Pearson's brother, Gerhardt Pearson, who played a very key role in these decisions; and at Yarrabah: Alfie Neal, Micky Connolly and Roy Grey. There are a thousand other heroes, including Tommy Geia on Palm Island, to name but one. There is old Les Stewart, who came out of retirement to fight the fight in his old age, when everyone thought he was an Uncle Tom, and we found out he wasn't. Jackson Shortjoe and Eddie Holroyd are on my wall in my office at Pormpuraaw. I could go on. Please apologise to all those people who fought the fight.

Give us that land and we can grow. Give us that land and we can put cattle on it and farm it. We can put a chemist shop or other kinds of shops on it. We can go forward and have the prosperity that's enjoyed by other Australians, but not as long as you deprive us of the right to own land with some sort of ridiculous tribal arrangements that set us back 4,000 years. The rest of the world abandoned the tribal ownership that's imposed upon us. Thank goodness, in some ways, it was, because the only weapon we've got to fight the big mining companies and all of the other interests that would take all of our land off us, actually, is Mabo. I thank—and may God bless—Father Passey who carried that legislation all the way through to that result in the High Court, when Eddie was pushed aside. So today we are discussing the opposition—(Time expired)

Mr HOWARTH (Petrie—Assistant Minister for Community Housing, Homelessness and Community Services) (15:57): I rise to thank all members for their contributions on the Native Title Amendment (Infrastructure and Public Facilities) Bill 2020. I've just been reading the second reading speech from the Minister for Indigenous Australians where he spoke about Indigenous overcrowding and how it's a real issue for Indigenous Australians. He also spoke about the $5.4 billion that the Australian government has invested in helping Indigenous Australians in solving overcrowding since 2008. It is a real issue, and I support what the minister had to say on that in his second reading speech.

I commend the bill to the House.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Message from the Governor-General recommending appropriation announced.
Mr HOWARTH (Petrie—Assistant Minister for Community Housing, Homelessness and Community Services) (15:58): by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Broadcasting Services Amendment (Regional Commercial Radio and Other Measures) Bill 2020

Second Reading

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

to which the following amendment was moved:

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

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

(1) notes the alarming decline in regional media;
(2) acknowledges that regional commercial television broadcasters' difficulties in meeting content requirements can be taken as an early warning sign of market failure;
(3) notes the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission has found that:
   (a) between 2008 and 2018, the closure of 106 local and regional newspaper titles across Australia has left 21 local government areas previously covered by these titles without coverage from a single local newspaper (in either print or online formats); and
   (b) the public broadcasters, the ABC and SBS, are not currently resourced to fully compensate for the decline in local reporting previously produced by traditional commercial publishers;
(4) further notes the Public Interest Journalism Initiative's Australian Newsroom Mapping Project found that the number of contractions in Australia's public interest news landscape has grown to over 200 since January 2019; and
(5) is of the view that this third-term Government has failed regional media by failing to reform the legislative framework and failing to deliver effective direct and indirect support to industry in a timely manner"—

Mr GOSLING (Solomon) (15:59): I rise to continue speaking about the Broadcasting Services Amendment (Regional Commercial Radio and Other Measures) Bill 2020. Where I left off, I was talking about the continuing crises—the bushfires and COVID, but also the crisis in regional media. This government—those opposite—are unfortunately proactively making things worse by cutting the ABC's funding.

Since 2014, around 800 ABC staff have lost their jobs. The Australia Network—so important to our relationships in the Indo-Pacific—has been axed. Shortwave radio has been shut down; that was so important to people on the land and waters of Australia so they can get news and information, whether it is out on a cattle station or on a prawn trawler. The number of hours of ABC's factual programming has dropped by 60 per cent, drama by 20 per cent, and documentaries by 13.5 per cent. What that means is less telling of our stories and fewer jobs for our creative Australians who are telling those stories, including Indigenous
It's NAIDOC week this week. Those cuts to the ABC are not good for closing the gap, for full reconciliation in our nation or for truth telling.

It is the role of the federal government to make sure that we have a strong independent media. At a time when the government should be investing in the ABC, or at least not cutting it to the extent that they are, the Morrison government is locking in almost $84 million of cuts to the ABC over three years. This is stupid, because we all know that during times of crisis—like in my electorate when there are cyclones bearing down, coming out of the Arafura Sea and the Timor Sea—the ABC, through its role and charter, saves lives. The ABC saves lives. In all times of crisis, Australians turn to our national broadcaster for that trusted news and information. Obviously, recent events demonstrate just how much we value and need a strong and independent ABC.

When it comes to kids' television, the federal government have decided that they're going to give funding for kids' TV in Australia to the Australian Children's TV Association and to Screen Australia for production of kids' TV. This shows that they either don't understand the sector or that they deliberately don't want to spend any money on educating our kids. The problem with giving funding to those two organisations instead of the ABC and NITV is that largely Australian producers and Australian businesses can't access them. It's largely for development funding, not to actually make content. So what the government are doing is exactly anti jobs and growth.

In the time I have remaining, I want to give a shout-out to some of our community radio stations in the Northern Territory that provide information and entertainment into my electorate. There's Hot 100. On the weekend it was great to catch up with Pratty and Joshua—young fella—from Hot 100. They're going to ride an old 1984 Statesman down the track to Adelaide in the Variety NT Bash, raising money for young Territorians. So well done to Pratty and his mates, and well done to Hot 100. Mix FM's Katie Woolf's show in the morning provides great information and debate on local, national and international issues.

I want to acknowledge Radio Larrakia's chair, Donna, the Fox and the hardworking First Nations staff. They get good product out through their radio stations. I have a lot to do with Territory FM and in particular Mel Little. I just want to give you a shout out, Mel, for all the volunteering you do in our community. I want to thank these radio stations along with the ABC because they keep my electorate informed. There's also Top Country and Darwin's 97 FM. They are really good people with good values. They all love the Territory; they make me so Territory proud.

What doesn't make me proud, though, is when I see a government faced with a $1 trillion debt that prioritises things that aren't important over funding our ABC, which we all know, not only in times of crisis but every single day, is vital to our democracy and to fair reporting in our country. I ask the government and I ask the minister to have a good look at yourselves. Fund the ABC, because it's an investment in our nation.

Mrs PHILLIPS (Gilmore) (16:06): I'm very pleased to rise to speak on the Broadcasting Services Amendment (Regional Commercial Radio and Other Measures) Bill 2020. I know that this bill will not lower the amount of local content that is currently available to regional audiences on commercial radio, which is a great thing. I want to give a really huge shout out to all my local commercial radio stations on the New South Wales South Coast—2ST, Power
FM, 2EC, Wave FM and i98 FM. My local TV stations, WIN Television and 9News Illawarra, are champions. They have their reporters out on the ground all the time.

But first of all I want to talk about commercial radio and the role of my local radio stations during the recent bushfires, just to show how crucial they are for our community. I grew up listening to my local 2ST radio station. Back in the days, Graham French was the news reader. He started working at 2ST in 1983, when I was 13 years old. Like many in my community, I listened over many years. There was news, there was three-way turf talk and lots of coverage of community events, and I was totally fascinated. In fact, it was Graham French and the 2ST news stories of the coverage of the Nowra pool campaign that eventually led me into this place. I could never forget the media stories about my beloved pool being described as an ugly duckling. Here I am, and I am pleased to say that that pool has been transformed into a very modern aquatic park.

But on his retirement in 2015, after more than three decades on the radio—it is important to mention this today—Graham said that, of the thousands of stories he covered over his years, the Shoalhaven bushfires in 2001 proved to be one of the most challenging. He said in those times, the radio was the immediate means of letting people know that their home may be in danger and they have to get out. It was horrendously long hours, he went on to say. That was some time ago.

Fast forward to the 2019-20 bushfires, and I'm pleased to say that 2ST and its journos were there every step of the way. They were tireless. I want to send a big shout out to Gavin and all the team at 2ST and Power FM for their excellent coverage. I spent a lot of time at fire control, the Shoalhaven emergency management centre, during the fire, and I saw the commercial broadcasters, all the broadcasters, and the fantastic role they played in ensuring that our community had the information they needed to remain safe. Apart from that, radio 2ST is there every step of the way. Every major public community event I go to, radio 2ST are there. They're sponsoring events. Whether it's the local show or a town hall meeting, they're there, and I really want to thank them.

Another commercial broadcaster in my electorate is the wonderful radio 2EC in the Eurobodalla. What a wonderful station and presenters we have there as well. Of course, we've got Tonya, the wonderful radio journalist who did an amazing job during the bushfires. I say 'job', but it went far beyond a job. It was 24/7 for weeks and weeks, and months and months, with little rest. It's important that that contribution is recognised in this parliament, because broadcasters and the staff there did the most amazing job. They helped their communities. What Tonya reported on not only helped save lives but helped people with vital information. It was someone to listen to in the most crazy and distressing of times. And our radio journos heard so much. They saw so much. They saw the anguish; they saw and heard the fear. And then, when the fires were over and a lot of the international media went away, it was our local journos, our local commercial radio broadcasters and our local ABC, that were there. That recovery is ongoing, and it's going to take years. But it's our broadcasters and our journos that are there every single day. I know that they are there; they're always asking the hard questions, but they're also sharing the many, many positive stories that have come out of this awful experience. Our community has rallied so much. There are great stories, and our commercial radio broadcasters are part of telling that story.
I just want to mention Wave FM and i98 a little bit further north but also covered by my electorate. And even though they are a little bit further north, they were still talking about the bushfires and ensuring that people in the northern parts of the electorate had that vital information. We also had so many donations and so many people wanting to help. Our journalists and our commercial radio broadcasters did a fantastic job at helping people there.

What an amazing job our local TV stations did during the bushfires and are always doing every single day. WIN TV and Nine News Illawarra are just amazing. They also worked tirelessly to cover the 2019-20 bushfires. I want to say thank you to each and every local TV journo, cameraperson and everyone working behind the scenes to get the stories out to our communities. Our local TV reporters on the ground are essential. During the bushfires, when your phones go down, when your NBN goes down and even your radio might go down, it's vital to have local reporters there to cover what's really going on the ground. We need to support our local regional media. Local regional media covers the stories we need to hear and it means local jobs. We need to do absolutely everything to support our local media. We can't lose our local media. We need to stand up and fight for our local media, and that's what I will continue to do every single day.

Mr SNOWDON (Lingiari) (16:13): Mr Deputy Speaker, as you have heard, the Labor Party will be supporting the passage of the Broadcasting Services Amendment (Regional Commercial Radio and Other Measures) Bill 2020. It makes only relatively minor amendments to local content obligations and the Australian content transmission quota. But, as you will know from the debate we've had previously, Labor is very concerned, as am I, that regional Australians are missing out as a result of this government's ongoing failure to support regional media and, in particular, its cuts to the ABC. You will have known, I'm sure, that for some time we have seen in my electorate of Lingiari, affecting all of remote northern Australia, the loss of public broadcasting reach, with the decision by this government, by the ABC, to cease its shortwave transmission service in the Northern Territory in January 2017.

I'll just remind you, Mr Deputy Speaker, that this was a decision taken by the board after it had its budget cut by this government. But, sadly, the board did not undertake any informed community consultation around the impact of this decision to cut this short-wave service. The decision and its impact are still being felt across northern Australia. Short-wave radio provided vital news and information services, including local radio and emergency services, that are, as you would understand, Mr Deputy Speaker, crucial to those of us who live in remote areas—particularly in times of natural disaster.

The ABC's claim that the majority of listeners would be able to access ABC services via AM and FM radio, digital radio and online streaming, or via the VAST platform, does not account for the reality of service availability in the bush. Even now, in 2020, former listeners and users of the ABC's short-wave service in the Northern Territory have been unequivocal in voicing their concern about the coalition's failure to intervene in this matter back in 2017. I think that this was to save something around $5 million and it had an impact beyond Australia into the South Pacific. It was a foolish decision; a stupid decision—a decision which ought to be reversed—and this government stands condemned for not making sure it was. Ask any truck driver up and down the Stuart Highway and they will tell you how much they miss the currency and quality of the short-wave service compared to online streaming and the VAST platform.
We have seen a hollowing out of regional media across this country. As we know, we've had over 200 titles close since January 2019. One of those was in Alice Springs: The Centralian Advocate. It was closed earlier this year, in June. It was our twice-weekly newspaper—sadly, a News Limited paper, but, nevertheless, it closed. The last edition came after 73 years of reporting local news; arts and entertainment; local council matters; births, deaths and marriages; local sporting events; and pictures of local kids doing things in their community, and with a sense of progressing and providing a local identity for Alice Springs and the wider Centralian community. It was, actually, a very effective local voice, despite the fact that it was owned by News Limited. Their decision to close it, however, has left a huge void—a huge void in the media of Central Australia. There is an online newspaper, the Alice Springs News, but it does not have the sort of reach that we had with The Centralian Advocate.

We rely on the ABC and yet we're seeing decisions taken by the ABC in terms of broadcasting which have had a really negative impact on the people of the bush. As a result, we're looking at other sources. There are other sources, but none as reliable or as important as the ABC. In Alice Springs, we have CAAMA, the Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association; 8CCC, a community radio station; and Sun FM, the local commercial radio station. We have access to NITV and ICTV. Yolngu Radio operates in north-east Arnhem Land and there are community radio stations, apart from in Alice Springs, in Katherine and Nhulunbuy. And then there are the RIBS, the remote Indigenous radio services, working in places such as Nauyiu, Yarralin, Kalkarindji and many other places across remote Australia. These RIBS communities have a small transmitter, able to cut into radio and TV services and to put in locally produced materials. They are, like a lot of things from this government, severely underfunded.

We have an obligation to try to ensure that people who live in remote parts of the country and in regional parts of Australia have access to decent media. As you would know, Mr Deputy Speaker, the Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance states, referring to decisions taken:

> In recent months we have seen more than 150 regional and community newspapers cease printing. This is on top of the 106 local and regional papers that closed over the previous decade. Many of those papers are more than a century old. Many may never reopen. It shouldn't be this way. The stories of regional and rural Australia are important: our stories matter.

the local paper is the heartbeat of the community. It provides local news that the big cities can't and/or won't provide.

It also quotes the UTS Centre for Media Transition as saying that regional media is 'a focal point for community connection, cohesion and education'. The MEAA speaks to the issues around media diversity and the concentration of media in this country, issues which should be high on the agenda of this parliament. We need to make sure that we get as much access to new media as we possibly can, but there's no substitute for the quality of local and regional media, local and regional newspapers, local and regional radio, and other services such as those. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms SHARKIE (Mayo) (16:21): I rise to speak on the Broadcasting Services Amendment (Regional Commercial Radio and Other Measures) Bill 2020 as amended by Mr Watts.
Australian media, as we all know, are facing many challenges with respect to technology and changing audiences, and traditional business models have had to change. Centre Alliance is aware of these challenges, which is why in 2017 we negotiated for an ACCC inquiry into the impact digital platforms were having on advertising in the media market, as part of our support of the government's media regulation reforms. As a direct result of that inquiry, the government directed the ACCC to develop a mandatory code of conduct to address bargaining power imbalances between Australian news media and digital platforms. Two of the world's biggest platforms, Google and YouTube, have instigated a campaign using their audiences regarding this draft code, which has caused some concern in my community.

We've only seen the exposure draft, and Centre Alliance needs to see the final legislation before we feel that we really need to reach a position. However, we believe media operators should be fairly compensated for the content they produce, and that includes the ABC and SBS. The media landscape is changing and regulations need to change to keep pace, and that's why we will support this bill before the House. This bill primarily provides flexibility for regional, commercial and television broadcasters to meet local content obligations. In some limited circumstances it also provides some relief from obligations. Regional commercial radio broadcasters will be able to split their local news and information content obligation exemptions into two periods, and, in certain circumstances, regional and remote television broadcasters constrained by commercial agreements with metropolitan broadcasters will be deemed to have complied with the Australian content quota.

This is about making regional media voices sustainable, and that's something that we support. It's one of the reasons why I approached the Minister for Finance in the early stages of the COVID-19 crisis to request some flexibility to use my office budget to include community radio. As an elected member, I use the resources—as do all of us here—to communicate with my community. Public safety information and Treasury support measures relating to COVID-19 were particularly important, so I sent out a newsletter to households, and I placed advertisements in regional newspapers and content on my social media platforms. However, it was brought to my attention by community radio stations that they felt they had been overlooked, and this is because the Parliamentary Business Resources Regulations used to preclude the use of office expenses to pay for such broadcasting. So I wrote to the finance minister, and I'm very pleased that the government agreed with that view, and now all of us in this place can support our community broadcasters as well as ensuring that we can get our messages to our communities—particularly with respect to COVID, which was so critical—out as far and wide as we possibly can. As I said, I would like to thank the minister for having the vision to include that.

Community radio engages 5.8 million people each year. It's an extremely effective medium for reaching regional audiences. I know firsthand. I've had a long association with community radio, although I'm no longer a volunteer, and it's volunteers who keep community radio stations alive. More than 25 years ago I had my own program on community radio. My hair was a different colour then; there was a lot less grey in it! But there was that youthful exuberance, and I loved it. And I would like to give a call-out to a lady called Judith Waugh. Judith Waugh still has a show on Coast FM. She was a wonderful mentor to me. She was very warm and engaging and invited me onto her show. That's where I learnt about community radio and that's where I built the confidence to eventually have my own show.
I have so many amazing community radio stations in my electorate. I've got TribeFM at Willunga, Triple Z at McLaren Vale, KIX FM on Kangaroo Island, Alex FM at Goolwa, Happy FM and Fleurieu FM on the south coast and Lofty Radio in the Adelaide Hills, and then online there's Hills Radio—and we're hoping Hills Radio might be able to receive a proper broadcast licence. I regularly talk to Bob, Jack, Mike, Dianne, Janet, Tanya and Chris, as well as one young person who in a way reminds me of myself when I was on radio. His name is Ryder Grooby. Ryder is 12 years of age, and he has his own radio station on Fleurieu FM, on Thursdays, and he's an amazing young man. Community radio is a wonderful training ground for young people.

I would really encourage every member in this place, if they don't already do so, to get into your community radio stations. They will warmly welcome you, and they will be willing to chat about anything you're interested in, as long as it's based in the community. We talk about everything from raising dogs—I have a Great Dane, and we talk about that—all the way through to community issues that are happening in our area. It's lots of good fun. I'd also like to acknowledge a gentleman who's recently retired from Happy FM and has been the lifeblood of Happy FM. His name is Ken Burgess. Ken has moved up to sunny Queensland. He's left Victor Harbor and is deeply missed in our community. Thank you, Ken, for all your years of dedication and volunteering. That's what this is all about; it's about volunteering.

I commend this bill to the House. I look forward to being able to support my regional community radio stations and regional newspapers in my electorate into the future.

**Dr Gillespie** (Lyne) (16:27): The Broadcasting Services Amendment (Regional Commercial Radio and Other Measures) Bill 2020 is an important bill, because it's offering some regulatory relief and therefore cost relief to many regional broadcasters, who are facing an existential dilemma. As you know, digital platforms have changed the way people engage with the media. Digital platforms involve streaming video on demand—Netflix and Stan—or, before that, just regular pay TV. The other digital giants in the platform, since Google and Facebook, are hoovering up the vast majority of potential advertising revenue. And, to add insult to injury, a lot of regional TV and in particular broadcasters are buying shows from the major metropolitan broadcasters, and the potential for them to earn income to keep them a viable business is limited if the shows that they have bought from the major broadcasters come with ads already embedded in them, so that the portion of time in which they can place local ads is reduced. So, these practical, commonsense amendments make a lot of sense, and hopefully they will put our regional radio broadcasters and our regional TV broadcasters in a better space.

The first exemption is regarding local content, or material of local significance, which is its formal name—news, weather, community service announcements or emergency announcements. Under the current legislation, there can be leave given over a five-week period, but, as media markets do quieten down over more than just the Christmas-New Year period, it will allow them to split this five-week so-called leave pass or exemption into two periods. That will work with the ebb and flow of the advertising market as well, and with what people's habits are when they go on long holidays over the major holiday periods of Easter and school holidays, and the big one at Christmas time. It will also allow that the three-yearly mandatory statutory review will no longer be required, and the trigger events that will create changes in more local content requirements will be similarly adjusted.
In the regional TV situation, the mandatory local content is really what attracts people, and that's what I'd like to bring to the attention of the House. Regional broadcasters deliver a lot of local and regional news, which is what most people in regional Australia are looking for. Because the other media are saturated with the national and international news, their point of difference is the local and the regional news items. And they are suffering from the same phenomena. Many potential advertising markets are suffering on traditional broadcasters, because, as I said, a lot of the eyeballs that watched TV in the old system, where you just had four major broadcasters, are now watching streaming video on demand, or they're getting their entertainment via streaming on Facebook; so the advertising is going onto the Facebook platform or the Google platform, and, as a result, as there are only so many advertising dollars available, that's diverting potential customers away from our regional TV and radio broadcasters.

The subcontent for drama, children's TV and documentary production is still required, however. That is a big relief to many people. We don't want to lose our local drama being seen, because, if we are ever going to grow our local screen production, getting shows on TV is a great way of doing that.

So these are practical, commonsense measures. They will, hopefully, support many local and regional TV and radio stations. We have plenty of them in the Lyne electorate, from the broadcasters in the Hunter Valley to those in the Manning and Great Lakes regions and up into the Hastings and Port Macquarie areas. They are all distinct markets. The TV media washes over the whole lot. Certainly we have many local community radio stations like Great Lakes FM and Bucketts Radio, and we have recently had a community radio station set up down in the Tea Gardens area, which is great news.

We all like our local and regional producers. We hope these amendments will make a material difference to them all.

Ms Murphy (Dunkley) (16:33): I rise to speak on this legislation, the Broadcasting Services Amendment (Regional Commercial Radio and Other Measures) Bill 2020, because media and a strong independent media have always been important, but, as we have seen, in 2020 they are more important than ever. One only has to look at what has happened in the US with the presidential election to understand why it's important to have news services around the world, but particularly in this country, that are based on those tried and true principles of journalism: of independence, of reporting facts, of having fact checks, of investigative journalism and of quality. Now more than ever that's what we need in this country.

Sadly, in the media landscape across Australia now, more than ever, those principles are in jeopardy. Not because of the amazing people that work in the traditional forms of journalism and who are committed to all of those important principles of journalism; and not because of the entrepreneurial, innovative and amazing people who work in the new forms of media, which I'll turn to in a moment, because most of them, and certainly all of those I've met in my community, are committed to those traditional important principles of media; but because of all the external threats that are placed upon them. The role of government is to regulate the media, to protect strong, independent media. Now more than ever our national broadcaster, the ABC, needs to be funded properly and protected. We need an independent national broadcaster which is not scared to do the investigative journalism and hold power to account. We need an independent national broadcaster which is dedicated to Australian faces,
Australian voices and Australian stories—be they documentaries, drama or music. The ABC is one of our most trusted institutions, and for good reason. Every opportunity I get, I lend my voice to saying this is an institution that we must treasure and we must protect.

This legislation talks about regional commercial radio in particular. Obviously I don't represent a regional seat, but it's really important that we remember the situation of areas like mine, which is an outer suburban area, when it comes to local media. We rely really heavily on local media for our local stories in the same way that regional areas do, because the state media and what happens in the CBD of Melbourne is not always what is happening in Frankston and Carrum Downs and Mount Eliza and Langwarrin. We have our own stories and our own interests, and we need those to be able to be reported. We had the Frankston Standard Leader, which was a hard copy paper which was dedicated to our area. Yes, it was News Limited and behind a paywall online, but it existed; it is now really a couple of stories a week. We have the Mornington Peninsula News Group, which is one publication a week.

We have, though, amazing local media. RPP FM is our community radio station, which broadcasts down the Mornington Peninsula and up to Frankston, dedicated to local stories, local people and local news. During COVID, LOCKDOWN Radio with Brendon and Shivani has been a source of comfort, support and information for people right across my electorate and down into the Mornington Peninsula and the electorate of Flinders. Community radio is where you find professionals who are giving their time and their skills to make sure that we get to hear the stories that matter to us. You find volunteers who are learning their craft or who are dedicated to making sure that we get to hear jazz music from 1920—because people in my community love it—and the most modern music from 2020, as well as local football, netball, soccer, arts and craft stories. I was really proud to join with the state member for Frankston to support RPP FM to get a multicultural radio grant. They're going to be broadcasting issues that matter to people in languages such as Italian, Lebanese, Spanish, Chinese; and we have a number of people in our electorate from Zimbabwe. It's that building of community and spirit that has to be fostered and supported.

As I mentioned, we also have really great, innovative people in the electorate of Dunkley who are using social media to fill that gap and feed that need for local stories. GameFace started broadcasting local footy and is now aiming to broadcast netball. They're also branching out into stories about our community on their Facebook page as a local TV service. We have Facebook pages like elsewhere around the country, but they are devoted not just to talking about what is happening at the corner store and whether people are parked across the lines in local parking spaces but to delivering the news of the local community. Like Frankston Community Noticeboard, where a lot of people in our electorate turn on Facebook in order to get the local news.

These sources and the people that run them are really important, and we are grateful for them every day, but they don't replace a robust, mainstream, independent media that reports on the facts, that reports on what is happening in a way people can trust. That has to be treasured and protected in Australia; we've seen the consequences in America of what happens when it's not, and that's a path that none of us in Australia is willing to go down. It's incumbent on all of us in this place to support our local community radio, our local newspapers and our local Facebook media groups, and to make sure that our Australian
national broadcaster continues to be properly funded and properly supported to be that fierce, independent broadcaster that we all respect so much.

Ms STANLEY (Werriwa—Opposition Whip) (16:41): I rise to support the Broadcasting Services Amendment (Regional Commercial Radio and Other Measures) Bill 2020. All of us in this place respect the importance of Australia's media and particularly its independence. However, due to the long-term actions of this government, independent and sustainable regional broadcast media is no longer sustainable. The range of regulations this government has forced on regional broadcasters is not reflective or relevant to the output or the reach of these stations. Regional media is not the poor cousin to our metropolitan broadcasters; it is no less important.

This government has shown that regional media was facing market failure—and it failed to act. In 2017, 12 regional and remote stations failed to meet the Australian content quota. The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications made it clear that some regional broadcasters were facing difficulties in meeting their Australian content requirements. Three years later, the government now decides to act as the guardian of regional media, while allowing regional broadcasters to stumble without any support. The department stated that the government will need to take action before more market failure occurs as this would limit regional audiences' access to Australian content.

If the government supports the notion that the current framework for regional and remote broadcasting isn't sustainable, why have they waited so long to act? This industry is facing an existential threat, and this government has done too little too late. Jobs, livelihoods and access to information are at risk in regional Australia. We have already seen local media in metropolitan areas slow significantly and start to cut jobs. We are seeing the ABC being forced to cut jobs because successive coalition governments are strangling the ABC through budget shortfalls.

This bill will allow regional broadcasters to monitor their work at a pace of their own output, which includes easier staff rostering, a move towards a complaint based approach rather than ACMA monitoring, and the removal of the three-year statutory review. The bill will also not decrease the amount of local content which is currently available to regional audiences on commercial radio. The landscape of media in regional areas is not comparable to metropolitan Australia and can't be held to the same obligations. Regional Australians cannot be sold short. Major structural reform is needed if regional media is to survive indefinitely without market failure. It's taken three years for the government to do anything about this problem, yet this bill is an all-too-familiar quick fix. A little bit of duct tape cannot hold back a cracking dam wall. Longstanding regulatory burdens cannot be undone with a simple amendment. If this is what the government has been working on for three years, it's not really a good effort.

A new regulatory framework needs to be prepared for regional media outlets. It needs to be developed with evidence based research and industry consultation, and have at its core the interests of regional communities. Recent times have shown just how much regional communities rely on their local media. We saw it during the bushfires, and we're also seeing it now during the COVID-19 pandemic. Bushfire victims had to rely heavily on regional broadcasts for the safety of their friends and family. If not for quick, decisive information, many Australians could have lost more than their homes; they would have lost their lives.
With the announcement that more than 125 News Corp papers will now be closed or digitalised, regional communities take another hit. Some of these outlets provided a voice for the local community for more than 150 years. Regional Queensland is the hardest hit by these closures, with 22 publications going digital. This not only monopolises and limits the regional content being displayed but it also means the journalists who have worked in these regional communities will no longer have a job and/or opportunities in the area, further draining regional areas of local talent and experienced opportunities. During these tough times, to further burden regional communities that are attempting to recover from drought, bushfire and recession is unacceptable. Put simply, the government has failed to act in the best interests of these communities. The government needs to do more to ensure the long-term sustainability of regional media on which regional communities and, more importantly, Australians rely.

Mr WILKIE (Clark) (16:46): I rise to speak on the Broadcasting Services Amendment (Regional Commercial Radio and Other Measures) Bill 2020.

Local media obviously matters, and the decline of local media in this country should concern us all. Let's not forget that media isn't just a business. Media is also a vital community service, and we need to legislate and regulate it with that in our mind. We've all seen the lovely little stories in our local papers about the child under the Christmas tree the day before Christmas, the local sporting champions having a big win or the much-loved local personality or character. This stuff matters to our community. It matters a lot, and the more our regional media is diminished and centralised in control centres, even interstate, the more those lovely little local stories that really matter to the community are disappearing from our TV stations, from the radio stations and from our print newspapers.

Scrutiny of local issues is even more important. In terms of media in regional areas—and let's face it, all of Tasmania is a regional area, in many ways even, including the capital, Hobart—as our local media is diminished then the scrutiny of, for example, local government and state government is also diminished. The member for Lyons would be well aware of the controversy at the moment in Tasmania over the COVID-19 hardship grants and the very serious allegations being levelled at the government that it ended up being just another slush fund for the state government to bankroll favoured regions or favoured organisations. The only reason we know about that is because our local media, which has a good understanding of the local political situation, has taken a real lead on this—in particular The Mercury newspaper in Hobart. The more we diminish our local media the more we diminish our capacity to have hot topics like that and to really get to the bottom of what's going on in our local community.

Local knowledge is important, and it's important that the local media know what's going on with these hardship grants I referred to, but it's perhaps even more important in times of crisis—when there's a flood or a bushfire. Of course, Tasmania has had some shocking episodes of bushfires over many decades, including earlier this year when there were some very nasty bushfires in the north of the state. If you're relying on newsrooms or news coordinators from elsewhere or flying in news crews from elsewhere, how on earth can they cover those stories properly? How on earth, when it's an emergency broadcaster like the ABC,
can they properly inform the local community about the situation, give reliable warnings about preparations that need to be made and evacuation routes that need to be considered or, heaven forbid, used?

We need local journalists on the ground who understand the local situation, especially in times of crisis. I make the point again: the more that Tasmanian news is coordinated through a control room, for example, in Canberra, then the capacity to provide that vital public service is more and more diminished.

Of course local jobs are important, and that's something we're seeing firsthand in Hobart. Over the last decade or so, The Mercury newspaper has really been gutted of jobs. You see it when they do the editing interstate and you get the most silly editing mistakes. Our local commercial TV and radio have been gutted over the last decade. The ABC has been gutted more than most. Those of you who have been to Hobart might have noticed the ABC building, near what we call Railway Roundabout. It's two stories—quite a large building. It wasn't that long ago that that was full of ABC staff doing really important local media for the whole of the state, including producing some very important programs. If you go there now, the ABC inhabit a part of the ground floor and the other floors are full of everything from the college of GPs to even a commercial TV station—even that has got a presence in that building. That reflects a whole lot of jobs—very important, specialised and technical jobs—that are now gone from the state. I again in this place lament the fact that the ABC has become Sydney centric at the expense of places like Hobart and, in fact, the whole state of Tasmania.

Local content matters. It really does matter. If I could talk not just about regional media but really about media more broadly across the whole country—it's simply not good enough that media in this country now, when they're required to produce local content, they'll put a news bulletin on the telly, they might broadcast a footy game and they might have some pretty trashy cheap reality show, and they'll say: 'That's our local content, done and dusted. We've complied with what the government requires.' That's not good enough. The government really should be looking to legislate the type of local content that Australian media buys in and broadcasts, especially drama. It's not good enough that, for drama in this country and the movies, you turn on the telly and it's something out of the UK or something out of North America. Of course a lot of that is very good and very entertaining, but it means that our own arts sector is just withering on the vine when it comes to that sort of production.

This goes to the cost of production. Of course it's cheaper for the ABC to rerun, for the seemingly thousandth time, Yes Minister, and it probably costs them next to nothing—

An honourable member: A very good show!

Mr WILKIE: It's a very good show, and sometimes I think it's more of a documentary than a comedy, a bit like The Hollowmen. All jokes aside, if you allow our media to just show what they want, then they will buy the cheapest they can get away with and it means our arts sector is all the more diminished. We need a carrot and a stick. We need a carrot to incentivise local production, but we also need a stick to make sure that our Australian media has an adequate amount of local content to ensure that our arts sector thrives and does well and we become an exporter of quality content to other countries.
Just recently, I was reminded of the challenge that our production houses have in this
country while talking to one of the co-owners of a company in Hobart that provides children's
TV content, and, in particular, animation. It's a very good outfit. They do a very good job, and
they produce content very efficiently to a very high quality, but they're saying that a
production house in India or the Philippines can produce the same animated content to a
reasonable standard for one-tenth of the cost. That's not a criticism of the production houses in
India or in the Philippines or in Hobart; it's just a fact of life that their production costs are so
low.

So do we want our children increasingly to be watching something produced overseas
somewhere like that? It might be good content and it might be educational, but it's not us. It's
not Australia. It doesn't reflect our country and what's going on in this place. You can only
watch so many reruns of Sesame Street before you're craving something from Australia. Of
course, we're all of a generation—or some of us are of a generation—that grew up on Skippy
and all sorts of other good shows. But we're not seeing that sort of thing produced in this
country, and it's up to the government to shape the media landscape to ensure that sort of
production occurs now and in the future.

We also need a level playing field—while I'm on a bit of a roll here. One of the problems
we have for our local content producers and media companies is that it's not a level playing
field and they're competing with the streaming services, for whom there aren't any effective
local content requirements. I met recently with Minister Fletcher to discuss this, and he, to his
credit, is alive to the issue that we really need to see the streaming services that are coming
into this country lift their game if they want to continue to have almost unrestrained access. I
impressed upon the minister that we really should be talking about not just improved local
content requirements for Australian media but also introducing mandatory Australian content,
not voluntary Australian content, for the streaming services.

In closing, I just say to the government that we've touched on a number of issues here. First
and foremost, let's not forget the value of our regional media. It's very important to this
country. It's very important to communities in the bush and in regional areas, and it's very
important to my own community in Hobart. The media is increasingly concentrated and
increasingly capital-city-centric, and it's up to us in this place to arrest that and to ensure that
that public interest role of the media is fulfilled. Sometimes it can be with a carrot, with
incentives, but sometimes it's got to be with a stick. Sure, there are extra challenges on
Australian media at the moment on account of COVID-19, but the fact is it's part of a longer
trend as well. The media needs to reinvent itself, and we need to ensure that, as it's
reinventing itself, it remembers its important role and serves regional areas.

I've also touched on the broader issue of local content and doing everything we can in this
place to encourage increased local content but also quality local content—for example,
drama—so that the young people who want to be actors or other performing artists have a
pathway to learn their trade, to do work, to earn an income and to realise their potential. It's
just not good enough for the government to throw around hundreds of millions of dollars to
encourage foreign production companies to come out to, say, Sydney and make something
with foreign actors. I think that's missing the point. We should be spending the money that's
required to ensure Australian production companies, using Australian actors and Australian
facilities, are making the world's best content for TV, for radio, for print and for streaming services.

Talking of streaming services, I make the point again that they're getting a free ride in this country and it's crucifying companies like that company I referred to in Hobart, who are producing real quality animated children's content for the media but can only fight the good fight so long. We in this place need to do everything to give them a hand to make sure they can survive and prosper. When our arts sector are given a fair go, they produce content as good as or better than content produced anywhere else, and there's no good reason why we can't be a significant exporter to other countries, but it's going to need help from governments to achieve that when you are up against production costs like those I mentioned in India and the Philippines, where the production costs for animated content are a tenth of the cost of producing it in Australia.

We have a wonderful arts sector, and this is another example of where we in this place are missing the opportunity, and governments are missing the opportunity, to celebrate and to support that arts sector. I tell you what: when some parts of our world are gone—in particular these production houses and our regional media—we'll miss them and we'll wonder how on earth we were so silly as to let them go.

Mr COULTON (Parkes—Minister for Regional Health, Regional Communications and Local Government) (17:00): I would like to thank the members who have contributed to the debate on the Broadcasting Services Amendment (Regional Commercial Radio and Other Measures) Bill 2020.

The bill will amend the local content framework for commercial radio licensees, to reduce the regulatory burden on regional licensees. It will also amend the Australian content multichannel quota so that regional commercial television licensees are not left in the position of failing to satisfy their regulatory requirements due to programming decisions beyond their control. The bill amends a number of provisions within the local content framework for regional and commercial radio licensees, providing licensees with a greater flexibility in complying with the framework. These amendments are relevant to the material of local significance obligation and the minimum service standard obligation.

The bill will also remove public holidays from the minimum service standard obligation. Material that must be broadcast under the minimum service standards can also be used to acquit the material of local significance obligation. However, licensees are not required to broadcast material of local significance on public holidays. Therefore, the bill seeks to better align the two obligations by removing the requirement to broadcast the minimum service standards on public holidays.

The bill will also remove the requirement for licensees to publish local content plans, which detail how licensees propose to meet the minimum service standards. Local content
plans place a significant regulatory burden on licensees but often provide minimal support for increased levels of local content in regional areas. Therefore, the bill will propose that licensees instead use the local content statement that they must develop under the material of local significance requirement. Local content statements are more streamlined than local content plans, and this change will significantly reduce the burden under the local content framework. The bill will also remove the statutory review provision for the local content framework. The statutory review is considered to be unnecessary, given the ongoing focus on the local content framework on a routine basis.

In the area of regional and remote commercial television licences, the bill proposes to insert a deeming provision with the effect that licensees are deemed to have complied with the multichannel obligation. This deeming provision will only apply if licensees broadcast the same amount of Australian content on each multichannel they carry as their metropolitan affiliate has broadcast. It takes account of the current realities of delivering multichannel content in regional and remote Australia, noting that it is becoming more commercially unsustainable for regional and remote licensees to carry the full suite of multichannels.

The bill provides an important reduction in the regulatory burden for regional commercial radio licensees and regional and remote commercial television licensees. It will amend the local content framework to make regulatory compliance easier for licensees.

Again, I thank members for their contributions to the debate and I commend this bill to the chamber.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Wicks): The original question was that this bill be now read a second time. To this the honourable member for Gellibrand has moved as an amendment that all words after 'That' be omitted with a view to substituting other words. The immediate question is that the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question.

Question agreed to.
Original question agreed to.
Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Mr COULTON (Parkes—Minister for Regional Health, Regional Communications and Local Government) (17:05): by leave—I move:
That this bill be now read a third time.
Question agreed to.
Bill read a third time.

Family Law Amendment (Risk Screening Protections) Bill 2020

Second Reading

Mr HAWKE (Mitchell—Minister for International Development and the Pacific and Assistant Defence Minister) (17:05): I present the explanatory memorandum to this bill and move:
That this bill be now read a second time.

The Australian government is committed to addressing family violence and continuing to improve the protections offered through the family law system to those vulnerable families
affected by violence and abuse. In December this year the government announced $13.5 million for the federal family law courts to pilot a trial systematic approach for the screening of matters of family safety risks and triaging matters into case management pathways according to their identified level of risk. This will include a specialist family violence list for high risk matters. The Family Law Amendment (Risk Screening Protections) Bill 2020 will support the effective implementation of these important new family safety risk screening and triage processes. The new family safety risk screening processes will improve the identification of and responses to family safety risks in family law matters to better achieve outcomes for families navigating the family law system.

The bill reflects the government's commitment to ongoing improvements to the family law system so that families can resolve matters safely, fairly and quickly. The $13.5 million funding for the pilot of risk screening measures builds on the government's heavy investment in addressing domestic violence, with $340 million in funding as part of the Fourth Action Plan of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022, a $150 million COVID-19 domestic violence support package and around $20 million in additional legal assistance funding to support those affected by domestic violence during the pandemic.

The bill and the pilot also responds to findings from reports examining the law system, including: the family law council's Family with complex needs and the intersection of the family law and child protection systems; the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs 2017 inquiry called a better family law system to support and protect those affected by family violence; and the Australian law reform commission's 2019 report Family law for the future: An inquiry into the family law system.

A new pilot of the new family safety risk screening process will operate from 2020-22 from the Brisbane, Parramatta and Adelaide court registries, which each collectively receive more than 42 per cent of filings. During the pilot a dedicated team within the courts will screen newly filed parenting matters for safety risks and triage and manage matters according to their level of identified risk. A family counsellor will take early action in high risk cases, including conducting a follow up risk assessment, developing safety and wellbeing plans and offering referrals to support services. A specialist family violence list, the Evatt List, named in honour of the Hon. Elizabeth Evatt AC, will be established to manage and resolve high-risk matters. The Evatt List will be supported by a judge led multidisciplinary team, including registrars and family counsellors. The new risk screening and triage processes will be complemented by tailored court processes, safety planning and referrals to support services of at risk families.

The bill will also make minor amendments to the Family Law Act in order to support the new risk screening processes by protecting information that will be generated through the new risks screening processes, which are based off existing Family Law Act provisions.

The bill will ensure that information obtained or generated through the risk-screening process cannot be disclosed, except in limited circumstances. Important exceptions to this confidentiality will enable disclosure if it is necessary to protect a child from the risk of harm or to prevent or lessen serious threats to the life, health or property of a person. These confidentiality provisions are consistent with existing family-counselling provisions in the Family Law Act.
The bill will also ensure that information obtained or generated through the new risk-screening process is inadmissible in any court or tribunal. A critical exception will apply where family safety risk-screening information or evidence indicates that a child has been abused or is at risk of abuse. These admissibility provisions are also consistent with existing family-counselling provisions of the Family Law Act.

By ensuring the confidentiality and the inadmissibility of information obtained through risk screening, the bill will enable parties to freely and confidentially participate in this process. This is especially important for protecting family violence victims in high-risk cases and for maintaining the accuracy and reliability of the risk-screening information and triage matters. The confidentiality and inadmissibility protections for risk-screening information are also appropriate, because the intention is the early identification and management of safety concerns and to provide an appropriate case management pathway for matters, including referring high-risk cases to a dedicated court list. The risk-screening information is not intended to serve the same purpose as or replace evidence in proceedings, which is provided through the usual methods, including the notices of risk that form part of existing practice.

Finally, the bill will provide immunity for court officials, such as registrars and family counsellors, when undertaking new non-judicial roles as part of the risk-screening process. This immunity reflects the protection currently afforded to family consultants under the Family Law Act. It will support court workers to carry out the new functions involved in risk screening, such as making referrals and triaging matters into case management pathways based on risk-screening information.

This bill will enhance the family law system's approach to risk identification and management and improve outcomes for vulnerable families. It is another example of this government's continuing commitment to addressing family violence in Australia and to ensuring that the family law system protects victims of family violence.

Mr DREYFUS (Isaacs) (17:12): Family violence is a scourge in our nation. It is present in a disturbing number of family law matters in both the Family Court and the Federal Circuit Court. During the COVID-19 pandemic the problem of family violence has worsened, with more violence being reported this year and greater difficulty accessing services for both victims-survivors and perpetrators. Labor has been fighting to make preventing and responding to family violence a national priority, and we are continuing that fight.

This Family Law Amendment (Risk Screening Protections) Bill 2020 provides legislative support for a domestic violence risk-screening pilot program being rolled out by the Family Court of Australia and the Federal Circuit Court of Australia. This program, called the Lighthouse Project, is being trialled in three court registries: Adelaide, Brisbane and Parramatta. The Lighthouse Project will screen for safety risks in all applications and responses for parenting-only orders filed with the courts. Specifically, this new pilot program aims to deliver improved outcomes for families in crisis using the courts through three key measures: new processes for the screening of all new matters for family violence; the triaging of those matters by a specialist team, with matters sent to the most appropriate case management pathways based on an assessment risk and with additional support and safety provided to those families; and the creation of a specialist list, called the Evatt List, with appropriately trained and skilled staff focusing on supporting at-risk families through the court system, supported by early information gathering and intervention when required.
The bill also amends the Family Law Act 1975 to support the Lighthouse Project pilot by establishing protections for sensitive information generated through the screening program and by conferring certain legal immunities on court workers involved in the safety risk screening. The bill also ensures that the sensitive information collected through the screening process is confidential and inadmissible in evidence in proceedings except in limited and appropriate circumstances. The Lighthouse Project is in part a response to many recommendations to improve the family law system and family safety that have been made over many years. These recommendations have been set out in reports that include the Chisholm report for the Attorney-General's Department in 2009; the Family Law Council report on families with complex needs of 2015; the Henderson parliamentary inquiry of 2017; and the Australian Law Reform Commission discussion paper Review of the family law system from 2018.

More specifically, the Lighthouse Project has been put in place in response to the report by Women's Legal Services Australia in October last year called Safety first in family law. Women's Legal Services Australia are to be commended for their outstanding work on behalf of family violence victims-survivors and for their powerful advocacy for meaningful reform of the family law system to keep women and children safe. At its launch in October last year, the Safety First in Family Law program was strongly endorsed by family violence campaigner and former Australian of the Year Rosie Batty. Ms Batty, who was driven to campaign to end family violence after her 11-year-old son, Luke Batty, was murdered by his father, said at the time of the program launch that it was critical for the government to act urgently to reform the family law system. She reminded the government:

Nearly 70 percent of matters lodged in the family courts involve allegations of family violence, but the system is not set up to deal with this—and neither are the many professionals who work within the system.

The Lighthouse Project was funded as part of the 2019-20 MYEFO, announced by the government on 17 December 2019. During brief consultations with stakeholders on this bill, there was general agreement that the pilot program should proceed as a matter of urgency.

It is regrettable but unsurprising that the Morrison government has taken so long to introduce this necessary bill and to bring it on for debate. It should have been done in the first sitting week of the year. This government and its Attorney-General seem to have found plenty of time to proceed with their pet ideological projects during the course of this tumultuous year, from trying to shut down the rights of injured Australians to enforce their legal rights through class actions to hurling the resources of the Attorney-General's Department and the Commonwealth's legal team behind Clive Palmer's failed attack on Western Australia's borders. Indeed, the Morrison government hasn't been so busy that the Prime Minister himself couldn't find a week to go to Queensland to throw all he could into the spectacularly failed state election campaign of the Liberal National Party there. It's all a matter of priorities, and this government has made its priorities all too clear.

But, that being said, Labor is pleased that, almost a year after committing to this measure, the government has finally got around to legislating for it. Of course, passage of the legislation does not guarantee the success of the Lighthouse Project. It will simply enable that program to be rolled out at last. It is up to the government to ensure that the project is implemented properly and that the project is successful. If the pilot is shown to be successful,
we expect the Morrison government to immediately provide the additional funding required to roll the program out across all Family Court and Federal Circuit Court registries across the nation as a matter of urgent priority.

This bill represents another step in the fight against the scourge and the national shame that is family violence, but much more needs to be done. We need more federal government support for frontline government services, including refuges and emergency accommodation for women and their children fleeing family violence. We need more federal government support for legal assistance services, including women's legal services, which play a vital role for women and their families who are at risk of or suffering from family violence. Indeed, as I have made clear today, the Lighthouse Project, which this bill provides legislative support for, was largely developed with the expertise of Women's Legal Services Australia.

We also need the federal government to do more to prevent family violence occurring and more to provide practical support to families suffering from family violence. This means that we need a government that is willing to set appropriate standards, including standards that demonstrate respect for women and consequences for those who do not show that respect. The Gillard government made domestic and family violence a national priority. The National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children was established under the last Labor government, which outlined the roles, responsibilities and priorities for federal governments to respond to domestic and family violence in Australia. With this plan came funding for frontline services, research and primary prevention. Labor is strongly committed to the prevention of domestic, family and sexual violence in Australia, and our record speaks for itself. I commend this bill to the House and I move the second reading amendment circulated in my name in the following terms:

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

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

(1) recognises the ongoing scourge of family violence in Australia;

(2) acknowledges there has been a surge in family violence since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic; and

(3) notes that:

(a) in its Budget, the Government announced unprecedented spending of hundreds of billions of dollars;

(b) this spending will contribute to unprecedented deficits and a national debt in excess of one trillion dollars; and

(c) despite this spending, the Government has not done nearly enough to support frontline services carrying out their vital functions of protecting women and children facing the threat of family violence".

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Wicks): Is the amendment seconded?

Dr Leigh: I second the amendment and reserve my right to speak.

Mr WALLACE (Fisher) (17:21): It never ceases to amaze me how those members opposite, the member for Isaacs in particular, are able to twist a good-news story around what the government is doing to help end the scourge of domestic violence into a partisan political point-scoring exercise. It is very disappointing but absolutely typical.
Domestic and family violence does not occur in a vacuum. It can never be excused, but some of the factors that commonly precede it can be identified. Among these, stress, alcohol and substance abuse, anger, and frustration are prevalent. For those who are going through the family courts, these factors can become acute. It is no surprise in this context that there were between 700 and 800 formal notices of family violence filed in the Family Court of Australia in each of the past three years. These formal notices are only the tip of the iceberg, with many more allegations of domestic and family violence being made in affidavits provided to the courts. The court's own data suggests that a further 37 per cent of women who experience domestic violence never disclose it while interacting with the family law system.

This House's Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs, of which I am chair, has been conducting an inquiry into family, domestic and sexual violence. Hearings for this inquiry are ongoing, and I will not pre-empt the committee's findings and recommendations. I would like to acknowledge the presence in the chamber of my deputy chair on that committee, who will no doubt be speaking on the Family Law Amendment (Risk Screening Protections) Bill 2020. However, I can inform the House that, in the evidence which the committee has received to date, many witnesses have seen a role for the family courts—when I say 'family courts' I'm talking about the Family Court and the Federal Circuit Court—in helping to reduce the impact of domestic violence.

I'm pleased to say that the Morrison government, too, recognises this role. That's why, in December 2019, this government announced a pilot program known as the Lighthouse Project, with a funding allocation of $13½ million. This pilot program will take place in the Adelaide, Brisbane and Parramatta registries of the two federal family law courts over the next two years. The pilot will use an online risk-screening questionnaire to allow early identification and the ongoing monitoring of the risk of family and domestic violence in families going through the court system. It will be a more systematic process to avoid families falling through the cracks and it will ensure that risks to vulnerable individuals can be proactively managed on an ongoing basis. Those who are identified as being at risk will be provided with information about planning for their safety and where they can find support. Their cases will be managed by a specialist judge-led multidisciplinary team, including registrars, family counsellors and legal support, and will be prioritised based on the level of risk.

However, one important factor remains to be locked in before the pilot can proceed, and that is to make sure that all parties can have complete confidence that the sensitive information they reveal by taking part in the questionnaire will not be released to anyone else and cannot be used to influence their own case. That is what the bill before the House will address. The bill will provide unequivocally that information obtained or generated through the risk-screening process is inadmissible in family law or in any other type of legal proceedings. The one and only exception to this inadmissibility would be in cases where the risk screening information indicates that a child under 18 has been abused or is at risk of abuse and that information is not accessible from other sources.

Although we must encourage parties to a family law matter to make open and thorough disclosures, we also need to keep the purpose of the system in mind. The risk-screening process exists to protect individuals from serious harm, and where disclosure of the information gathered through the process would achieve that purpose it is appropriate that
such disclosure should be required. As such, the bill provides that officers and staff, members of the court, family counsellors, contractors and subcontractors involved in the risk-screening process must not disclose the information gathered. However, it also provides for a series of exemptions designed to protect the individuals involved from serious harm. In particular, information may be disclosed if it would protect a child from physical or psychological harm, or reduce a serious and imminent threat to the life or health of any person. It would allow information to be disclosed if a crime involving violence or the threat of violence toward a person has been committed or is likely to be committed as well as if a similar offence involving the criminal removal or damage of a person's property is involved.

This government is already investing heavily in addressing domestic and family violence. In March 2019 this government allocated $340 million in funding as part of the Fourth Action Plan of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children. During this pandemic we have provided another $150 million to respond to the increased prevalence and impact created by the COVID-19 crisis, which my committee has received so much evidence about.

In my own community on the Sunshine Coast the Assistant Minister for Community Housing, Homelessness and Community Services joined me and the member for Fairfax just last week to announce that local not-for-profit community housing provider Coast2Bay are receiving $2.6 million of Morrison government funding. This investment will be used by Coast2Bay to purchase eight new dwellings at two sites on the Sunshine Coast which will be used as emergency accommodation for women and their children who are escaping domestic and family violence.

This funding is being delivered to Coast2Bay under the Safe Places Emergency Accommodation grants. I'm grateful to the assistant minister for recognising the terrific work that Andrew Elvin, Lee Banfield and the team at Coast2Bay are doing. I look forward to next year when this new accommodation will be providing a way out for hundreds of vulnerable women and children on the Sunshine Coast. In the context of this $490 million investment, this bill will facilitate another critical part of the Morrison government's comprehensive action to combat domestic and family violence. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms CLAYDON (Newcastle) (17:29): I'm very pleased to stand in the chamber to make a contribution to the debate on the Family Law Amendment (Risk Screening Protections) Bill 2020. This bill creates some important legislative protections to support the rollout of a domestic violence risk screening pilot program which will run in court registries in Adelaide, Brisbane and Parramatta. It's impossible to actually overstate the prominence of domestic violence in Family Court disputes today. Indeed, a 2016 audit of the work done by Legal Aid commissions in Australia found it to be a factor in a staggering 79 per cent of Legal Aid family law matters. As the first step in the risk assessment process in the courts, screening is critical. It's designed to identify people who might be at risk of family violence so that further investigation of preventive action may be taken.

Of course, Labor supports this bill. Stakeholders and frontline organisations have been pleading for a consistently applied national risk assessment tool for years. It was recommended by the Chisholm report in 2009. It was identified as a problem by the Law Council report in 2015. It was recommended by the Council of Australian Governments advisory panel on reducing violence against women and their children in 2016. It was a key
recommendation of a parliamentary inquiry that the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs conducted into a better family law system to protect those experiencing family violence back in 2017. I remember it well because I was the deputy chair.

But let's not ever lose sight of the fact that this is not an abstract matter for committees to ponder and later forget. These are matters with very real and lasting human consequences. Indeed, in 2015, the coroner in the inquest into the death of Luke Batty identified the lack of a consistently applied risk assessment tool as a factor in that tragedy, yet here we are in the closing weeks of 2020, and the legislation has only just today come before the Australian parliament. The fact that this has taken so long—so many years—is frankly appalling and it doesn't say good things about the priorities of this government. Indeed, it points to the huge gap between the rhetoric and the action, between intent and delivery.

None of these risk screening trials could take place until this bill came before the chamber. As I said, people, frontline organisations have been calling for it for a long time, have been waiting and wondering the hold-up has been. Frankly, that is a very good question which only the government can answer. Nonetheless, we on this side of the House welcome the pilot project, make no mistake. It is a significant step forward. If the pilot is successful when we've done these rollouts in Brisbane, Adelaide and Parramatta then I fully expect the Morrison government to be ready to urgently fund the rollout of this program across the nation. But when it comes to the diabolical scourge of domestic violence, this is not simply enough. Foremost among the needs to make sure that Australian women and their children are kept safe is a stronger commitment of resources.

Back in 2017, when the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs did its inquiry into how, through the Family Court system, we might better support women and children fleeing violence or experiencing violence, stakeholders and services told us again and again that they cannot deliver what women and children need to remain safe with the very meagre resources they've been allocated. They told us they had to turn women away or take on the burden of providing the support themselves with no funding or by asking staff to work without pay.

Sadly, in 2020, I'm hearing exactly the same things echoed as deputy chair of the social policy and legal affairs committee's next inquiry, which is focused on family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia. Our courts and our judges are at breaking point, with people having to wait a year or more to have their cases heard. At the same time, the community organisations charged with assisting and supporting women and children fleeing from violence are buckling under the weight of unmet need. It's absolutely unforgivable that there was no new funding for the courts or our frontline service providers in this year's federal budget.

We also need greater investment in legal services, which play a profoundly important role in giving women the legal information, advice and support to successfully leave violent relationships. This has become even more urgent in recent months given the increase in the incidence of family and domestic violence during COVID-19. When the Australian Institute of Criminology surveyed 15,000 Australian women in May, it found that a staggering 8.2 per cent of those who live with their partners had experienced physical violence during the
preceding three months. That is nearly one in 10 women. Of great concern is that nearly two-thirds of those women said this was the first time their partner had been violent with them.

If the federal government were serious about banishing the scourge of domestic violence, it would ensure that the courts and legal and community organisations have the resources to help those who need it. But it's not just funding that is needed. There is one thing that stakeholders have consistently put at the top of the list to drive down domestic violence that won't cost a cent, and that is the removal of the presumption of shared equal parental responsibility in custody cases. There is substantial evidence that this presumption is leading to inappropriate and, sometimes, downright dangerous parental arrangements. Even though there are exemptions available for families experiencing violence, they are very rarely used.

Only a matter of weeks ago, the Law Council of Australia, along with a series of frontline organisations, told the parliamentary inquiry into family, domestic and sexual violence that this is the single most important priority to protect women and children in the family law system. To this end, the member for Moreton has already tabled a bill that does exactly this. In doing so, it ensures that children's interests are given the utmost priority in family law decisions. Protecting women and children must be absolutely central to the mission of our family courts and our social services system. I recognise that the bill before us today is a step forward, but we must urgently do so much more. We must provide proper resourcing to our courts, our legal services and our community sector, and we must immediately remove the presumption of equal shared parental responsibility in Family Court decisions.

Mr HAWKE (Mitchell—Minister for International Development and the Pacific and Assistant Defence Minister) (17:39): I thank members for their contributions to the debate on the Family Law Amendment (Risk Screening Protections) Bill 2020. The Morrison government is committed to addressing family violence and continuing to improve the protections offered through the family law system to those vulnerable families affected by violence and abuse. This bill will support the implementation of the Lighthouse Project in the Adelaide, Brisbane and Parramatta registries of the federal family law courts from 2020 until mid-2022. The Lighthouse Project has been enabled by $13.5 million in funding provided by the government in the 2019-20 MYEFO which will allow the federal family law courts to pilot risk screening, triaging processes and a specialist family violence list in each of the three registries.

This bill will ensure that the appropriate protections are in place to support the effective implementation of these important new processes by protecting sensitive risks for any information and conferring immunity on court workers. The new family safety risk screening process will allow the early identification and ongoing assessment and management of risks to vulnerable families navigating the family law system. This bill will amend the Family Law Act to ensure that information generated during the risk screening process is confidential and inadmissible. This will ensure the family safety risk screening information cannot be disclosed, except in limited circumstances. Important exceptions to this confidentiality will enable disclosure if it is necessary to protect a child from the risk of harm or to prevent or lessen serious threats to the life, health or property of a person. It will also ensure that information obtained or generated through the risk screening process is inadmissible, subject to exemptions such as where family safety risk screening information indicates that a child has been abused or is at risk of abuse.
These confidentiality and admissibility provisions are consistent with existing family counselling provisions of the Family Law Act. By ensuring the confidentiality and inadmissibility of information obtained through risk screening, the bill will enable parties to freely and confidentially participate in the process. It will also ensure that many at-risk parties will receive tailored referrals to support services and assistance with safety planning. Finally, the bill will provide immunity for court workers, such as registrars and family counsellors, when undertaking new non-judicial roles as part of the family safety risk screening process. This immunity reflects the protection currently afforded to judges and family consultants under the Family Law Act.

The Family Law Amendment (Risk Screening Protections) Bill will ensure that appropriate protections are in place to support the government-funded Lighthouse Project initiative and allow new family safety risk screening and triage processes in the federal family law courts. This bill is another reform of this government to address family violence and builds on the more than $1 billion invested by the government since 2013. The bill will help to improve the identification and management of family safety risks to achieve better outcomes for families engaged with the family law system.

I commend the bill to the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Owens): The original question was that this bill be now read a second time. To this the honourable member for Isaacs has moved as an amendment that all words after 'that' be omitted with a view to substituting other words. The immediate question is that the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question.

Question agreed to.
Original question agreed to.
Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Mr HAWKE (Mitchell—Minister for International Development and the Pacific and Assistant Defence Minister) (17:43): by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Family Law Amendment (Western Australia De Facto Superannuation Splitting and Bankruptcy) Bill 2019

Second Reading

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr DREYFUS (Isaacs) (17:43): Labor will always champion legislation that makes the family law system fairer. The amendments in the Family Law Amendment (Western Australia De Facto Superannuation Splitting and Bankruptcy) Bill 2019 will make the system fairer for de facto couples in Western Australia. Currently, unlike in other states and territories, superannuation cannot be split as part of a property settlement between de facto couples in Western Australia. Instead, courts in Western Australia are required to assess other assets that
may be split between the parties and make adjustments in favour of the party with less superannuation. The amendments in schedule 1 address this anomaly by ensuring that de facto couples in Western Australia are treated the same as de facto couples in other jurisdictions in relation to superannuation splitting in family law matters.

The amendments in schedule 2 of the bill will address a further anomaly in the family law system, one that causes further unfairness to de facto couples in Western Australia. Where either or both parties to a family law dispute involving a de facto couple are also involved in bankruptcy proceedings, de facto couples in Western Australia are currently forced to resolve those matters through separate proceedings in different courts. Family law proceedings are resolved in the Family Court of Western Australia. Bankruptcy proceedings are resolved in the Federal Court or the Federal Circuit Court of Australia. Schedule 2 would address that inconsistency by extending the federal bankruptcy jurisdiction to the Family Court of Western Australia, so that bankruptcy and family law matters involving de facto couples can be heard concurrently in a single court.

As the Attorney-General is aware, these changes are uncontroversial and long overdue. But, given the Morrison government's record of never delivering on its announcements, I suppose we should be grateful that these reforms are being delivered at all. So I do not propose to dwell on the fact that it has been almost three years since the Attorney-General committed the government to these measures and almost one year since the bill was introduced into the parliament. Perhaps some of my colleagues will have more to say about that.

Instead, I'd like to talk very briefly about the problem of delay in a related context, and that is delay in the context of the family law system as a whole. As I stand here today, it is taking about 1 1/2 years, on average, from the time a family law matter is filed in the Family Court or Federal Circuit Court to the date of a trial commencing. That's the average waiting time. Some families are waiting up to four years. And, of course, that's just to get to trial. Once a trial has concluded, litigants then have to wait many months for the courts to hand down their judgements, and even matters that do not ultimately proceed to trial are taking many, many months to resolve. You do not have to be a family lawyer to work out why. Just last week, we heard that one Federal Circuit Court judge is managing 659 cases at the same time, and that, on average, judges at that court have 337 matters each on their dockets. These extraordinary workloads inevitably result in delays, and those delays harm Australian men, Australian women and Australian children—they harm Australian families.

This problem is not new, but it is a problem that has become considerably worse over time, and that is because the government's response to the problem of delays in the family law system has been to do everything it can to delay taking action. For years, the Liberal government's management of the crisis in the family law system has followed the same pattern. First, in response to political pressure, the government calls a press conference to announce that it will be establishing an inquiry to come up with solutions to fix the family law system. Second, the government says it can't possibly do anything to fix the problems in the family law system while the matter is being inquired into. Third, when the inquiry finally reports, the government ignores the inquiry's recommendations. Then, when faced with renewed political pressure, the government calls another press conference, establishes another inquiry into the family law system—and so it goes on.
This pattern suits the government's political purposes, but it has been devastating for Australian families because, while the government has dithered, the very real problems in the family law system have continued to fester. And, if the Morrison government gets its way, those problems are about to get a whole lot worse very quickly, because, after the coalition has spent the last seven years in government asking family law experts to conduct inquiry after inquiry, the only major reform to the family law system that the coalition has shown any interest in is the Attorney-General's reckless proposal to abolish the Family Court by merging it with the Federal Circuit Court. That proposal is based on—wait for it—a six-week desktop review by two accountants from PwC. That is how seriously the Morrison government takes the job of reforming the family law system. The Morrison government has said: 'Forget about what the experts have told us. None of them has anything to teach us. Let's ask two accountants what they think we should do about the family law system and follow their advice.' The Attorney-General's arrogant proposal to abolish the Family Court as a specialist, standalone Family Court is as irresponsible as it is ill informed, and Labor will oppose it. There's much more that I could say about this bill and about the family law system more generally, but I'm conscious that a number of my colleagues from Western Australia who have long advocated for the reforms in this bill would like to say a few words. I move:

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

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

(1) notes that:
   (a) Labor has always supported, and will always support, amendments to make the family law system fairer for all Australians;
   (b) the effect of the amendments in this bill would be to make the system fairer for de facto couples in Western Australia;
   (c) despite the bill having bipartisan support, it has taken almost a year for the Government to bring this bill on for debate; and

(2) is of the view that:
   (a) the delay in bringing this bill on for debate is emblematic of the Coalition Government's neglect of the family law system in Australia;
   (b) after doing so much to undermine the family law system for seven years, the Government should make fixing the family law system a priority; and
   (c) to that end, the Government should not proceed with its reckless proposal to abolish the Family Court of Australia by merging it with the Federal Circuit Court".

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Owens): Is the amendment seconded?

Dr Leigh: I second the amendment and reserve my right to speak

Mr KEOGH (Burt) (17:50): We're here today to debate, finally, the Family Law Amendment (Western Australia De Facto Superannuation Splitting and Bankruptcy) Bill 2019. What does this bill do? This bill gives effect to a referral of power from Western Australia to the Commonwealth, in respect of superannuation matters in family law proceedings for separating de facto couples in Western Australia. It also extends federal bankruptcy jurisdiction to the Family Court of Western Australia to hear bankruptcy proceedings concurrently with family law proceedings concerning de facto couples. It provides for some transitional arrangements and it makes consequential amendments to 21 other acts.
Why? Because Western Australia is blessed to have a separate Family Court system to the rest of the Commonwealth. I say 'blessed' because, as the shadow Attorney-General alluded to, there have been many reviews of the Family Court and family law system in this country, over many decades. Interestingly, the most substantial recommendation that has been made for reform is not what this government has placed on the table by abolishing a specialist Family Court; the best reform put forward to date has been to remodel the Commonwealth Family Court system on the Western Australian Family Court system.

But to come back to the particulars of this legislation, it has had a long and tortured history to get to the point where we can speak on it today. The Family Law Legislation Amendment (Superannuation) Act 2001 provided for superannuation splitting for married couples, and that applied in Western Australia as well. Then the states referred powers to the Commonwealth for de facto property maintenance and superannuation in family law matters from 2003 onwards. The Family Law Amendment Act 2005 amended the Bankruptcy Act to confer on the Family Court of Western Australia the same jurisdiction in bankruptcy—which related, again, to parties to a marriage—that had been conferred on the Family Court of Australia by the Bankruptcy and Family Law Legislation Amendment Act of that same year.

Then we come to 2006, when the Western Australian parliament referred power to the Commonwealth to allow it to provide for the separation of superannuation in relation to de facto couples—both heterosexual de facto couples and homosexual de facto couples. That was done despite the then government's position that it would not support the use of the power in so far as it concerned homosexual de facto couples. This is a great illustration of how Western Australian family law was ahead of the game of the Commonwealth when it came to supporting homosexual couples who were separating, and it took a long time for the Commonwealth to catch up. Then we had the Family Law Amendment (De Facto Financial Matters and Other Measures) Act 2008. That applied to both heterosexual and homosexual couples, but it didn't pick up the Western Australian provisions and provide that power to Western Australia. So, again, we had Western Australia missing out.

Finally, from 2008 through to this 2019 bill, we have legislation that was foreshadowed by the Commonwealth Attorney-General in March 2018, nearly 13 years after the Western Australian parliament made its referral of power to this parliament. This bill was then introduced on 27 November last year. That's 20 months, or over 1½ years, after the federal Attorney-General foreshadowed the legislation. It was referred to a committee in December of last year. The committee reported in March of this year. That's only a three-month inquiry. The committee kept its work short because it understood the urgency of this work. And now, on 9 November 2020, eight months after that committee reported, a total of 14 years after the original referral of power and 12 years after the Commonwealth dealt with this issue for all other homosexual de facto couples in the country except Western Australia, we finally come to the point where we are debating this legislation in this House.

The explanatory memorandum to this legislation says that the measures in this bill are machinery in nature and will have no more than minor regulatory impacts, that the measures in the bill will address an increasing inequality faced by de facto couples in Western Australia and that the bill promotes human rights. I will just highlight the distinction here between a bill that is said to be machinery in nature and legislation that will deal with an inequity and is about promoting human rights. The core there is that this parliament, until this point, has
actively discriminated against homosexual couples in de facto relationships in Western Australia. This is not machinery in nature. This is real-world stuff for real couples who have had to use our family court system, and it is a disgraceful situation. It is so disgraceful that, during my time as a member of the executive of the Law Society of Western Australia, and, then, as President of the Law Society of Western Australia, time and time again I and the society raised this inequity and raised this issue with Commonwealth attorneys-general, both Liberal and Labor, waiting and trying to push for this reform to happen.

So I am now very proud to be able to stand as a member in this place and see this law that will provide equality for Western Australians in accessing the family law system now come through this House. I thank the federal government for their work with the Western Australia government. The new Attorney-General in Western Australia, John Quigley, reagitated this with the current federal Attorney-General—who, I might point out, was also a Western Australian Attorney-General and never pushed this matter then. I thank the government for bringing this forward, but I also ask that they don't let this bill languish in the other place for as long as they have let it languish in this place. It is important that this bill actually gets passed and that it gets passed quickly, because 14 years is way too long and we cannot let this go for any longer. It is imperative not only that this bill is passed but that it is now passed quickly. I commend the bill.

**Dr ALY (Cowan)** (17:57): As a Western Australian, I'm very proud to stand here—and particularly to follow my colleague, the member for Burt—and speak on the Family Law Amendment (Western Australia De Facto Superannuation Splitting and Bankruptcy) Bill 2019, which will finally bring some form of equality to Western Australian de facto couples.

Most de facto couples in Western Australia wouldn't know that they wouldn't be able to split their superannuation assets as part of the division of family property, as couples around Australia have been able to do since 2001. They probably wouldn't know that until such time as they may have to, sadly, undertake a separation as a de facto couple, look at their assets and go through that process. So I'm really happy to support this bill that will address that anomaly that's been going on for, as the member for Burt said, way too long.

Labor will always support any sensible reform to the Family Law Act that's going to make it easier—as easy as it possibly can be for families going through separation—to go through the family law system and have outcomes that put the interests of the children as the first and priority point of interest and their welfare at the centre of it. As you would know, Deputy Speaker, we currently have a special inquiry—it's yet another special inquiry into family law. I know from being on that inquiry that we have a long history of inquiries into family law and the various issues around family law and the operation of the courts in this place, yet this government has not yet introduced any real reform that would make the experience of going to the Family Court a little bit easier on those families going through it, particularly for the children of those families.

In terms of the draft legislation before us, I note that the Attorney-General introduced this bill into the parliament on 27 November last year. Considering that that's almost a year ago to the day, I imagine there have been several opportunities to bring this bill on for debate. Considering that the Attorney-General is himself a Western Australian, I would have thought that he would have put a little more effort into ensuring that this bill was passed. Sadly, this Attorney-General has proven on several occasions that, despite being a Western Australian,
he has abandoned the interests of his state and doesn't really fight for Western Australia much at all. But we're talking here about an Attorney-General who didn't have time to set up a federal integrity commission, either. Despite dozens and dozens of other bills being brought on for debate over the last 12 months, this one has not. This bill is non-controversial and has had support from both sides, but it is an extremely important bill, and extremely important for those people in Western Australia. Imagine how many de facto couples in the last 12 months have had to go through the courts and have had to go through the distribution of their financial assets—couples who could have had this legislation in place 12 months ago if this Attorney-General, a Western Australian, had done his job.

The delay in bringing this bill on is, I have to say, just further evidence of this government's neglect for the entire family law system and of their neglect of the recommendations that have been made, time and time again, by practitioners, by people in the field, by experts and by the numerous inquiries that we've had. While this government sit on their hands and while this Attorney-General sits on his hands in terms of family law, Australian families and especially children continue to suffer. I'm happy to support this bill, but I want on record just how disappointed I am that it's taken this long for this bill to come before the House.

Mr HAWKE (Mitchell—Minister for International Development and the Pacific and Assistant Defence Minister) (18:02): I thank members for their contributions to the debate on the Family Law Amendment (Western Australia De Facto Superannuation Splitting and Bankruptcy) Bill 2019. This bill implements a narrow referral of power from the Parliament of Western Australia which will allow separating de facto couples in that state to split superannuation in the same way as de facto unmarried couples elsewhere in Australia. The bill will also allow Western Australian de facto couples to have bankruptcy matters heard concurrently with their family law proceedings, avoiding the need to pursue them as separate proceedings in two different courts. The measures in this bill will end an inequality that has been faced by separating de facto couples in Western Australia for the past 10 years. These important measures will provide greater access to justice for WA de facto couples by providing fairer and faster resolution of their disputes. The bill will mean WA de facto couples will be able to achieve a fair split of their superannuation assets as part of a property settlement and will also save them valuable time and money in resolving bankruptcy and family law disputes together.

The bill establishes a new part of the Family Law Act 1975 dealing solely with superannuation splitting for separating de facto couples in Western Australia. This new part largely replicates the existing superannuation-splitting provisions and definitions that apply to married and de facto couples in other states and territories. The bill will enable a separating de facto couple in Western Australia to make an agreement to split their superannuation or enable a court to make orders splitting the parties' superannuation interests. The bill will also enable separating Western Australian de facto couples to participate in private arbitration of their superannuation proceedings, as their counterparts in other jurisdictions can do.

Consistent with recommendations from the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee, the bill will provide that the measures apply to all separating Western Australian de facto couples who have not received final property orders at the time of commencement and who otherwise meet the requirements in the bill. The bill provides that final court orders
or agreements made before commencement which are not terminated or set aside will not be affected by the enactment of this bill. This will provide certainty for de facto couples in Western Australia whose property division has also been resolved.

Schedule 2 of the bill will extend federal bankruptcy jurisdiction to the Family Court of Western Australia. This will allow bankruptcy in family law matters of de facto couples to be heard concurrently in a single court. Currently de facto couples in Western Australia need to resolve these matters through separate proceedings in two different courts. The ability to have bankruptcy and family law matters heard together will bring de facto couples in line with married couples in Western Australia and with married and de facto couples in other states and territories.

The measures of this bill provide a vital role in ending disadvantage for Western Australian de facto couples. By enabling these couples to split their superannuation and to commence concurrent family law and bankruptcy matters in the same court, the bill will help Western Australian de facto couples resolve their disputes in a fairer, faster and simpler way. I thank the members for their contributions. I commend the bill to the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Owens): The original question was that this bill be now read a second time. To this the honourable member for Isaacs has moved as an amendment that all words after 'That' be omitted with a view to substituting other words. The immediate question is that the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question.

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

Consideration in Detail

Bill—by leave—taken as a whole.

Mr HAWKE (Mitchell—Minister for International Development and the Pacific and Assistant Defence Minister) (18:07): I present a supplementary explanatory memorandum to the bill. I ask leave of the House to move government amendments (1) and (2) as circulated together.

Leave granted.

Mr HAWKE: I move government amendments (1) and (2) as circulated together:

(1) Schedule 1, page 3 (after line 4), before item 1, insert:

1A Subparagraph 10L(2) (b) (i)

After "Part VIIIB proceedings", insert ", proceedings for an order under Part VIIIC".

(2) Schedule 4, item 3, page 86 (line 5) to page 88 (line 6), omit the item, substitute:

3 Payment splitting or flagging by court order

(1) Subject to subitems (2) to (5), section 90YX of the new Family Law Act applies in relation to all de facto relationships, including those that ended before the commencement of that section (the 

startup time).

Previous orders
(2) Subject to subitem (3), section 90YX of the new Family Law Act does not apply in relation to a de facto relationship if an order (the previous order), other than an interim order, under section 90SM of the Family Law Act 1975 or section 205ZG of the Family Court Act 1997 (WA) was in force in relation to the relationship at the startup time.

(3) If the previous order is set aside after the startup time under section 90SN of the Family Law Act 1975 or section 205ZH of the Family Court Act 1997 (WA), section 90YX of the new Family Law Act applies in relation to the de facto relationship after the order is set aside.

Previous financial agreements

(4) Subject to subitem (5), section 90YX of the new Family Law Act does not apply in relation to a de facto relationship if a financial agreement (the previous agreement) within the meaning of Part 5A of the Family Court Act 1997 (WA) was in force in relation to the relationship at the startup time.

(5) If the previous agreement is terminated or set aside after the startup time under section 205ZU or 205ZV of the Family Court Act 1997 (WA), section 90YX of the new Family Law Act applies in relation to the de facto relationship after the agreement is terminated or set aside.

Mr DREYFUS (Isaacs) (18:07): These amendments are largely self-explanatory. Labor supports them. They address a number of technical concerns that were raised in the report of the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee, which was a bipartisan report.

Question agreed to.

Bill, as amended, agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr HAWKE (Mitchell—Minister for International Development and the Pacific and Assistant Defence Minister) (18:08): by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Education Legislation Amendment (Up-front Payments Tuition Protection) Bill 2020

Higher Education (Up-front Payments Tuition Protection Levy) Bill 2020

Second Reading

Cognate debate.

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

to which the following amendment was moved:

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

"whilst not declining to give the bill a second reading, the House notes that Australia's higher education system is failing our kids, workers and businesses, due to Coalition Government policies that:

(1) slash billions from university funding;
(2) are bad for our economy and labour market; and
(3) impose massive debts on people seeking a higher education".

Dr LEIGH (Fenner) (18:09): This government's attitude towards universities has been nothing short of outrageous. At a time when there is capacity in our universities due to the
slowdown in the number of international students, we should be inviting more Australians to study at our great institutions. Yet what is this government doing? It's cutting government funding to Australia's higher education institutions on a per-student basis, and it's raising student fees, making it harder for Australians to get an education, at the very time at which we should be educating more young Australians.

This stands in complete contrast to the way Labor handled education in the early-1990s recession—the recession that those opposite referred to as the 'Keating recession', despite the fact that many other countries in the world saw a global downturn at that point. They won't have this recession called the 'Morrison recession', but they're happy to call the early-1990s global recession the 'Keating recession'. What did the Hawke and Keating governments do at that time? Labor enabled many more people to expand their educational opportunities. We encouraged young Australians to stay on at school, knowing full well that, were they to leave school into the teeth of that global recession, the chances were that they wouldn't be able to find work. So, we encouraged the increase in the educational capacity of young Australians. We wanted them to be learning when they couldn't be earning.

But what's this government doing now, a generation on, when the equivalent to finishing school is attending university? They're putting their heads in the sand. They're attacking universities. There might be a recession and a pandemic on, but the mob opposite are never too busy to play the culture wars, to attack Australian higher education institutions. They wouldn't even allow many of us on this side of the House to speak when their higher education bill was being rammed through. As soon as they'd done their deal with the member for Mayo, they just guillotined the debate. Many of us on this side of the House—I worked at the Australian National University, finishing up as a professor—didn't get a chance to speak in that debate, because they just wanted to ram through their retrograde attacks on higher education the moment they had the numbers.

They're scared of debate. They're talking about free speech in universities. Part of the deal in which they managed to get this through was to strike a deal with One Nation to get some so-called free speech bill through, legislating what already operates in practice. But while they were talking about their commitment to free speech in universities, they wouldn't allow free speech in the parliament. They wouldn't allow parliamentarians to have our say. No, they just wanted to ram it through without debate.

The fact is that I haven't had a single constituent contact me and say, 'Hey, what I reckon would be really good right now would be if you made it harder for young Australians to get a spot at university, if you made it tougher for young Australians to have an opportunity to study.' No-one's contacted me about that. Instead, I've seen many young Australians struggling to find work. We saw those queues outside the Centrelink offices. We saw the impact on young Australians. We saw a million casuals shut out of JobKeeper because of the ideological predispositions of those opposite. They shut a million short-term casuals out of JobKeeper, despite the fact that they knew that in many cases that was arbitrary, that these were people such as a casual teacher who might have been working at multiple schools but hadn't been with this particular school for a full year and so was shut out of JobKeeper.

And they shut universities out of JobKeeper. They kept changing the rules on universities, the moment universities thought they might have a go. It was a bit like Lucy and Charlie Brown with the football: he's been promised one more time, 'I won't pull it away; it'll be there
to kick.' He takes the run-up and at the last moment she pulls it away and he falls flat on his back. That's what those opposite did to universities—but, I beg your pardon, it was not all universities; private universities were alright. A couple of private universities could get JobKeeper. But if you're one of the 40-odd public universities in Australia, you couldn't get JobKeeper. So, they've had to fire more than 10,000 staff, with another 10,000 potentially on the chopping block, according to the National Tertiary Education Union.

Right here in the ACT, a jurisdiction that is heavily dependent on higher education, the Australian National University are doing all the belt-tightening they can. They have cut back on senior staff costs, they have forgone travel and they have tightened their belts in every possible way they could, but they still weren't able to prevent hundreds of jobs going at the Australian National University. At the very time that we're asking university researchers to assist in finding a vaccine for COVID-19, this government is cutting funding to universities. At the very time that we need researchers to deal with the scourge of dangerous climate change, this government is cutting funding to universities. This government is full of climate change deniers; it is in thrall to its backbench. And today Australia is finding itself increasingly isolated on the world stage. With President-elect Biden now committing the United States to zero net emissions by 2050, Australia stands isolated. More than 70 countries have signed up to zero net emissions by 2050. Every state and territory in Australia as well as major business groups and the scientists are telling us that we need to go to zero net emissions. Australia is now left out on the fringes of the debate—I was going to say 'in the cold', but it's really in the heat! Australia is left out with Saudi Arabia and Jair Bolsonaro's Brazil.

They say that it's only when the tide goes out that you find out who's swimming naked. Right now, Australia's nudity on climate change policy is being exposed for the world to see. The fact is that the Morrison government has had 22 climate policies and still is unable to deal with the tinfoil hat brigade sitting on the backbenches over there, who are driving the government's policy agenda. It's no coincidence that those who are touting unproven cures for COVID-19, like hydroxychloroquine, are the very same who are touting climate change denial. They're small in number but they're powerful in their ability to make the tail wag the dog, to ensure that Australia is left behind in international climate change negotiations. We were there, while Australian bushfires were burning, arguing in the Madrid climate conference that the world should do less to combat dangerous climate change.

That work is going on within our universities. The research on climate change is continuing in our universities, yet this government is attacking universities, attacking scientists and doing its level best to ensure that scientists are relegated on these major issues. It is unconscionable that at the very time in which Australia is suffering a human capital crisis we're not investing in human capital. Instead, the budget was very heavy on physical capital. Labor doesn't begrudge measures such as the accelerated depreciation measure that the government put forward. But we have to recognise the way in which these things work from an economics standpoint. Claudia Goldin and Larry Katz talked about inequality as being a race between education and technology. When education and technology both advance, you get growth with fairness. When technology advances and education stagnates, then you get a widening gap between the have and the have nots. That's why when Labor were in government we were committed to encouraging automation and to encouraging education. It's why we went to
the last election promising to properly fund schools, vocational training and universities and, at the same time, with accelerated depreciation measures. But in the latest budget we saw an incentive for firms to invest in new machinery—which, potentially, could be job displacing.

So if you're an older worker—an over-35 worker—you will have looked at the last budget and seen a budget that said to your employer: 'Here's a big subsidy to invest in machinery that could well do the job of your over-35 worker. Oh, and here's a subsidy to hire under-35 workers who could well do the work of your over-35 worker.' If you're an over-35 worker, the budget that the government brought down was dangerously unbalanced. What we should be doing instead is ensuring that we invest in the sources of growth, that we invest equally in technology and education. That is where this government has let us down. That is where the government's university and education policies have let us down. And that is why we are seeing universities having to let staff go at a time when instead we should be expanding funding to universities and expanding the places available for students to study.

Ms THWAITES (Jagajaga) (18:20): It's a privilege to follow the member for Fenner on this. I know how passionate he is about higher education. This is important legislation. While Labor does not oppose the Education Legislation Amendment (Up-front Payments Tuition Protection) Bill 2020 and the Higher Education (Up-front Payments Tuition Protection Levy) Bill 2020, we are once again disappointed by how long it has taken this government to act and we are extremely disappointed by this government's approach to higher education. This legislation must be considered in the broader light of this government's attacks on Australia's higher education system and on our students. The government's job-ready graduates bill, which recently passed the Senate in a dodgy deal done with Centre Alliance and One Nation senators, sells our students and young people short.

It is hard to imagine a worse time for reforms to be introduced which will increase the cost of going to university for our students. Young people finishing high school this year have had such a difficult year. People in year 12 in my electorate are about to start their VCE exams, and I wish them all the best. They have done their study under the most difficult of circumstances. The usual rites of passage—the ceremonies, the celebrations and the privileges that come with being in your final year of high school—have not been available to them in remote learning. They are going through all the stress and pressure of this final year of learning, and their exams and their assessments, in an environment where they will graduate into unemployment, uncertainty and limited options to begin their careers. Their planned gap yet might be off the agenda. Their plan to work for a year and make a bit of money before they go to university might not be open to them.

Despite all this, they have shown remarkable resilience and flexibility. And what does this government offer them in exchange? They have made it harder and more expensive for them to go to university. Some of these students will now pay more than double for the same qualifications. In fact, 40 per cent of students will have their fees increased to $14,500 a year. Students studying the humanities, commerce and communications will pay more for that degree than doctors and dentists. Fees will more than double for people studying humanities, jumping from just over $27,000 to $58,000 for a four-year degree. This government's is disincentivising students from enrolling in courses and subjects that they love and are passionate about, subjects and courses that can stand them in good stead for the future.
I, like many people in this place, have an arts degree—and it has stood me in good stead. I'm standing here and I have had a successful career to date. I believe the skills I got through that arts degree at university have helped me to think and to contribute to our community. And I've done it all without being saddled with massive amounts of debt. Surely all of us are in this place to make our communities better for those who come after us—not to shut the door and say: 'It's harder, it's more expensive. Sorry, we've had our chance but you don't get your chance.' But that is exactly what this government is doing. This government is waging an ideological war on universities and on students—cutting funding, jacking up prices and locking students out.

Of course, we know about the ideological war on universities: it has been all about locking them out of JobKeeper. Despite universities being one of the hardest hit sectors in this crisis, the government made a number of changes to make sure they were not eligible for the JobKeeper subsidy. In my electorate, that has had a big influence. The government changed the rules three times to make sure universities didn't qualify for JobKeeper. So academics, tutors, admin staff, library staff, catering staff, ground staff, cleaners and security staff—all people with families, all people with lives to lead, all trying to make ends meet—are not eligible for government support in their crisis. As I said, I've seen this impact in my community, where La Trobe University is a major employer and a major support for many of our businesses. La Trobe University has had to inform their staff that they're facing a significant financial shortfall this year. They were forced to ask staff for expressions of interest for voluntary redundancies and preretirement contract programs.

According to La Trobe, access to the JobKeeper scheme would have provided them with $50 million to mitigate the impact of this crisis, but this government had no interest in providing that support. They kept moving the goalposts. All of those people suffered, and their families suffered. La Trobe University is a key employer in my electorate, and it's responsible for thousands of direct and indirect jobs. I know it has hurt that this government has not felt that it can extend JobKeeper to universities and, in fact, has instead waged an ideological war on them. It's not good enough. Our students deserve a future. They do not deserve to be saddled with debt as they try and embark on the rest of their lives. Our universities deserve support, not an ideological war.

Ms KEARNEY (Cooper) (18:26): I'm very happy to speak to this amendment moved by the member for Sydney. What a contest of ideas there is on education policy! Lately the Labor leader, the member for Grayndler, spent nearly a whole day at an early childhood education centre discussing Labor's promise to make child care universally affordable. Meanwhile, the Liberals have spent their days passing their awful job-ready graduates legislation, which, in summary, says to kids from less privileged backgrounds, 'Uni is not for you.' Labor has fought tooth and nail to kill off this legislation. We heard from the member for Grayndler who said: 'We see education as being about creating opportunity. Those opposite see it as entrenching privilege.' And now this: another piece of legislation which is just a tweak to a system—a tweak which Labor had to demand after it was introduced half baked last time.

Labor will not oppose the Education Legislation Amendment (Up-front Payment Tuition Protection) Bill 2020 and the Higher Education (Up-front Payments Tuition Protection Levy) Bill 2020. From 1 January 2020, tuition protection scheme arrangements were expanded to
cover students accessing VET student loans, FEE-HELP and HECS-HELP assistance at private education providers through the Education Legislation Amendment (Tuition Protection and Other Measures) Act, which Labor supported through parliament. At the time, Labor voiced our concerns that exclusion of domestic up-front fee-paying students from the tuition protection scheme would create a complex situation where different students had different rights and protections. The shadow minister for education and training wrote to the minister asking him to consider exactly these changes. I was proud to support the member for Sydney in this work. I spoke to many stakeholders at the time who were also concerned about the lack of coverage for fee-paying students. We welcome these bills which provide new tuition protection arrangements for domestic up-front fee-paying students. It may have taken nearly 10 months, but we're pleased that the government has come around to legislating to tie up these loose ends.

More broadly, while we welcome this tweak to the tuition protection scheme, we must consider this in light of this government's attacks on Australia's higher education system. We on this side of the House support university education, we support TAFE, we support schools and we support early education. The same cannot be said for those who sit opposite. The Liberal government is systematically dismantling the choice that Australian kids should be able to make to decide between going to TAFE, getting a university degree or entering the workforce. The Liberals have decided that only rich kids should go to uni, and they refuse to fund our public provider, TAFE. They ignore the incredibly weak job prospects that 2020 has delivered to our youngsters. Now, rather than choosing between earning or learning, many will just enter the dole queue.

The year 12s in my electorate have had such a tough year, persevering through incredible uncertainty this year. Year 12 kids sitting their exams are thinking about the fact that the degree that they set their heart on years ago may well be out of reach. I've had so many emails and calls from students who had planned to study humanities, law, economics, commerce, communications or visual arts, and now they see those degrees as being out of reach. Fees for humanities and communications subjects will rise by 113 per cent. Law, commerce and economics will increase by 28 per cent. A full four-year program in these disciplines will cost students about $58,000. As the Labor leader said this morning, those who sit opposite have said, 'Know your place.' That's their view of the world; it makes me furious.

Despite the hubris, the Liberals are making it harder and more expensive to go to university and not only are they closing the doors on a uni education but they are refusing to value a vocational education and training sector, particularly by the public provider. There was not a cent in this budget for TAFE. The government has spent seven years neglecting TAFE and training systems at a time when we as a nation are screaming out for skilled workers. It's a travesty that this government has neglected the VET sector and our youth.

Labor has a vision. A vision for TAFEs and the VET sector. It's one where it is vital, robust and valued. We have a vision for the uni sector where every kid who excels at school can go to uni. Labor doesn't want Australia to be like America, where our kids have to get a life time of debt to get a good education. It's only ever Labor that makes good education possible for all Australians. Labor wants uni to be affordable and available to all students who work hard, and we want that for kids who want vocational training as well.
We have a vision for early education to be universally affordable and high quality. This government does not. It gives lip-service but does nothing useful. Yes, we will support this legislation—there's nothing wrong with this piece of legislation—but please get your act together and actually open up pathways for young people to study and work.

Mrs ELLIOT (Richmond) (18:31): I too rise to speak on the Higher Education (Up-front Payments Tuition Protection Levy) Bill 2020 and the Education Legislation Amendment (Up-Front Payments Tuition Protection) Bill 2020. As we know, these bills provide new tuition arrangements for domestic up-front fee-paying students. Whilst we welcome the practical changes of this legislation and the simpler arrangements in place—we've stated we do support that—we must consider this bill in light of this government's constant attacks on our higher education system and, indeed, their attacks on our education system more broadly, whether it be in our universities or in TAFE. We've see massive cuts from this government when it comes to TAFE funding, or indeed their lack of funding right across the board when it comes to our schools. It's making it extremely difficult for young people, especially from the regions, to be able to access effective support and training. It's harder for younger people from the regions to access university. With the increase in fees, it makes it increasingly difficult for our young people to gain the education they all deserve.

We've consistently seen Liberal-Nationals governments cut right across the board, making it very difficult for those younger people. I support the amendments moved by the shadow minister that the House notes that our education system is failing our kids, our workers and our businesses due to the coalition government policies that slashed billions from university funding. It is extremely bad for the economy and the labour market and, really importantly, it imposes massive debts on people seeking a higher education. The fact is you can't trust the Liberal and National Parties with universities. They cut funding and push prices up, making it so much harder for young people to get an education.

We've seen constant neglect from this government when it comes to the higher education sector. It's extremely clear when you look at the university sector during the pandemic and the lack of support from the government. Their lack of support has meant massive job losses in the industry. Labor has been calling upon the government to step in and help our universities to save those jobs. In my area it's specifically with Southern Cross University. We've consistently called on the government to take action to support the university. We've seen so many job losses in that region and we will continue to ask the government, and call upon them, to step in and assist particularly our regional universities, who have had a very difficult time during the pandemic.

Higher education—our fourth-largest export industry—is such an important industry for our nation, and this government is doing nothing to protect the industry from the massive job losses. As I said, we've seen so many cuts from the government when it comes to the education sector, and we see these cuts at both federal and state levels. Indeed, just last week we saw the New South Wales Liberal-National government's very harsh decision to close four schools in the town of Murwillumbah in my electorate of Richmond and force them into one location and then sell off the remaining sites to developers. This decision has quite rightly angered locals in my community. This sudden decision was made with absolutely no consultation whatsoever. Under the New South Wales government's plan, Murwillumbah Public School, Murwillumbah East Public School and Wollumbin High School will all be
forced to close and move into a single campus at the Murwillumbah High School. That's four schools closing, forced into one location and then those sites being sold off to developers. This is a bad decision by a bad government. Our community will rightly fight this really, really bad decision.

Murwillumbah, as a community, a very strong community, has united to save these schools. All four P&Cs have voted for a halt to the plans and have called for consultation with the community. The Teachers Federation members at all four schools have also united to call for a halt and to demand consultation over this action. The community have also launched an online petition to the New South Wales parliament calling on the government to abandon their plans to close the four schools and to genuinely consult with the families directly affected by this decision. These closures are disgraceful, shameful and wrong. The New South Wales Premier, Gladys Berejiklian, and her rotten-to-the-core Liberal-National government have cut so many services in Murwillumbah, and now they're closing all four local schools. These closures will result in severe job losses and worse educational outcomes for our children! It shows yet again in regional and rural areas that the Liberals and Nationals just cannot be trusted.

The New South Wales Labor leader, Jodi McKay, visited Murwillumbah together with state Lismore MP Janelle Saffin, Tweed Labor deputy mayor Reece Byrnes and me. We met with parents and students who explained to us how they weren't even consulted about this decision. Students also have spoken about the lack of consultation and the shock of receiving the news that their beloved schools would close. I spoke with local students from Murwillumbah East primary school, Zac and Zoe, who spoke so passionately about their school community. Zoe was concerned because there had been no warning for the students at all, and she said: 'They haven't considered anything about how the students would feel. I know I was crying when I found out. This is my home away from home. This is my family.' And Zac told me how important the school is to him, saying: 'It's not really so much of a school—it's more of a community.' It's a disgraceful decision to not let our community have a say.

There's no evidence that megaschools produce better educational outcomes for students. These closures are all about the Liberals and Nationals selling off prime real estate to their developer mates rather than educating our children. They're trying to make a profit at the cost of our children's education. These secret school closures are indeed a shameful act by this government. They're selling out our children and they're selling out our community. We also now know that the New South Wales government has been planning this since February—secretly planning this. Well, they now need to come clean with all of the documentation around these secret plans. The fact is that North Coast Nationals MPs Geoff Provest and Ben Franklin have been secretly plotting for months to forcibly close four of our local schools, cram those students into one location and then sell off the other school sites. Disgraceful.

Well, our community stands together and demands the Nationals come clean and tell us the full story about these dodgy deals. Labor is demanding and will continue to call for the New South Wales government to abandon its plan to close the four local schools at Murwillumbah, forcing them into that one location. This is a decision that's rightly angered our entire community. And who will be next? Which community on the North Coast will be the next to be told overnight that all their schools are closing?
This really is a shameful act. In fact, it's disgraceful. And this is being done by a rotten government with no integrity. So we'll continue to call upon the New South Wales government to abandon these harsh plans.

As I say, we see, right across the board, whether it's the federal or the state Liberal-National government, harsh cuts that are hurting our community. In my electorate of Richmond, as I've said, Southern Cross University is a major employer, and this government have done nothing, while the university is in really difficult circumstances due to the pandemic. We're talking about many job losses there. Many staff have lost their livelihoods as a result of this government's failure to take any action at all. In fact, this government's gone out of its way to exclude universities like Southern Cross from JobKeeper, and indeed it has been impacting severely upon the university. Recently, Southern Cross announced a $33 million funding shortfall that will lead to catastrophic losses of more than 130 local jobs. Seventy-one staff have taken voluntary redundancies, and there are a further 63 full-time job losses. Southern Cross University, like all universities, and particularly regional universities, is a strong economic driver in our region, and it produces great quality graduates. And now, more than ever, we need to keep them there and have them in place. So I will continue to call on the Morrison government to take action.

We've also seen this government increase university fees for our students. Thousands of students will have to pay so much more. So, whilst they're cutting a lot from the education sector, they're also forcing up those fees, and many parents have told me that their children will not be able to go to university. It's outrageous! An ordinary four-year degree will now cost about $58,000 for many disciplines, making it so difficult for students to be able to go to uni.

And make no mistake: every student who ends up paying more, every student who misses out on a place and every job lost in the university sector is the fault of the Liberals and Nationals—that is a fact. This government is doubling the cost of a university degree for thousands and thousands of Australians, and here we are, in the depths of the Morrison recession. We need to be focusing on training and educating our young people. We are seeing rising youth unemployment and we're also seeing the demand for university places increasing. It's been such a difficult year for our year 12s, and this government should be providing support and pathways for them, for greater training, whether it be through universities or TAFEs. But we consistently see, from this government, more cuts in place.

In conclusion, we've consistently seen, since this government was elected, cuts to funding for TAFE and universities, and, generally, for schools as well. We've seen the Liberals and Nationals, at all levels of government, making it more and more difficult for our young people to access universities and the educational outcomes they rightly deserve—particularly in our regions, and we blame the National Party for that.

Mr BURNS (Macnamara) (18:43): I echo the words of the member for Richmond in her fine contribution. I know that the Prime Minister has spent a lot of time away from the great state of Victoria. He's avoided Victoria for the last few months. I know that the Prime Minister has forgotten about Victoria and that the welfare of Victorians hasn't been the issue for the Prime Minister, though he's been happy to issue press releases undermining the health authorities in Victoria. What makes it worse is that Victorian institutions have suffered
because of the neglect of this government, and no institutions have suffered more than those in our university sector.

We've remarked a number of times since the start of this pandemic that this government designed a JobKeeper scheme specifically to leave people off it. They specifically left off artists and entertainers. They specifically left off those working in local government. And they specifically left off those working in our university sector, and there have been hundreds of job losses because of this government's decision not to back in our university sector. To make matters worse, our university sector is now operating under guidelines that are completely the responsibility of this federal government. The international education sector in Australia is at the behest of the COVID rules outlined by this government, yet this Prime Minister, who has forgotten about Victoria, except for issuing the odd press release with his mates undermining the Victorian health authorities, is now not supporting the Victorian institutions. And why does this matter? It's because international education is Victoria's largest exporter. International education is a massive institution and a massive driver of economic prosperity, growth and jobs in the great state of Victoria. Instead of supporting our major exporters, what did this Prime Minister do? What did this government do? They left them off the JobKeeper. That has meant that hundreds of jobs that didn't need to go are now gone because of the decisions of this government.

But it's not just attacking the staff and it's not just leaving those who work in our universities sector behind. This government and the hypocrisy of those people who sit around the cabinet table—many of whom enjoyed free university in their time studying—have decided that their legacy, the legacy of the Morrison government in our university sector, is to leave them behind, to leave those staff behind during a pandemic and to make university degrees more expensive for Australian students. The legacy of this government is to leave the staff of our universities behind during the pandemic and to make universities more expensive for Australian students. It wouldn't be so hard to believe and to stomach if it weren't for the galling hypocrisy that many of those who made that decision had the full support of this nation to get qualified, to study, to learn and to think at university for free.

But of course what was good for them isn't good enough for the next generation of Australians. What was good enough for those sitting around the cabinet table isn't good enough for the ordinary Australian student or those in year 12 right now, who have had a year that none of us can imagine. Seventeen-year-olds having to go through the hardest year of high school know that they're going to have to face more expensive university degrees, unlike those people who made that decision for them.

This will have a full-on effect. I'll finish with this point because it's specific to those in my electorate. Monash University, a great university, churns out even better people, I have to say, and I'm a very proud alumni of the great Monash University. But because of the decisions made by this government, Monash University has had to make cutbacks. Unfortunately, it's had to let 270 staff go. It's also had to make a really difficult decision around removing the Monash Centre for Theatre and Performance. It has been collapsed and merged into the school of music, reducing the amount of subjects, dedicated staff and students who are able to be educated in the performing arts at Monash. That might not seem like a big deal to those opposite, who have left our artists and entertainers behind. But this is a $100 billion industry. Melbourne is a city full of vibrancy and culture, and this government has continued to attack
the very institutions which create thoughtful, smart and articulate Australians who challenge
the notions that this government puts forward.

With this bill, we say, 'Sure, we'll pass this piece of legislation but there is a bigger issue
and a bigger challenge that we must right.' This government has attacked universities at every
opportunity and they have left staff behind, causing thousands of job losses. The largest
Victorian exporter, international education, is on its knees because of the decisions of this
government. Australian students have been given no support and, to make matters worse, the
icing on the cake is that this government has made university degrees more expensive. This
will forever be its legacy and it will forever be its shame.

Ms O'NEIL (Hotham) (18:49): I really want to commend the member for Macnamara for
that address. It turns out some of the best people in the parliament went to Monash! I'm really
pleased to be able to make a contribution to the debate today about upfront payments tuition
protection. Labor will be supporting the bills that are before the House, the Education
Legislation Amendment (Up-front Payments Tuition Protection) Bill 2020 and related bills.
We're doing that because the shadow minister for education wrote to the relevant minister—I
think almost a year ago—asking him to consider these exact changes. There were some issues
between upfront payment students and other students in the way that their degrees were being
handled, and we're really pleased to see that the government, after the creaking wheels of how
things operate around here, has finally gotten around to fixing this problem.

But I want to spend a little bit of time today talking about some of the broader issues facing
the education sector, and specifically the vicious and unwarranted attacks that have been dealt
out year on year on year since this government was elected seven years ago. I have a real
passion for the subject on the table today. That's partly because I went to Monash University
myself—I was there for 6½ years—and also because Monash University's main campus is
right in the heart of my electorate, and I can tell you that thousands of people I represent are
among the incredible number of people around Monash University—including students, ex-
students, teachers and researchers—who are doing awesome and creative things and making
our country a better place.

What has happened in the last seven years has been an absolute disgrace, and I utterly
condemn the approach that this government has taken to education. It has been anti-
intellectual, short-sighted and virtually Trumpian in how it's treated the education sector. You
would think that, if there is one thing that we can come into the chamber and agree on, it
would be that education is valuable and a part of our future. We know that, if a country
denigrates its education system, reduces the quality and standard of education and reduces the
number of young people in that country who get these awesome opportunities to get
themselves educated, that country is going backwards, and that is exactly what is happening
on the Morrison government's watch.

One of the most unspeakable betrayals of this sector came through the recent Job-ready
Graduates Package. I have to start by saying: the job-ready package? Can we just kill the
marketing slogans in this House, please? It was a vicious cut to the support that's provided for
education and for thousands of young people around this country. The legislation makes
students pay more for their degrees. That's the long and the short of it. In fact, for thousands
of students it means approximately doubling the cost of their education.
Other speakers have pointed out the extraordinary hypocrisy of this policy. Every single member of the cabinet of this country went to university, and they used that opportunity and got all the great things from that. Many of them went to university for free. Then they got to the pinnacle of their careers, into the cabinet room down the hall here, and they made it harder for the Australians who follow them to do the same thing. I just think that is rank hypocrisy. It is a disgrace. Why would you come into this place and think, 'Yes, what I'm going to do with my great opportunity here is make things harder for the generations that follow'? But that is what we've seen under this government.

The timing of this is also a complete outrage. We are in the middle of the first recession that we have had in this country for 30 years. For the first time, many Australians who never thought they would face unemployment are in a dole queue somewhere, and young people are particularly badly affected by this problem. Any government worth its salt would see this for the huge opportunity that it is to get those young people who are not fully occupied with work and give them a chance to improve their skills so they don't bear the scars of unemployment and underemployment for years down the track. But, instead of doing such an obvious move, the government have chosen this moment to make it harder for them to go to university, and for that I think they need to be held accountable.

It's also part of the context here that young people are going through an incredibly difficult time anyway. Even before COVID, we had a generation out there who were really struggling. They are far less likely to own a home than even people my age and certainly people a bit older. As I said, they're paying more for education. They're far more likely to be underemployed or unemployed. They're far more likely to have lost their job because of COVID and far more likely to have missed out on JobKeeper, that important support that's helping so many Australians right now. What are we doing for these young people? Why are we kicking them while they're down by trying to make their opportunities to go to university harder? I just don't know how hard Scott Morrison wants to make life for these young people.

I want to say a couple of things that are a bit specific to Monash now. A lot of the people I represent are employed by Monash University, and those people are acutely aware of the impact of seven years of neglect by this government.

This is a sector that is rife with casualisation. It is rife with poor treatment of researchers and scientists, these people who contribute so much to the value of being Australian, and this has had its toll. Just in the recent COVID crisis we've seen Monash University lay off somewhere around 277 staff, and this has had a particular impact on its performing arts department. I am sure those on the other side of the House don't have too much concern about this, because we know the way they treat the arts sector has been very shabby in the last few months. But this was a vibrant part of the university, quite a famous part of the university. I want to say to the students who are tackling this problem at the moment that I'm standing with them in their fight and I hope they are having good discussions with the university about how this is going to unfold.

If I can say one final thing about universities that I have found incredibly upsetting over the last couple of months, it has been the exclusion of university staff from JobKeeper. It is insult after insult after insult. We need to do better than this, and that is what Labor wants to do. You have heard over previous weeks the Labor leader, Anthony Albanese, stand in this chamber and speak with such great passion about how he values education. Labor knows that,
if we want a brighter future for young people and our country, we are only going to get it one way, and that is through the education system.

Ms COKER (Corangamite) (18:56): I rise to speak on the Education Legislation Amendment (Up-front Payments Tuition Protection) Bill 2020 and the Higher Education (Up-front Payments Tuition Protection Levy) Bill 2020. I would like to begin by thanking the shadow minister for education, the member for Sydney, who last year wrote to the Minister for Education to voice our concern that the exclusion of domestic upfront-fee-paying students from the tuition protection scheme would create a complex situation where different students have different rights and different protections. It is pleasing to see the government has listened and introduced legislation to address the problem.

Labor welcomes this practical legislation, but it is important that the House recognise this legislation does nothing to address this government's diabolical funding cuts and attacks on our higher education system, on the workers and the researchers and, importantly, on the students. Recently, this government made changes to the cost of university study. This year, 2020, has been a nightmare year for young Australians. Students have had to study remotely. They have missed out on key milestones, from formals to schoolies and gap years. Many young Australians have spent much of the year unable to see their friends and classmates, so the last thing they need is to be saddled with a lifetime of debt if they continue their studies. Yet the Morrison government is embracing policy that would result in 40 per cent of students paying double the amount for their degree, an added extra cost of $14,500 a year. This makes no sense. It's unfair and it is ill thought through. I have spoken to many young people in my electorate about the impact these changes will have on their lives and their education. One young woman who attended a recent forum I ran with the member for Sydney on these changes was Lily Watterson. Lily is a bright, articulate, passionate young woman who is currently a student at Surf Coast Secondary College in Torquay. Lily hopes to study for an arts degree next year. She said:

... I live regionally, so I definitely can't commute to uni every day and having this added pressure of the fees more than doubling is just crazy.

There's no way I can afford to move to Melbourne and support myself. I've got a single parent so it's not like I'm going to be getting my rent paid every week.

And Lily is not alone. I'm worried for so many young people in my community who won't be able to go to university because of changes this government has made.

It's not just high school students; current university students are also being impacted. Ana Machado Colling is another intelligent young woman who attended the forum. She has already done a Bachelor of Arts and hopes to go on to do a masters. This is what she told me: 'A lot of us have found ourselves unemployed during COVID, and study has become a strong alternative for us. For a masters degree to cost something like $80,000 is just unbelievable. It will go over my HECS-HELP, which means I'll have to pay upfront. I don't understand how that's feasible for someone living out of home, paying rent and studying full time.' Over and over, when I speak to young people in my electorate like Lily and Ana, they're concerned about the changes. They're so downhearted. They're altering their plans—plans they've had for years—because of the threat these changes present. They're being denied the opportunities I and many others in this chamber have had, largely due to these changes. Thanks to former
Prime Minister Gough Whitlam, this was an opportunity that we all had for the power of education, and many of us had free education. It was a great thing. Now things have changed.

I myself am a proud graduate of the humanities. I studied drama and literature as an undergraduate and went on to study communications at a postgraduate level, as well as teaching. I am very grateful for that education; it taught me so much about the world around me, and I use my degrees every day. I also believe the humanities are more important than ever. The big problems we face right now—declining trust in our political system and our institutions like this parliament, inaction on climate change, income inequality and injustice—are social problems, problems of collective action, and it is the humanities which equip us to deal with social problems, to analyse and to question the status quo. As Robert French, the Chancellor of the University of Western Australia and former Chief Justice of the High Court, has said:

Humanities is the vehicle through which we understand our society, our history, our culture. Studying the humanities helps teach us to reflect, to inspire, to create, to move people, and to understand and change the world around us. Studying the humanities helps young people get jobs. According to recent research, people with humanities degrees have higher employment rates than science or maths graduates. Australia is in the midst of a once-in-a-100-years recession. I cannot think of a worse time for the government to be making it harder for young Australians to study the humanities. I urge the government to rethink this petty attack on humanities and instead to think about creating jobs and opportunity for the next generation.

One of the aspects of the government's recent changes to higher education that I find particularly appalling is the significant impact it will have on regional areas like my electorate. The government has said it wants to help more young people in regional areas, but its policies are instead leaving regional, rural and remote universities, their staff and their students worse off. This is because regional universities deliver a greater proportion of courses that will have a funding cut compared with non-regional universities. Under the government's policy, nearly twice as many regional and remote students will have to pay the highest rate of student fees.

I'm proud to represent regional Victoria. Parents in my communities of Corangamite want their children to have the opportunity to go to university. They know that getting a great education is a ticket to a great job and a lifetime of opportunity for their kids. They do not want to see children in our communities priced out of an education.

But it's not just about kids, it's about jobs. Universities support 14,000 jobs in regional Australia. They support jobs in my electorate at Deakin University. But funding cuts in regional universities will mean fewer jobs in our regions for academics, for support staff, for administrators and for service providers. This process has already begun in my region, with Deakin University cutting over 300 jobs. Unfortunately, these workers were ineligible for JobKeeper. The question must be asked: why is the Morrison government discriminating against these workers and leaving them adrift to join the unemployment queue? They've been left behind by the Morrison government, and these workers know it.

The coronavirus has exposed the flawed financial model that many if not all of our universities have embraced. They had pursued the international student market as a way of raising revenue, but, with the advent of COVID, having all the eggs in one basket no longer works. I'm not criticising universities. They've been forced into this precarious situation...
because the federal government does not, at its core, believe in funding universities—quite shameful, really. In contrast, Labor's record on education in regional areas is strong. Labor's policies in government saw enrolments of students from regional and remote areas increase by 50 per cent, and I want this to continue.

The government's approach to higher education is cruel. It cuts billions from the sector while doing nothing to help young people get into high-priority courses and jobs. It will make thousands of students pay more than double for the same qualifications, and it will continue the Liberals' track record of years of neglect and cuts to our higher education sector. The young people in my community that I've had the chance to meet and talk to are passionate, clever and articulate. They want to study at university, they want to get good jobs and they want to contribute to our community. I feel for them so much, not just because of the big challenges they've faced this year but because the Morrison government is making it harder for them to achieve in the future. As a mother of two daughters aged 17 and 18, I have seen firsthand just how tough this year has been for the younger generation. For those young people in my community who might be following along with this debate, I want them to know: I hear you, I stand with you, and Labor will fight for you.

The Morrison government's approach to higher education is a world-class blueprint for inequality: increase fees to limit access, fill the gap with a loans scheme so that people with less financial stability feel less able to repay, and put the highest price tags on courses linked to socially influential careers—this is the holy trinity of shutting down aspiration. We don't want it in Corangamite, and we don't want it in Australia.

Mr HOWARTH (Petrie—Assistant Minister for Community Housing, Homelessness and Community Services) (19:06): I want to thank those members who have spoken on the Education Legislation Amendment (Up-front Payments Tuition Protection) Bill 2020 and the related bill, the Higher Education (Up-front Payments Tuition Protection Levy) Bill 2020. The bills enable Australia's unique and successful tuition protection arrangements to be extended to cover domestic students who pay their tuition fees for their studies up-front. This will ensure that these students receive the same government-backed protections and assistance through either a replacement unit or course to continue their studies or a refund of their tuition fees for incomplete units of study where their provider has failed to deliver.

The Higher Education (Up-front Payments Tuition Protection Levy) Bill 2020 will seek to impose the up-front payments tuition protection levy and prescribe the levy components and the manner in which they will be determined each year. This will enable the viable providers to contribute to a fund, rather than maintaining their own separate tuition protection arrangements for domestic up-front paying students, which can often be burdensome for providers to maintain. The new tuition protection arrangements for up-front paying students are consistent with the already-proven successful tuition protection model for international students and domestic students who access a Commonwealth loan to support their studies—that is, support through either a replacement unit or course to continue their studies or a refund of their tuition fees for incomplete units of study where their provider has failed to deliver.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the education sector. Now more than ever, these bills provide an additional measure of surety to domestic higher education students who are not relying on Commonwealth assistance loans. These students can be assured that they will be assisted through these government-backed tuition protection arrangements in the event that their provider closes or stops teaching a course from 2021. This surety will also
encourage people to invest in their higher education and gain the necessary skills and qualifications for employment in their chosen career field, thereby contributing to future growth of Australia's skilful workforce. I thank members again for their contributions to this key debate on extending tuition protection arrangements in the higher-education sector to domestic students who pay up-front for their studies. I commend the bills to the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Goodenough): The original question was that this bill be now read a second time. To this the honourable member for Sydney has moved as amendment that all words after 'That' be omitted with a view to substituting other words. The immediate question is that the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question.

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

Third Reading

Mr HOWARTH (Petrie—Assistant Minister for Community Housing, Homelessness and Community Services) (19:10): by leave—I move:
That this bill be now read a third time.
Question agreed to.
Bill read a third time.

Higher Education (Up-front Payments Tuition Protection Levy) Bill 2020

Second Reading

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

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Goodenough) (19:11) The question is that this bill be now read a second time.
Question agreed to.
Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Mr HOWARTH (Petrie—Assistant Minister for Community Housing, Homelessness and Community Services) (19:11): by leave—I move:
That this bill be now read a third time.
Question agreed to.
Bill read a third time.

Veterans' Affairs Legislation Amendment (Supporting the Wellbeing of Veterans and Their Families) Bill 2020

Second Reading

Consideration resumed of the motion:
That this bill be now read a second time.
to which the following amendment was moved:
That all words after "That" be omitted with a view to substituting the following words: "whilst not declining to give the bill a second reading, the House criticises the Government for failing to:

(1) appropriately address the serious issue of veteran suicide, including its stubborn refusal to enact a full Royal Commission into veteran suicide and its insistence on instead establishing a National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention; and

(2) introduce enabling legislation to establish a National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention."

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Goodenough) (19:12): If it suits the House, I will state the question in the form that the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question.

Mr GEORGANAS (Adelaide) (19:12): I rise to speak on the Veterans’ Affairs Legislation Amendment (Supporting the Wellbeing of Veterans and Their Families) Bill 2020. The bill is designed to improve the wellbeing of veterans and their families, and of course Labor will be supporting this bill, with some amendments that have been moved by the shadow minister. Earlier this year the government announced two new roles: the National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention, which will be complemented by the Veteran Family Advocate. I note that the government intends to bring forward this legislation to establish the national commissioner later this year, while this bill will establish the Veteran Family Advocate as a new commissioner to work as part of the Repatriation Commission and the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission.

As I said, we on this side will be supporting the bill, with some amendments. But, I've got to say, there are some serious concerns about the government's related proposal of a National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention. We on this side have said many times that we prefer a royal commission into veteran suicide. From a procedural point of view, we believe that it may be premature to establish the Veteran Family Advocate position ahead of a national commissioner. However, we welcome the announcement of the Veteran Family Advocate at this time as a standalone measure. We just want to ensure that the advocate is appropriately resourced to do the job. So, we have some serious concerns. Given the growing number of veteran suicides, I cannot for the life of me understand why, if you want to help veterans and their families, the government has completely failed to act in this area. We've said that we need a royal commission into veteran suicide. We don't need it five years down the track, or three years; we need it now. There were 33 suicide deaths among serving and ex-serving ADF personnel in 2018, and there were 465 suicides between 2001 and 2018. But we know that the figures are actually much higher. If this was road traffic accidents or something else, there would be an outcry. It's appalling that this government isn't conducting a royal commission. Our service men and women deserve much better.

In my electorate I have some great advocates who are mums who have lost sons. Imagine being in their position. Their sons served in the ADF, on the front line, and gave their all for this nation. For people like Julie-Ann Finney, from my electorate, and Angela McKay, who have both lost sons, the least we can do is conduct a royal commission. Their sons were in the Defence Force, served with dignity and were proud to be in the Defence Force. We make decisions in this place and send people into the most dangerous spots in the world and ask them to put their lives on the line for our democracy, our freedom and all the things we
believe in. Yet we cannot get to the bottom of all these deaths that occur through suicide in the defence forces.

When they come back from some of these places, they are obviously traumatised. Imagine being on the front line. I went to Afghanistan and spoke to young Army and Air Force people over there. They told us some of the horrific kinds of stories that you hear. At Tarin Kowt, on the front line, one young soldier told us of an experience he had two weeks before we got there. They would go out and give colouring pencils and crayons to kids in the village. One day when they are out with a swarm of kids wanting their lollies and colouring pencils, one of them had a suicide jacket on and it exploded. The officer who was put in charge was a 23-year-old man who was serving there. What he described to us has been etched in my mind for ever and a day. His job was to investigate who the suicide bomber was. He explained to me that he had had to pick up the pieces of the body and lay it on the table. It was completely torn apart. He had to put the arms and the legs down separately and the body, the torso and the head. When they looked at the body, they saw that it was a young kid of no more than 13 or 14 years old.

The young man who described this to me was about to come back to Australia a few weeks later. I thought to myself: when he comes back to this place, who would he have to talk to? Who would understand the horror and the tremendous trauma that he had gone through in that period? And you could see when he was explaining it to us that it was a horrific event. What would this young man do when he came back—talk about the football? I recall him telling me he was a Port Power supporter. I figured he'd be back within a week and go and speak with his mates—people who would have no idea what he was doing in Afghanistan and maybe not even have any interest in what he was doing. They were going to say: 'How are you, mate? What did you think of the footy scores on the weekend?' We need to put supports in place for these people so that when they return home we can ease them back into the community and they are free of any trauma. We must work at that continuously.

That's why this bill is short. It doesn't call for a royal commission. It doesn't acknowledge the hundreds of mums and dads out there who have lost children to suicide in the defence forces. We need a royal commission now—not next year, not the year after. We need the Prime Minister to call a royal commission into veteran suicides to give people like Julie-Ann Finney and Angela McKay in my electorate the ability to voice their concerns and tell us what they went through when their sons came back and to get to the bottom of why so many veterans are committing suicide.

This is obviously an area that has been going on for too long in a negative way. We hear about it regularly, we read about it in the papers and we hear horrendous stories. This has to end, and it will only end with the services in place, the agencies in place and the medical people in place to assist these people with social workers and by keeping a constant eye on them. It is not good enough to come back from war-torn areas and just get thrown into the community without someone keeping an eye on you to see if you're okay and making sure there are services you require, or if there is anything that can be of assistance or just someone to talk to—just like this young lad I was telling you about. It absolutely blew me away when he told me the story of what he had to do. He was 23 years old and due to come back to Australia in two to three weeks after that incident.
I wonder what measures were put in place for this young man after the trauma that he went through? He's one of hundreds. He was trained and he was proud of his job. He exercised his job in the proper and appropriate manner. He knew he had a job to do that day; he did it, and, as I said, he protected our democracy, our freedom and our way of life by being over there. The least we can do for people who have gone through horrendous events, such as this young lad, is to conduct a royal commission into veterans' suicides, to ensure that we minimise them. One is too many. I hope that the government sees fit, and that the Prime Minister sees fit, to call a royal commission into veteran suicides.

Mr HOWARTH (Petrie—Assistant Minister for Community Housing, Homelessness and Community Services) (19:21): I want to thank the member for Adelaide, who contributed to the debate on this bill and I acknowledge the continued support for the veteran community demonstrated by everyone in this parliament.

The Veterans' Affairs Legislation Amendment (Supporting the Wellbeing of Veterans and Their Families) Bill 2020 addresses three key issues. It fully implements the government's commitment to create a Veteran Family Advocate, it provides changes to better support for the transition from ADF services to civilian employment and it ensures that all recipients of the gold card are treated equally in terms of their benefits.

We recognise that in many ways, the service of Defence families on the home front is just as important as service on the front line. That is why the government has made engagement with veterans' families a priority over successive terms, establishing the female veterans and veteran families policy forum and the Council for Women and Families United by Defence Service. We have listened to what is working and what needs improvement. This bill will take our commitment further by establishing a Veteran Family Advocate.

I'd like to congratulate Ms Gwen Cherne, who has been appointed as the inaugural Veteran Family Advocate and as a commissioner on the Repatriation Commission. This bill extends that appointments, so Gwen will also be appointed as a commissioner on the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission. These commissions are responsible for the administration of veterans legislation and for providing advice to the minister and government in relation to these acts.

Since being appointed Gwen has wasted no time, working with veterans' families to build our understanding of risks and predictive factors of ADF personnel, veterans and their families, particularly as they transition to civilian life. Gwen has spent her first several weeks learning more about the department to understand recent progress and the challenges which still face it. She has met with the Female Veterans and Families Forum and the Council for Women and their Families United by Defence Service, and has sought briefings with Open Arms, including with peer support workers and the Veterans Review Board. Gwen has met with Defence, Defence Families Australia, the staff establishing the Joint Transition Authority, the Australian War Memorial, the ACT veterans ministerial advisory committee and many other national bodies.

Based on this, Gwen is drafting a strategy to address the obligations under this new role, focusing on policy and system changes to support the government's commitment to enhance the health and wellbeing of the veteran community. Gwen will also work with the National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention so that recommendations can be rapidly translated into removing risk factors. Ms Cherne has an impressive resume in roles
relating to defence personnel and veterans' families nationally and internationally. But, more than that, she brings a range of lived experience. Gwen is the granddaughter of a World War II veteran and the daughter of a Vietnam veteran who had PTSD. She spent time in Afghanistan as a development worker working on military bases and coordinating stabilisation reconstruction efforts with the international response. She was a defence spouse, a carer after her husband suffered a stroke while deployed in Iraq, and she experienced and survived family and domestic violence. Gwen is a war widow to suicide and the mother of a current serving Australian Defence Force member.

Gwen will ensure veterans' families have a voice. The government cannot solve the complex problems faced by veterans without the assistance of their families. Families understand how a veteran feels at a particular moment, the nature of their challenges and what needs to be done to best support them, and I understand that from families of veterans in my own electorate who've contacted me. By working together, we can achieve better results for our veterans and their families that support them. I wish Gwen all the best in the role.

The second part of this bill facilitates flexibility in the way programs can be designed to assist the transition from the ADF to the civilian workforce. This government has made significant improvements in transition and employment support. This was clearly demonstrated in the budget with an additional $23.7 million provided for the Joint Transition Authority and employment support. This bill will further support employment by allowing for the establishment of new programs, such as the support for employment program through the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Regulations 2020. The regulations will contain the details of the employment assistance or benefits as well as who they will be provided to and in what circumstances they can be provided.

I thank the Senate Standing Committee for the Scrutiny of Bills for their work and note their comments in relation to the transition to civilian employment measure. In response, an addendum to the explanatory memorandum has been prepared, which I now table, to address concerns by the Senate committee as to why it is most appropriate that details of the support for the employment program be placed in the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Regulations 2020. Once established through the regulations, this program will provide eligible veterans with both pre- and post-employment assistance. This will ensure similar employment support is available to the veterans for up to five years, as is currently available for transitioning ADF members, including career advice, coaching, assistance with skills translation, resume and interview preparation, and coaching to adapt to the structure and communication of civilian employment.

The final part of this bill fixes an unintended omission that has meant the energy supplement has not been payable to some gold card holders because they are covered under different legislation. This government acknowledges the importance of the gold card to the veteran community. After extensive consultation and as part of the interim response to the Productivity Commission's report, we have ruled out any changes to the gold card. This provides certainty to our veterans and their families. This measure builds on our acknowledgement and extends the provision of the energy supplement to Australian participants in the British nuclear tests, British Commonwealth Occupation Force and Australian residents who worked as part of the Australian surgical and medical teams in Vietnam, ensuring all gold card holders are treated consistently.
Our veterans were prepared to make great sacrifices when we needed them and, as the Australian Defence Force Veterans' Covenant states, 'For what they have done, this we will do.' This bill supports the wellbeing of veterans, their families and the wider veteran community.

Finally, I note the second reading amendment to this bill moved by the opposition regarding veteran suicide and a royal commission into veteran suicide. The suicide of any former or serving ADF member is tragic, and the government is committed to taking action to prevent these deaths. Suicide prevention is a complex issue and it deserves an enduring focus. Like a royal commissioner, the National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention will have powers to undertake full inquiries into suicides and suspected suicides, including the ability to compel production of evidence, summon witnesses, conduct public and private hearings, and make recommendations to the government about actions to prevent future suicides. Unlike a royal commission, this will be a permanent and ongoing function. I note that the Attorney-General has introduced two bills to enable the establishment of this important role: the National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention Bill 2020 and the National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2020. I thank the Attorney-General and his department for leading this important work, which will create enduring change for ADF personnel, veterans and their families. I commend this bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Goodenough) (19:30): Order! It being 7.30 pm, I propose the question:

That the House do now adjourn.

**Journalism**

Ms THWAITES (Jagajaga) (19:30): As our world tries to deal with this pandemic and as one of the world's most important democracies held its presidential election, questions about how we get our information and worries about the spread of misinformation have never seemed so important. Many of us have spent hours glued to our televisions for the past five days, awaiting a result from the US election. We couldn't help but notice the other decision-making process that was happening at the same time: the decision of what broadcasters internationally and locally were deciding to air on their networks and how they were reporting the ballot count.

At 6.30 pm local time on Thursday, President Trump gave a press conference at the White House to falsely claim that the election was a fraud and that the Democrats were stealing it away from him. The US networks ABC, CBS and NBC all made the decision to cut away from the President's press conference as he was citing false statements and unfounded conspiracies. This is something we have not seen before during the Trump presidency—the media reporting Trump's baseless rhetoric as lies and misinformation and choosing not to broadcast it. But we know that this is not isolated. The areas where fake news and the rise of conspiracy theories continue to flourish are wide. Due to rapidly growing digital platforms and social media and a decline in traditional media, this is not unique to the US. We are all at
risk from the spread of denial, mistruths and misinformation, yet this government has no serious plan to support public interest journalism.

President Trump's election-rigging conspiracy theory was parroted here in Australia, in fact—most shockingly by government members. Both George Christensen and Matt Canavan used their official social media accounts to share posts alleging voter fraud in the US—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Goodenough): The member for Petrie on a point of order?

Mr Howarth: I would just ask the member for Jagajaga to refer to members by their correct titles.

Ms THWAITES: My apologies, Deputy Speaker. The Prime Minister has not publicly condemned those comments—not surprisingly, as we have seen the Prime Minister repeatedly fail to act and pull into line government members who are spreading misinformation. All year we've seen social media accounts from the government side wrongly spruik hydroxychloroquine as a treatment for COVID-19. This kind of misinformation is outright dangerous. Perpetuating these lies and blurring the line between fact and fiction only continues to undermine and erode our democracy. Climate change deniers, far-Right hate groups, Islamophobia and COVID conspiracies all spread in social media bubbles on platforms like Facebook and Twitter. I have read with great interest and alarm in recent days reporting by Business Insider explaining how Sky News now has one of the biggest social media reaches of any Australian media organisation to spread their own unique brand of information and opinions.

Meanwhile, the news sources we used to get our information from and which helped us to create shared stories about what was actually going on in our communities are declining almost to the point of extinction. Our national broadcaster, which we know has been a trusted source that people have looked to for reliable information during this pandemic, has had its budget repeatedly slashed by this government. Tonight the government have been using the Senate to try to preemptively undermine the ABC's independence because they are not prepared to face scrutiny. Public interest journalism is on the endangered list in this country, and the government has no real plans to change the situation. We know from data collected by the ACCC that 106 local and regional newspaper titles closed across Australia between 2008 and 2018. That's a net 15 per cent decrease in the number of these publications. Earlier this year we nearly lost the independent news wire, AAP. The number of journalists employed in print and online businesses fell by 20 per cent between 2014 and 2017.

We are experiencing a crisis of information in this country. It requires the government to think differently about how it supports public interest journalism. It requires some creativity and some new thinking about: how do we have information flourish that is trustworthy? How do we support journalism that tells us what's going on in our community without peddling misinformation? How do we call out lies and mistruths? And what role do all of us, as leaders in this place, have to do that? If we continue to drift along, our democracy is at risk. Our sense of what makes us a strong and cohesive community is at risk. (Time expired)

Drought Communities Program

Mr RICK WILSON (O'Connor) (19:35): I rise this evening to update the House on how the Morrison government's extension of the Drought Communities Program is making a real
difference to regional communities in my electorate of O'Connor. The Drought Communities Program supports communities in drought affected areas across Australia. Last year, I wrote to both the Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management, and the Prime Minister, calling for the program to be extended to Western Australian communities experiencing extremely dry conditions. I was very pleased in January to see a great outcome, with the program extended to a further 52 communities experiencing hardship, 20 of which are in my electorate of O'Connor. Communities of less than 1,000 people received $500,000, and communities with a larger population received $1 million to get local infrastructure projects and other drought resilience activities off the ground. This brings the total commitment under the program to $301 million since 2018. For the shires of Brookton, Broomehill-Tambellup, Esperance, Jerramungup, Kulin, Lake Grace, Pingelly, and Plantagenet and Ravensthorpe, this funding has brought a welcome boost to their communities.

The funding will be a huge benefit to these communities who have suffered prolonged low rainfall and will support events that create jobs, boost tourism, improve community wellbeing and enable construction of important community infrastructure. For the Shire of Brookton, $500,000 will be put towards a Brookton recreational precinct upgrade to enhance community facilities and tourism infrastructure, allowing increased community access to quality services for years to come. This project will include the construction of the community garden, a Men's Shed building and a youth building, creating age-appropriate spaces for the various community groups to enjoy. The local caravan park is also located in this precinct where the funding will be used to upgrade the camp kitchen, ablation blocks and signage to bolster the local tourism sector. In the Shire of Broomehill-Tambellup, $1 million will be put towards initiatives aimed at securing their emergency water supply and improving accessibility to cultural and social infrastructure, such as upgrading disability access to the Broomehill Sporting Complex.

The shires of Esperance and Jerramungup plan to use their funding to improve strategic water supplies, such as the Grass Patch community dam, the Boxwood Hill community dam and improved water storage facilities. In Kulin, funding will allow improvements to the local aquatic centre, for its continued enjoyment by all ages, and the installation of a projector and large screen at the Freebairn Recreation Centre for community events. Lake Grace—a shire well known for its vivid wildflowers—will use part of their funding to enhance this attraction through the creation of new community walking trails and interpretive wildflower signage. Improvements to the main street are underway in Pingelly, preserving the community's heritage and offering a vibrant central space for local business to thrive where the community can gather. The community of Mount Barker will benefit from upgrades to the local pool, bringing welcome relief for residents as the weather starts to warm up. The Shire of Ravensthorpe will also use these funds to improve the town's aesthetics and improve access to public facilities. All these projects, whether focused on sporting or community infrastructure, bolstering local tourist attractions, preserving a community's heritage or improving water infrastructure and security are all integral aspects that make regional towns such a wonderful place to live.

Drought is nobody's friend. It wreaks havoc on regional communities, often for prolonged periods. It brings with it uncertainty, despair, financial hardship and a blow to community
spirit. When drought escalates, so does the government's response. As set out in our *Drought in Australia: Australian government drought response, resilience and preparedness plan*. The Morrison government is here for our rural and regional communities who are doing it tough through drought. We'll be here to support them for as long as it takes through dedicated initiatives, such as the Drought Communities Program extension.

I want to contrast the Morrison government's response with the Western Australia government's response, in particular on the water infrastructure rebate scheme. Western Australia received $5 million through this program, which was oversubscribed by nearly double. The Western Australian government not only did not put a cent into this particular program, they charged the Commonwealth government $500,000—or, 10 per cent of the fund—to administer it. The Commonwealth has gone back in and offered another $5 million on the basis that the Western Australian government match that funding and they are refusing to do so. So I do want to draw the attention of the House to this absolutely despicable decision by the Western Australia government to ignore our farmers, who are doing it tough for the second very dry season in a row.

**Morrison Government**

Mr ZAPPIA (Makin) (19:40): Over recent times, public confidence and faith in what traditionally were perceived as upright pillars of society—including major financial institutions, religious organisations, reputable charities, sporting icons, government agencies and parliament itself—have been considerably diminished both here in Australia and across the world. That confidence was further eroded last week by US President Trump, with his allegations that the recent presidential election was rorted and his claims of widespread illegal votes being cast and election theft. For those of us elected to public office, whom the Australian people have placed their trust in, the loss of faith in elected representatives should be of concern. It leads to a loss of faith in the laws of our land, the fairness and justice that our values and our identity are built on, and the freedom and democracy that so many Australian lives have been lost defending. As I reflect on the public scandals in Australia over recent years, which include the abuse of office, rorting and misuse of public funds, it is not acceptable that they should be glossed over as isolated cases or aberrations. Public cynicism further deepens when governments are seen to condone, cover up or ignore bad behaviour. Yet that is what has been happening time and time again under the Morrison government.

There have been the $100 million sports rorts, where public money was spent to influence an election outcome; the payment of $30 million for the Leppington Triangle airport land valued at $3 million—paid to a substantial Liberal Party donor—and then reportedly leased back to the seller at a value of less than $1 million; the $150 million swimming pool rorts program; the energy minister's connection to the illegal clearing of grasslands and an $80 million water purchase where above-market prices were allegedly paid; the $220 million regional rorts allegations, which raised a scathing report from the Auditor-General; and the recent standing down of the chairman and deputy chairman of the corporate watchdog, the Australian Securities and Investments Commission. And in South Australia, three government ministers, the Speaker of the Legislative Council and the Chief Government Whip were all stood down over tens of thousands of dollars of questionable travel claims. Never before can I recall a mass standdown of so many senior government officeholders. That list is not
exhaustive, and I could add much more to it. So what has been the Morrison government's response to such a serious matter?

Firstly, they've dismissed claims of wrongdoing as exaggerated nonsense. Secondly, they've cut funding to the National Audit Office for exposing the rorts. Thirdly, after years of procrastination and vacillation, the Morrison government has finally unveiled its draft legislation to establish what has been widely described as a 'Clayton’s integrity commission'. This is what credible legal experts have said about the government's proposed federal anticorruption commission. The Centre for Public Integrity has been quoted as saying:

Christian Porter's proposal would be the weakest watchdog in the country … They're setting that bar so high for investigations that they wouldn't be able to investigate 'sports rorts' or the Western Sydney airport deal.

Steven Charles QC, former judge of the Victorian Court of Appeal, was quoted as saying:

It's an attempt to protect ministers, politicians and senior public servants from investigations into serious corruption.

Geoffrey Watson SC, former counsel assisting the NSW ICAC, said, 'It is designed to cover up corruption, not expose it.' And Anthony Whealy QC, former judge of the NSW Supreme Court, was quoted as saying:

It's a crying shame the government will not give this body an effective way to control corruption in the public service and the Parliament … The real reason for that is they are afraid of … how it might affect them.

Sadly, the last comment resonates widely throughout the community.

The standards of integrity set by this parliament become the benchmark for society. If members of parliament or of the elected government are seen to be above the law, community standards deteriorate. The establishment of a national integrity commission that acts independently of government and which the Australian people can have total confidence in will go a long way to restoring public trust and confidence in the highest authority of our nation, that is, this parliament, because the standards set for the commission directly reflect the standards that the parliament has set for itself.

**Longman Electorate: Community Radio**

Mr YOUNG (Longman) (19:44): On Saturday, I attended the AGM for one of my electorate's most important community organisations—Moreton Bay's own 101.5 FM, a community radio station in Caboolture. Community radio plays an important role in so many communities. It gives a platform to a diverse range of views that enrich our social and cultural fabric. It promotes media diversity and provides social inclusion and local community participation, as well as media access that is in the public interest. Radio station 101.5 FM does all of these things. It also supports local content production that is tailored to the needs and interests of not only the people living in my electorate of Longman but, in fact, eight per cent of the Moreton Bay Regional Council.

For more than 30 years, 101.5 FM has been operating out of Caboolture. The idea for the station began through a conversation between Andrew Stanton and Alex Long, who became the first station president. With a lot of help from the community, particularly Rotary, Moreton Bay council and the local business community, they raised just under $500,000 in over three years to launch it. Then known as Caboolture Radio, its first test broadcast was in
1987 and it went live in 1989. Andrew and Alex were joined by dozens of volunteers. Currently there are 83 volunteers on the books and two paid staff. This number is expected to swell again with young people now COVID restrictions have eased. The station also gives undergraduate students work experience in the industry. Several young volunteers have gone on to mainstream media such as The Courier-Mail, ABC and television.

Over the past 31 years, thousands of people have walked through its doors and contributed in some way to making the station what it is today. Many of those have helped raise millions of dollars for local causes through supporting fundraising or other events for community groups each year, and the station averages more than 40 outside broadcast fundraisers every year. It currently has more than 200 community members. These include schools such as Saint Columban's College and Mount Mee State School and community groups like the Redcliffe, Caboolture and Bribie Island legacy groups, the Burpengary Community Association, the Abbey Museum of Art and Archaeology, Donnybrook Sports and Community Club and the Bribie Island Orchid Society. Groups like these use the station as an information portal for members and to help out with their fundraising efforts.

The station has helped many people develop a love for radio, including people on Work for the Dole programs and others doing community service through court orders. The station has an open-door policy, whereby if someone wants to have a go at radio they get a go. Not only does it play an important role in the community through its broadcast content but it also provides employment, new training and skills, and a focus for many people who otherwise don't have one. The station broadcasts 24 hours a day every day, with a breakfast show, morning magazine program, drive-time program and local information shows. It plays a wide range of music from classic hits, country and blues, to top 40 hits and Aussie rock.

Community radio has not been without its challenges over the years as technology evolves and new forms of media come along. Given that 101.5 FM's primary role is the dissemination of information during an emergency, it was paramount that it kept touch with the rapidly changing technology. To their credit, the staff have fully embraced technology in their day-to-day operations. The station has the latest studio and podcasting equipment coupled with a fully capable emergency broadcast unit. This equipment ensures that it is ready to keep pace with the ever-changing Longman community, its needs and expectations.

According to the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia, which champions community radio across the country, community broadcasters like 101.5 FM are more crucial than ever. For the most part, stations like 101.5 FM are well positioned to meet these challenges; in fact, community broadcasting is thriving across the country. Audience research released in December 2018 showed it had the highest national listening audience on record. In Queensland, more than 1.2 million people, or around 31 per cent of the population, listen to community radio. Community radio stations like 101.5 FM play an important role in local communities like those in Longman and it is vital to support them so they can continue filling the airwaves.

Palmer, Mr Clive

Dr ALY (Cowan) (19:50): Over the last few days, Western Australians have witnessed an out-of-touch billionaire suffer a huge defeat and spit the dummy. And no, I'm not talking about Donald Trump. I'm talking about another businessman who tried his hand at politics: Clive Palmer. Last week, the High Court made its ruling and rejected his bid to have WA's
border closure ruled invalid. And he was ordered to pay costs, which are estimated to be in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. Let's hope he pays them!

I think Clive is actually very lucky that this was the result. If he had been allowed into WA, he might have had a little bit of an unpleasant surprise to learn what people in WA actually think of him. There are few comments from my Facebook page that I can repeat in this place, but here are some of them. One said: 'Shame on him and the federal LNP government.'

Another said:

Well done Premier Mark McGowan for protecting Western AUSTRALIANS from assaults by Covid and the disrespectful Clive Palmer. Taking the best advice from Medical professionals is the way to go....

Alan said: 'And at the next elections we shall remember'—the Prime Minister's—'support for Palmer'. Vicky said: 'Thank you to the state lawyers and Mark McGowan,' and then asked, 'Is there a law that we can put in place to stop Clive Palmer ever entering WA?' Even though the border is coming down now and it's safe to travel between WA and other safe jurisdictions, it's very clear that Mr Palmer is not welcome in Western Australia.

So how did we get here? Let's go back to the very start of April when this COVID-19 pandemic really hit and Mark McGowan made a very tough but sensible decision to close Western Australia's border. It was the first time that this had happened since Federation, but the extraordinary circumstances called for extraordinary measures. And that response worked.

The health measures undertaken by the McGowan government in WA have been the envy of the world, and I think that my colleague here, the member for Fremantle, can attest to the fact that, in WA, we've been incredibly fortunate to be able to go about our business and our lives in a relatively normal fashion. We've been able to go to bars; we've been able to go to the theatre and to watch live sport, while much of the world, as we speak now, is returning to lockdown.

The Federal Court ruled in October that the hard border had been effective in preventing the spread of COVID-19 in WA. Of course, we had some natural advantages, like the fact that Perth is the world's most isolated city. I know that we always think of 'WA' as 'wait awhile', but I think, in this case, 'WA' stands for 'way ahead'! And we had some luck along the way, I'm sure, but it was decisions like the border closure that Mark McGowan took that have kept WA safe and strong.

But of course Clive Palmer wasn't okay with this. He wanted to be able to come to some meetings in Perth. So he decided to sue Western Australia and force open our border. Fortunately, last week, that lawsuit failed. And no thanks to our Prime Minister and Attorney-General Porter, both of whom supported Clive Palmer in his bid to have the WA border opened, as did Liza Harvey, the leader of the Liberal Party in Western Australia.

The people of WA, I have to say, were incredibly shocked and disappointed that this federal government joined the High Court action on the side of Clive Palmer. The fact that our Attorney-General is a Western Australian member added insult to injury. Now, it's true that, after a certain amount of public backlash, the Attorney-General withdrew. But he had the gall also to pretend that they hadn't supported Clive. There is a document filed in the High Court on 12 June by the Commonwealth that states: 'The Attorney-General interventes in support of the position of the plaintiff.' Who is the plaintiff in this case? None other than Clive Palmer. Clive Palmer had the support of the Prime Minister, he had the support of Liza
Harvey and he had the support of the Attorney-General when he tried to force open the WA border too early.

Like all Western Australians, I am grateful that the Mark McGowan government has kept us safe. I'm grateful that the Federal Court and the High Court have ruled: 'Clive Palmer, you're fired!'

Special Broadcasting Service

Mr ZIMMERMAN (North Sydney) (19:55): I rise to congratulate SBS on 40 years of outstanding broadcasting on television, a milestone it recently celebrated. It is a great privilege for me, alongside the member for Calwell, to be the convener of the Parliamentary Friends of SBS. Our group reflects the broad support SBS has across the parliament. I'm also proud to have SBS headquartered at Artarmon in my electorate. It was on 24 October 1980—appropriately, United Nations Day—that Australians were first able to tune into the new Channel 28. Since then, SBS has played a crucial role in our community in fostering social cohesion and understanding. It has engaged Australia's multicultural and Indigenous communities, while also helping all Australians better understand our nation's diversity.

Their wideranging and distinct programming has not only been a favourite of mine but a favourite of the millions of Australians who tune in to watch homegrown and internationally sourced productions and current affairs programs. Australians have become accustomed to tuning into SBS to watch favourites, such as the FIFA World Cup or international comedies and dramas such as Inspector Rex, DNA or The Killing. So many of us have enjoyed watching the occasional bleak, brooding and plot-twist-filled Scandinavian crime drama or dystopian dramas like my favourites The Handmaid's Tale, Years and Years and War of the Worlds—and never more so than during the last 12 months as we've battled the pandemic.

We have been exposed to the food of the world, made accessible even in our own kitchens, by SBS Food. We have even become experts on complex European politics through the Eurovision Song Contest—and who doesn't love Eurovision! This year we were very disappointed that Montaigne wasn't able to perform, because Eurovision was cancelled, but we look forward to her performing and becoming a finalist in 2021. We've also benefited from SBS's incredible World News Service, under presenters who have become icons—George Donikian, Lee Lin Chin, Anton Enus and Janice Petersen. Shows like Insight have brought some of the nation's most important issues into our homes. I congratulate Jenny Brockie, who just a few weeks ago retired as host of that program, on her leadership.

SBS has also played a significant role during the recent bushfires and the current COVID-19 pandemic in reaching audiences via television, radio and online services in more than 60 languages and providing vital information. I suspect that the partnership between government and the SBS will only grow in providing multilingual messaging in areas like health and natural disasters in the years ahead. During the current pandemic, they have more than demonstrated their capability to play such an important role.

National Indigenous Television, or NITV, which is owned by SBS, provides thought-provoking and inspirational content for all Australians and particularly for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. It has given new opportunities to Indigenous Australians in all aspects of television and screen production.
I also want to personally acknowledge the incredible role and support SBS has provided to the LGBTI community through its broadcasting, including of the Sydney Mardi Gras. I have no doubt that this has made a difference to the lives of many, particularly those who struggle with their sexuality, for whom SBS has become a home and a friend.

SBS Television was launched in 1980 by then Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser, who was a staunch believer in multiculturalism and was pivotal in ensuring the broadcaster's success in those early days. In fact, Mr Fraser was perhaps the first Prime Minister to enunciate the importance of multiculturalism, which has been one of our nation's greatest achievements. We have demonstrated that diversity is a strength not a weakness. Mr Fraser understood and valued SBS's point of difference. He understood that at the core of SBS's mission was to give Australia's ethnic communities a voice in an increasingly diverse and changing nation.

SBS has evolved in its reach, content and programming over the four decades since. It has come a long way from the line-up that was captured so well by Marg Downey as the SBS woman on *Fast Forward*. Who will forget those sketches! It's success in launching SBS On Demand has been particularly noticeable and important, and it has brought their reach to whole new audiences. Their online presence really has been groundbreaking.

I've had the pleasure of working with several leaders of SBS—the former managing director, Michael Ebeid; the current managing director, James Taylor; and the former chair, Dr Bulent Hass Dellal. Under the new chair, George Savvides, whom I met with via Zoom last week, I'm sure the same great and informative programming will continue.

On behalf of the entire community, congratulations to SBS on 40 years of brilliant, challenging and exciting television that has brought so much to so many. Happy birthday, SBS!

House adjourned at 20:00

NOTICES

Mr Fletcher to move—That so much of the standing orders be suspended as would prevent the private Members' business notice relating to the disallowance of the Australian Postal Corporation (Performance Standards) Amendment (2020 Measures No. 1) Regulations 2020, made under the Australian Postal Corporation Act 1989, and presented to the House on 10 June 2020, standing in the name of the Member for Chifley being called on immediately.

Mr Thistlethwaite to move—That this House:

(1) notes:

(a) that 1 December 2020 is National Water Safety Day where we highlight the importance of staying safe and acting responsibly around water;

(b) that from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020 some 248 people lost their lives to drowning across Australia;

(c) that Royal Lifesaving estimates in its annual drowning report that an additional 504 people experienced a non-fatal drowning incident;

(d) the drowning report indicates the total number of drowning deaths over the past year decreased by 8 per cent on the previous year;

(e) people aged 25 to 34 years accounted for 17 per cent of the total number of drowning deaths, the most of any age group; and
(f) despite still being the leading location for drowning, deaths in rivers and creeks decreased by 32 per cent, compared with the 10-year average;

(2) acknowledges:

(a) drowning and accidents in the water can be avoided if people act responsibly and follow the basic water safety rules:

(i) always swim between the red and yellow flags at the beach and obey the instructions of lifesavers;

(ii) alcohol and swimming or boating don't mix;

(iii) don't swim at unpatrolled beaches;

(iv) don't swim alone; and

(v) never take your eye off children around water; and

(b) that too many avoidable drownings occur when rock fishing and rock fishers should:

(i) stay alert to the weather conditions;

(ii) learn how to swim;

(iii) choose the safest possible location;

(iv) wear the right gear;

(v) never fish alone; and

(vi) always wear a lifejacket; and

(3) encourages:

(a) all Australians to learn how to swim from a qualified instructor before they enter the water on their own; and

(b) people who use our waterways regularly to take the opportunity to learn rescue techniques and resuscitation from organisations like Surf Life Saving Australia by joining your local surf club.

Mr Leeser to move—That this House:

(1) notes the:

(a) substantial investment the Government has made since 2013 in funding urban infrastructure projects to reduce congestion and improve quality of life for people living in urban areas; and

(b) significant role the Government has played in partnering with state governments and private enterprise to ensure these essential projects are carried forward;

(2) acknowledges the positive impact these projects have had on the Australian economy through boosting productivity and creating jobs;

(3) commends the Government for its ongoing commitment to reducing traffic congestion and improving road safety through a record $110 billion transport infrastructure program, boosting the economy, creating jobs and getting Australians home sooner and safer; and

(4) congratulates the Government on the recent completion of numerous major infrastructure projects, including NorthConnex, which is enabling drivers to travel between Newcastle and Melbourne without stopping at a single traffic light, boosting productivity as well as improving traffic flow and pedestrian safety on Pennant Hills Road.

Ms T. M. Butler to move—That this House:

(1) notes that:

(a) the koala is an iconic Australian species;
(b) the Queensland, New South Wales and Australian Capital Territory koala populations have been listed as vulnerable under national environment law;

(c) vast numbers of koalas were killed in last summer's national bushfire crisis, including an estimated third of the New South Wales population;

(d) in the wake of the fires the koala is being considered for up-listing (an increased threatened listing status);

(e) habitat loss is among the most significant threats to koalas;

(f) the Government is years overdue in making a Threatened Species Recovery Plan for the koala, which was initially due by 2015; and

(g) the National Koala Conservation Strategy ran until 2014 and has yet to be replaced by this Government; and

(2) therefore calls on the Government to prevent further habitat loss through yet-to-commence development in areas in which the koala is listed as vulnerable, pending the completion of the formal assessment for up listing, the making of a Threatened Species Recovery Plan, and the making of a new National Koala Conservation Strategy.
Monday, 9 November 2020

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Rob Mitchell) took the chair at 10:00.

STATEMENTS

Remote Contributions in the Federation Chamber

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Rob Mitchell) (10:00): Members will be aware that part of the Agreement for Members to Contribute Remotely to Parliamentary Proceedings that was presented to the House on 6 October allowed for the official parliamentary video facility to be made available in the Federation Chamber at the discretion of the Speaker. I can inform members that the Speaker has agreed, beginning today, to extend participation via video link for some aspects of the business of the Federation Chamber. These are contributions to 90-second statements, private members' business, three-minute constituency statements and the adjournment debate on Thursdays.

These are speaking opportunities only, not opportunities to move or second a motion or an amendment, or to count for quorum purposes, for example. All of the relevant provisions of the agreement for members apply to members who participate in Federation Chamber meetings via video link, including the need to provide 15 minutes' notice to the Chair.

I remind members that, as the Speaker has stated previously, House standing orders and practices apply to participation via video link. This extends to the degree of formality required as if the member were present in the chamber or Federation Chamber, and to regard for the authority of the chair. I also ask members participating remotely to follow the technical advice which has been provided to them to ensure they have the best possible video connection for their contributions to proceedings.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

COVID-19: Victoria

Mr BURNS (Macnamara) (10:32): It is really good to be here delivering these remarks in person. I would start by thanking the parliamentary staff, who have really worked so hard to enable the contributions of members from around the country, especially in my home state of Victoria, but not exclusively Victoria, because there are various reasons why members couldn't participate and attend parliament in person. It wasn't like being here, but it was a whole lot better than missing out. I want to put on the record my sincere thanks to all the staff who have made this possible.

I also want to say a big thank you today to the people in my electorate and right across our great state of Victoria who have endured six months I haven't experienced in my life time—six months of some of the most isolating and difficult days that our state will hopefully ever have to see, where friends and family were separated, where businesses were forced to make sacrifices and where people were asked to stay at home and to wear masks, to do the right thing and to make sacrifices in order to save lives. It is surreal that I am standing in this great chamber, but it is also so wonderful that today marks 10 days since we have had a new coronavirus case in the great state of Victoria, something that would have been hard to imagine in early August when we were hitting over 700 cases. The top we hit was 725 cases in a single day; yet today we mark 10 days without a case.
To get to this place has been really difficult. People have made huge sacrifices personally and financially, and over 800 Victorians have lost their lives, many of whom were in aged-care homes and many of whom said goodbye to this world without their loved ones around them. That is something that will leave a mark on their families for rest of their lives and is immeasurably difficult. But today we have a sense of optimism, with only four active cases. We hope that those four Victorians are able to return to good health as soon as possible and that we are all in a state now to be able to begin the long road of economic recovery. Just as we have done throughout these last few months, we say to Victorians that we have been there with you and we have gotten through this together. It has been a remarkable achievement. Despite some loud voices trying to undermine the health advice, Victorians have risen above them, they've stood together and have achieved something that the rest of the world has not been able to do, which is to defeat the second wave of the coronavirus, and I couldn't be prouder of the great state of Victoria.

**Remembrance Day**

Mr ALEXANDER (Bennelong) (10:35): On 11 November, 102 years ago, the guns fell silent across the Western Front of World War I. At 5.45 am, representatives of the allied powers in Germany signed an armistice that entered into effect at 11 am of that same day. The conflict, which had taken six million lives, was finally over.

The trauma of the world's first truly international and industrial war is hard to overstate. The entirety of northern France, Belgium and millions of lives were torn apart by hundreds of millions of munitions. To this day, bits of bombs and mines are discovered every year in those fields.

Australia, despite its relatively small size, sent a contingent of 416,000 men to the British war effort. Of that group, 62,000 were killed and 156,000 were wounded, gassed or taken prisoner.

The end of the war on 11 November in 1918 did not end the trauma of war. It lingered on in the experience of many men who returned home, physically and mentally scarred. In 1914, Ryde had 3,500 homes. From those homes, 2,000 people volunteered—nearly two-thirds of homes sent a son, brother or father: think about that for a second. The effects this war had on our communities are unimaginable even in today's strange world of the pandemic.

It should not be overlooked that the vast majority of Australians who served were very young. The average age of volunteers was only 24. Horrifyingly, a very large percentage of Australians were only 18 or 19 years of age. These bright and strong young men went off to war, many not to return.

While the war ended on 11 November, it was followed soon after by the Spanish flu pandemic, which devastated the world in ways we can now understand. We must also remember that the signing of the Armistice did not end the war. Struggles and suffering continued across the former battlegrounds, including in Armenia, reeling from their recent genocide, and of course the war to end all wars was followed by the Second World War within two decades.

Every Remembrance Day we gather as a community and reflect on the sacrifices made by thousands of those brave men and women in the First World War and in subsequent conflicts. It was an Australian journalist, Edward Honey, who first proposed holding a two-minute
silence in 1919. The idea was adopted by King George V who personally requested all people of the British Empire to stop for two minutes on the hour of the Armistice to pay respects to the war dead. We have observed that silence every year since, and rightly so. Although there are no longer any living veterans of the war left, we must not forget the horror of war and the price at which victory was purchased so many years ago.

**Barton Electorate**  
**Jack and Jill Preschool: 70th Anniversary**

**Ms BURNEY** (Barton) (10:38): Today I would like to give a big-shout out to all my constituents in Barton. We all know that 2020 has been a tough year for all. As we move into the festive season next month, I would like to wish all of Barton all the very best for next year. I’d like to acknowledge all the frontline workers who have kept us safe through the pandemic and all the doctors, nurses, hospital staff, cleaners and health workers. I also want to acknowledge the work of many volunteer groups in Barton for their tireless work to support our community through this pandemic.

I had the pleasure of visiting Jack and Jill Preschool in Bexley a few weeks ago. The preschool were celebrating their 70th anniversary. I was joined on the day by my colleague Chris Minns, the state member for Kogarah; Liz Barlow, Bayside Council councillor; and Kurranulla Aboriginal Corporation chairperson, Deanna Schreiber.

Despite the challenges of social distancing and no attendance of parents, the preschool put on a wonderful morning tea. The morning included a smoking ceremony and a welcome to country—a really great experience for the children. To Maureen and other committee members: congratulations on a wonderful morning. To all the teachers and staff: congratulations on the wonderful job you do there for the children. Thank you for the extraordinary morning, and well done on reaching the 70th anniversary, with hopefully many more to come.

I also rise today to offer my best wishes to all the year 12 students in Barton who are commencing their HSC written examinations. This has been a tough year for all of us, but no more so than for our students from kindergarten to year 12. HSC students, you have spent 13 years preparing for these exams. They're important, but they're not everything. There are great futures ahead for you, be they in TAFE, university or other avenues you would like to pursue. I finish by saying to the year 12 students: make sure you enjoy this last experience of school life, and remember that, when you finish your final exam, it will be the start of your next adventure. They say that when one door closes another door opens, and that's true for life in general. To everyone at Jack and Jill Preschool; to the wonderful health workers, carers and volunteer workers in Barton; and particularly to the HSC students, I wish you well into the future, and thank you.

**COVID-19: Travel Agents**

**Mr LEESER** (Berowra) (10:41): Travel agents have been hit particularly hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. International border closures have prevented travel agents from recovering in the same way as other businesses. In July, I attended a breakfast forum in my electorate with travel agents, hosted by Darren Rudd, the CEO of the Australian Federation of Travel Agents, to discuss the unique challenges travel agents face. There are over 3,000 travel agent businesses across Australia, contributing over $28 billion to the Australian economy.
annually. The industry employs around 40,000 Australians, predominantly women. This is an industry that has enabled Australians to have great international and domestic travel experiences.

I think about some of the travel agents in my electorate who have shared their stories with me: Stephanie Savage from the Impulse Travel Group, a powerful advocate and a wonderful entrepreneur who has operated her multisite business for decades; Monique Monsees and Elizabeth Ellis at Cherrybrook Travel, who recently won the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Local Business Award; Chris and Sandy of Travel Africa Your Way, who know Africa better than anyone; Lynn Bradley from Compass Travel & Cruising, who runs a 35-year-old business; Graham and Kent Ross from Ross Garden Tours, the most celebrated gardening tourism business in Australia; Lori and Derek Kirk from Hornsby Travel and Cruise, whose business operates from the Hornsby Mall; Paul Lechner of Addicted to Maldives, a specialist agent for one of the most beautiful places in the world; and Louise McCarthy, Michelle Desmarchelier and Penny Toon, travel managers who organise travel for busy corporates and families.

Travel agents face particular difficulties because of the commission structures under which they operate. The commission structures have made travel agents particularly vulnerable to the pandemic's impact. While travel agents experienced dramatic falls in revenue, they also had to refund commissions received from the previous year of operating. Despite seven consecutive months of almost no income, travel agents have been key to facilitating refunds for Australians who haven't been able to travel. The repatriation of approximately $10 billion is an ongoing process, with an estimated $4 billion in refunds still outstanding. It is a complicated process which has no doubt been difficult for every travel agent. I want to acknowledge the fortitude travel agents have shown in undertaking this task, despite having no certainty about the future.

While JobKeeper has helped get the travel industry through the pandemic, many travel agents have missed out on government support available to other businesses. Most do not benefit from the most recent loss carry-back measure announced in the budget. Many travel agents are not corporate tax entities, which is a requirement to qualify for the loss carry-back measure. Most travel agents are set up as family trusts, unit trusts, partnerships or sole traders. In fact, AFTA has over 1,300 sole traders operating a travel agency business, none of whom qualify. The unique characteristics of the industry warrant industry-specific support from government. I commend the efforts of the Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment, who is actively considering further support for the industry. I raise these issues on behalf of my constituents and add my voice to the colleagues who have also raised these issues publicly.

**NAIDOC Week**

**Mr Snowdon (Lingiari) (10:44):** Today we celebrate the commencement of NAIDOC Week, the theme of which is 'Always Was, Always Will Be'. I know that communities and organisations around my electorate will be actively involved in the celebrations. This gives us an opportunity to reaffirm our support for the Uluru Statement from the Heart, our commitment to a constitutionally recognised voice to the parliament, our commitment to working towards a treaty and our commitment to truth-telling. We have an obligation to at last deal with the truth of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people being the original owners of this land; their subsequent dispossession and alienation; the historical racism that they have suffered and endured at the hands of authority and government for now over 230 years; and
the denial of their rights as the original inhabitants of this land. We must confront these truths. We have an obligation and an opportunity to reset the agenda, to rebalance the ledger, to work with First Nations people, to listen to First Nations people, to deal with the truth of the past and to provide First Australians with constitutional recognition through a voice to the parliament.

Mr Deputy Speaker, lest you think I'm a recent convert to these matters, on 17 September 1987 I stood in the Old Parliament House and gave my first speech, during which I said, among other things:

As a nation we have yet to recognise and accord Aboriginal people the justice that is their due.

... ... ... It is time that, as a nation, we examined the history of our colonisation of this land and came to terms with the Aboriginal view.

... ... ... The myths that have built up around the settlement of this country must be exposed.

... ... ... No longer do we, the colonisers, rely on guns and poison. The contemporary tools of colonisation are legislation and statutes ... To the best of my knowledge we remain the only former British colony not to have recognised the rights of the indigenous people either by treaty or through the Constitution.

... ... ... This nation cannot pretend to wear the mantle of maturity until the indigenous rights of Aboriginal Australians are given formal recognition and the demands by Aboriginal and Islander people for compensation for lands stolen and for social and cultural disruption are addressed. In my view, this should involve appropriate amendments to the Constitution.

At the conclusion of the speech, I quoted eminent Australian author Xavier Herbert. In addressing the issues of Aboriginal land rights—and we could use Aboriginal land rights or constitutional recognition—he said:

Until we give back to the black man just a bit of the land that was his, without strings to snatch it back, without anything but complete generosity of spirit in concession for the evil we have done him—until we do that, we will remain what we have always been so far, a people without integrity; not a nation by a community of thieves.

**Higgins Medal**

**Dr ALLEN (Higgins) (10:47):** One of the most highly anticipated events in the year for students in my electorate of Higgins is the Higgins Medal award presentation. The Higgins Medal acknowledges and recognises the efforts of students who excel in their studies or extracurricular activities and those students who show strong leadership qualities amongst their peers. This year, because of COVID, we had to conduct it via Zoom. I was very pleased to award an impressive 50 students, from 28 schools, with their medal. These students and their families heard from guest speakers Sally Capp, who has recently been voted in again as Lord Mayor of Melbourne, and Angela Gao, who is a previous recipient of the Higgins Medal, from Lauriston Girls' School. Thank you to both Sally and Angela for their wonderful speeches. I know the 2020 Higgins Medal recipients were inspired by both of them.

I would like to take this opportunity to read out the names of the recipients: Isabel Larner and Max Stewart of Armadale Primary School; Lucas Regos of Camberwell South Primary
School; Lola Karavesov and Peter Cornelius of Caulfield Grammar School's Malvern campus; Cian O'Flynn and Harry McGindle of De La Salle College; Arnaud Ong and Sharannya Chakravorty of Glen Huntly Primary School; Hannah Waddell and Oliver Holbeach of Glen Iris Primary School; Eva Hunter from Hughesdale Primary School; Sienna Smith and Olivia de Rozario of Korowa Anglican Girls' School; Amalie Newbound of Lauriston Girls' School; Sophie Murchie and Oliver Abela from Malvern Central School; Sam Purnell and Chloe Groom from Malvern Primary School; Chantelle Amis and Laura Gosbell from Malvern Valley Primary School; Daisy Graham and Katharine Ye from Melbourne Girls Grammar; Lakshithaa Ravindran and Maleesha Dharmadasa from Murrumbeena Primary School; Connie Lekkas and Alexander Logan from Oakleigh Grammar; Lauren Connors and Amy Ryan from Sacre Coeur; Ashlee Quinn and Mia Basile from Sacred Heart Girls' College; Maya Rached and Molly Phillips from Solway Primary School; Diya Asthana and Sarah Marriott from St Catherine's School; Sophie Ronchi and Grace Wilmot from St Cecilia's Catholic Primary School; Alessandra Lane and Ashton Dcouto from St Joseph's Primary School; Ryan Cornelius from St Kevin's College; Joshua Hegan from St Mary's Primary School; Kiara Entera and Olivia Devasagayam of St Michael's Parish School; Kayley Campbell and Jack Conway from St Patrick's Primary School; Luella Cain and James Moylan from St Roch's Parish Primary School; Callum Schultz from the Currajong School; and, finally, Gia Dredge and Ziad Elzabri from Toorak Primary School. Well done again to all of you. You've made your schools and families proud. Given the unprecedented nature of 2020, receiving this medal this year is truly a fantastic achievement.

NAIDOC Week

Ms BIRD (Cunningham) (10:50): I want to start my contribution today by acknowledging the First Nations people of this country and, in particular, the original owners and custodians of the land on which this parliament meets and the original owners and ongoing custodians of the land that encompasses my electorate, around Wollongong. They are owed our acknowledgement and respect, in particular because this is NAIDOC Week. In my electorate, there are many, many people and organisations taking the opportunity to acknowledge and pay respect to our First Nations people. Of course, NAIDOC Week is normally earlier in the year but, due to the COVID pandemic, we have seen it moved to this week.

I personally and on behalf of many of my local constituents want to acknowledge the extraordinary value of the current leaders of the Indigenous community in our area. We see their amazing welcome to country at so many events that we attend, where I always learn something new about the Dreamtime stories of my own local area and the ongoing custodianship and connection to land that the Aboriginal people from our area feel. There is always a generous and heartfelt welcome extended. Given that the history has been so fraught and so negative for our First Nations people, that generosity and willingness to share their expertise and their knowledge with the rest of us is an invaluable asset in all of our communities and should be acknowledged.

I spoke in this House earlier in the year after the bushfires that we experienced over the last summer. Many of us recognise—and I am glad that this has been across the board—that, if we listen more closely to Indigenous Australians about the management of land, we could learn an awful lot about better managing the fire risk in this nation. I am pleased that that view is
now much more mainstream and people are really starting to engage with First Nations people.

I want to finish by saying that, as part of this, I believe that we do need to pay respect to the Uluru Statement from the Heart, we do need to support a constitutionally recognised voice to parliament, we do need a treaty and we do need truth-telling. I think we would all be stronger for taking that next step, called for by our First Nations people, coming together and giving honest feedback to the nation about how they see the way forward. I reaffirm my own commitment to the Uluru Statement from the Heart. Happy NAIDOC Week everyone.

**Playgroup Tasmania**

**Mrs ARCHER** (Bass) (10:53): When we think of our local playgroup, many of us would think of community halls filled with young children and their parents, playing and connecting. Playgroup has a long and credible history as one of Australia's largest civil society movements, ensuring young children and their parents can have access to quality playgroups across the nation. Playgroup Tasmania has been operating for more than 40 years, dedicated to supporting the health and wellbeing of families and the community. Children and young peoples' wellbeing is heavily shaped by their relationships with their family and the wider community. It is well recognised that the first 1,000 days of a child's life are critical and that a child's early experiences and interactions with their primary carers are vital to their later life outcomes.

The Playgroup model is a flexible approach to supporting families and the community throughout this journey. In Tasmania, they support a network of over 55 playgroups, including PlayConnect. This is an early intervention program of facilitated supported sessions that offer a soft entry for families with a child with autism-like characteristics to be connected with wider support and relevant information. There is also the PlayTogether program, funded through the federal government's ILC grants, which enables more inclusive access for children and families with additional needs.

In my electorate of Bass is the organisation's headquarters, located in Invermay, in an area where 2018 AEDC data indicated that 11½ per cent of children are vulnerable in two or more domains and over 19 per cent are at risk in the emotional and communication domains. Each week around 50 families with young children are accessing volunteer led and supported programs. I can attest to just how wonderful the playgroup is and would like to pay credit to current CEO Jacinda Armstrong, who has done an incredible job in leading Playgroup Tasmania over the past few years, working so hard to grow the organisation and ensuring they continue to meet the needs of local communities.

As with almost every community organisation across the country, Playgroup Tasmania had to close its doors in March, leading to Playgroup at Home, a closed Facebook group providing families with a safe space to share ideas and activities, ask questions and support each other. Just like at real playgroup, they had guest speakers, music and stories, and craft ideas. As Jacinda said, it has never been more important than right now for children and families to play and learn together in their community. In complex times it's simple things like play that really help our children. The priority focus for them now is to provide support for families with perinatal mental health challenges. I look forward to working with Jacinda and Playgroup Tasmania to assist where I can on this important issue.
COVID-19: Education

Dr ALY (Cowan) (10:56): I think I will spend some time today on congratulating all the schools and all the school students out there who have made it through—or almost—a particularly challenging year this year. Let's face it: we're all pretty happy to see the end of 2020. Certainly for our schools in Western Australia it hasn't been as challenging as it has been for some of the schools in the eastern states. Largely due to the McGowan government's tough stance on the border and following the health advice, we've been very fortunate in Western Australia that the impact of COVID-19 on our schools, with schools closing down and disruption to education, hasn't been as acute or as acutely felt as it has in other parts of Australia.

Last week, I was honoured to visit Emmanuel Christian Community School and take along with me the US consul general for Western Australia, Mr David Gainer, to provide a very timely insight into the differences between the Australian voting system and the US voting system. We spent around an hour with the year 11 politics and history class, as well as some ring-ins from some of the other classes, and the students were highly engaged in the conversation that we had with Mr Gainer. I thank him for taking the time to come out and visit Emmanuel Christian Community School with me last week. I also met with the year 9s at Ashdale Secondary College last week, and, again, it was an incredibly engaged, thoughtful and intelligent conversation that was had with the students there.

Over the year, despite the challenges that COVID-19 has presented, I've been very fortunate to be able to visit many of my senior secondary colleges. I got to MC the Mercy College school ball earlier in the year; that was fun. I also visited Kingsway Christian, St Stephen's and a couple of schools outside of my electorate—Sacred Heart and St Mary's. During the lockdown we managed to Zoom in with some of the primary school kids to ensure that, even though I was unable to visit them and they were unable to visit Canberra, we could still have those conversations about our democratic process and what it's like to be a member of parliament, hopefully inspiring the next generation of political leaders as well.

Lately, though, those visits have been rather bittersweet, because, while I have been encouraging these young people to pursue their dreams, I know that, due to the changes that this government has introduced to higher education, many of them will not be able to do that.

Good luck to all the year 12s finishing their exams, and goodbye to 2020!

Lawrence, New South Wales

Mr HOGAN (Page—Assistant Minister to the Deputy Prime Minister) (10:59): I'd like to recognise the historical significance of the town of Lawrence in my community. The first record of Lawrence being recognised as an official town was in 1858. Prior to this the area of Lawrence fell within the 15,000 acres of farmland called Larnook Lodge. Gold diggers and farmers would use the stop as the quickest way to get on land from the Clarence. With these travellers came an inn, which later became the very famous Lawrence hotel. The area was also being used as a major port further inland on the Clarence.

With the influx of people arriving by boat the area soon became home to many farming families and soon the Lawrence township formed. The Ensbeys arrived from Cambridgeshire. William, his wife and two sons began farming in the area around Lawrence and Southgate. The family have farmed the famous Clarence sugar cane for generations. Dianne, Rob, Mark
and Kelly are still farming the properties around Lawrence today. The Ensbey family has spread throughout the region.

The family of James and Elizabeth Boyle migrated from Kinross, Scotland in 1849. James and Mary took up property on King Creek, farmed sugar cane and set up a sugar mill: the Kinross mill. The Boyles had 11 children. One of them, James, was a boat builder and ran the business on the six acre block on which the 2NR broadcast station was built. He was also the undertaker. Their descendants married into the Want family, another local family. The Reeves family have also farmed the area since before Federation and still live in the area today. Roger was a member of the Maclean shire council. He still lives in Lawrence today. I'd also like to express my condolences to the family after the recent passing of Robert.

The school was founded in 1868. Generations of family went through the school: the Cottons, Ensbeys, Glovers, McPhersons, Reeves, Sheilds and Waylands just to name a few. The Lawrence ferry was built in the 1880s to help residents and businesses move across the Clarence. Many locals will know the Wright family, who were involved with some of the most essential aspects of Lawrence life during the early 20th century. Elijah had a saddlery business in the late 1880s. Lyle worked in the general store before serving in World War I. Lyle and his wife, Maggie, planted many of the trees still standing in Lawrence today. Keith Wright was a dairy farmer in more recent times. The Bancroft and Eggins families are also very well-known family farmers in the area. The Archer family have an interesting history. Three brothers—Allan, Blue and Moot—ran the Archer's butchery until 1979. I also encourage everyone to visit the Lawrence Historical Society. It has one of the best displays I've seen in our region acknowledging the history of our past.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Rob Mitchell): In accordance with standing order 193, the time for members' constituency statements has concluded.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Electronic Cigarettes and Personal Vaporisers

Dr FREELANDER (Macarthur) (11:02): I move:

That this House:

(1) acknowledges that the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport held an extensive inquiry into the use and marketing of electronic cigarettes and personal vaporisers in Australia, throughout the 45th Parliament;

(2) notes that the inquiry did not find, nor recommend, that e-cigarettes and personal vaporisers be considered to be 'health products', nor that they reduced harm to users;

(3) further notes that e-cigarettes and personal vaporisers:

(a) are not universally considered to be an effective tool in helping smokers to quit smoking or reduce consumption of nicotine products;

(b) may be considered to be a 'gateway' into the consumption of nicotine, tobacco and nicotine products; and

(c) involve the use of flagrant advertising and enticing flavours, which allure consumers to consume their substance;

(4) notes that the Senate is considering holding another superfluous inquiry into the use of such products, despite the House having held an extensive inquiry in the previous parliament;
(5) condemns any attempt from vested interests to promote the use of e-cigarettes and personal vaporisers within this parliament; and

(6) concurs with the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport in its findings, namely that independent experts at the Department of Health, the National Health and Medical Research Council and the Therapeutic Goods Administration are well-placed to review the use and regulation of electronic cigarettes and personal vaporisers.

There is a rotten smell in this building and it smells like big tobacco. I don't stand here to lecture or to judge or to demonise people who are trying to give up smoking. I want to make that clear because there will inevitably be attempts by some to paint my comments in that light. I stand here to raise serious and valid concerns about the influence of big tobacco on our democracy. Big tobacco, like many of the diseases it causes, is a malignant force.

I was part of the Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport in the 45th parliament, which held an extensive and fair inquiry into the use and marketing of electronic cigarettes and personal vaporisers in Australia. The inquiry received over 350 submissions, many of them extensive. We held multiple public hearings and sought the expertise of a range of stakeholders and experts in their respective fields. I want to make it clear that that entire process would not have been possible without the dedicated team of the committee secretariat. I want to thank them for their diligence and hard work throughout that yearlong inquiry.

Our inquiry made a number of recommendations and acknowledged that independent experts at the Department of Health, the National Health and Medical Research Council and the Therapeutic Goods Administration were well-placed to review the use and regulation of electronic cigarettes and personal vaporisers and had previously made their views clear about their role in Australia.

We received information and submissions from virtually every health organisation in Australia, from the AMA to the College of Physicians, to Asthma Australia, to respiratory medicine Australia and to multiple other medical jurisdictions—all of which were quite clear in their view that electronic cigarettes and personal vaporisers should not be made available over the counter to all and sundry.

Now, unfortunately, we came up with a number of recommendations that were not considered appropriate by the tobacco industry. Among the inquiry's suggestions was the following: the TGA continues to oversee the classification of nicotine and relevant exemptions for nicotine products and the assessment of any electronic cigarette product as therapeutic goods. We also suggested the Australian government establish a regulatory process for assessing and restricting colourings and flavourings used in electronic cigarettes. The TGA subsequently undertook an inquiry into the availability of electronic cigarettes and nicotine products. They came out with a number of findings, which recommended there be absolutely no change to the availability of these products, that they not be available over the counter, and they were quite critical of the fact that these products were obviously targeted to young people with things like bubble gum flavourings, peaches and cream etcetera. They are clearly targeted at young people.

Subsequent to that TGA inquiry, Philip Morris—big tobacco—has come out with a 10-page criticism of the TGA fine. The TGA is a nationally and, indeed, internationally recognised authority, and yet big tobacco wasn't happy with what they found. Big tobacco has put pressure onto the Australian Senate, and the Senate has now recommended yet another
inquiry, at the behest of big tobacco. This is shocking. This is big tobacco influencing our parliament to make addictive products available for our children. This is a disgrace. This is an absolute disgrace. You'll just have to forgive my cynicism, but this new undertaking has been made at the request of big tobacco. It's come forward rapidly. It really is unbelievable, to me, that our parliament would give in to big tobacco like this, and I would caution our Senate about having this inquiry and, indeed, about giving in to big tobacco. Thank you.

Dr WEBSTER (Mallee) (11:07): I second the motion and rise to express my support for the Commonwealth government's cautious approach to the regulation of e-cigarette products. I also acknowledge the contentious nature of this issue and that there are many people in Australia, and in my electorate of Mallee, who have come to rely on e-cigarettes as an alternative to cigarettes and tobacco. Having heard testimonials from a number of people in my electorate, I know that some have used these products successfully to reduce their consumption of tobacco, leading to improvements in their quality of life.

I co-signed a letter, with several other MPs and senators, addressed to the Minister for Health, calling for a delay in changes to customs regulations that would end the importation of vaping liquids for use in e-cigarettes. In doing so, I expressed my concern that these changes were rushed, did not appropriately consider community sentiment and did not allow adequate time for doctors and suppliers to move to a new regulatory framework to continue the distribution of these e-cigarette products. However, these concerns do not change the fact that the jury is still out on e-cigarettes. That is to say that, at this point in time, evidence related to the safety and health benefits of e-cigarettes is inconclusive.

E-cigarettes are still relatively new products, meaning there is not enough meaningful data and information available to inform their long-term health effects. This position is replicated by several leading organisations around the world, including the World Health Organization, the Cancer Council of Australia, the Alcohol and Drug Foundation of Australia, and the US Food and Drug Administration agency. Studies are also increasingly showing that e-cigarettes can emit harmful substances. The National Health and Medical Research Council advises that e-cigarettes may expose users to chemicals and toxins such as formaldehyde, heavy metals, particulate matter and flavouring chemicals at levels that have the potential to cause adverse health effects. Manufacturer quality can also not be guaranteed, meaning associated risks are greater still. In 2019, the Victorian Poisons Information Centre reported 41 cases of liquid nicotine poisonings, up from 21 cases in 2018. Also in 2018, a Victorian toddler died from e-cigarette liquid nicotine consumption.

Furthermore, beyond anecdotal evidence and personal testimonies, the evidence for e-cigarettes as cessation aids to help people quit smoking is also inconclusive. For this reason, the Therapeutic Goods Administration is yet to approve any e-cigarette products as a tool to quit. This therefore means that it is illegal to supply these products if they can claim to assist people to quit smoking. There are many smoking cessation therapy products that are lawfully available for commercial sale in Australia that have all been evaluated by the Therapeutic Goods Administration for quality, safety and efficacy, and e-cigarettes are not one of them. One piece of research also points to a potential rise in smoking rates by renormalising smoking, reducing a smoker's motivation to quit or encouraging nonsmokers, including young people, to take up smoking. Evidence suggests that the use of e-cigarettes by non-smoking youths predicts future take-up of smoking. In the USA there was a 78 per cent increase in the
number of high-school children who are vaping over the most recent 12-month period surveyed.

There are also known risks associated with nicotine exposure on brain development, meaning pregnant women and adolescents should avoid nicotine-containing products. More concerning still is that e-cigarette products are appealing to children and adolescents due to the enticing flavours available. This is perhaps my greatest concern when it comes to e-cigarettes, that without controlling these products we will see increasing rates of smoking, especially in young people. That's why I'm glad that the Australian government is committed to reducing the prevalence of smoking and its associated health, social and economic costs. Evidence shows that smoking rates in Australia are now among the lowest in the world. It shows that 11 per cent of Australians aged 14 years and over reported smoking daily in 2019, down from 21 per cent in 1991. These results show that the broad range of tobacco control measures of successive Australian governments are working without the need for products such as e-cigarettes that pose further risks. I hope to see a continued reduction in Australia's smoking rates to meet the government's target of reducing rates to below 10 per cent by 2025.

Ms McBRIDE (Dobell) (11:12): I rise to speak on this motion moved by the member for Macarthur, and in doing so recognise his life's work as a paediatrician and his strong voice in this place for better health for all Australians, especially children and young people. Dr Mike isn't afraid of saying what's right, even when it's not popular, and often in the face of loud voices.

As the only pharmacist in this place and someone trained in nicotine addiction and smoking cessation, I thought it was important to bring the debate about e-cigarettes back to where it should be and to examine some of the key facts. First, no brand of e-cigarette has been approved by the TGA for assisting people to quit smoking. Systematic evidence and quality trials have found no conclusive evidence that e-cigarettes are an effective quit aid or that they are more effective than approved, established methods for quitting smoking. According to NHMRC reports, e-cigarette use in nonsmokers is associated with future uptake of tobacco cigarette smoking, countering claims that e-cigarette use is mainly by long-term smokers to help them quit. The market for e-cigarettes is clearly young people and the tobacco industry's profit drivers to addict a new generation. Current use of e-cigarettes among Australian teenagers aged 14 to 17 is 17.5 per cent, second only to 18- to 24-year-olds, with the highest usage rate of 18.7 per cent. As leading respiratory physician Professor Matthew Peters points out, 'documentary evidence suggests kids who use vaping are three to four times more likely to go from e-cigarettes to smoking'. Vaping is what the Public Health Association of Australia has called a Trojan Horse to effectively market tobacco products. Australia has an outstanding record of protecting young people from the harms of tobacco and nicotine, which we must protect.

Second, Australia has one of the lowest smoking rates in the world, despite what the lobbyists might tell you. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare data published in July shows daily smoking rates to be at an all-time low of 11 per cent. This has been hard fought in the face of strong opposition from big tobacco and vested interests, and I acknowledge former federal health minister Nicola Roxon's work implementing plain packaging in 2012—Australia, leading the world in preventative health policy to control tobacco. In 2017, when presented with the Bob Elphick medal, Nicola Roxon said:
We all know that tobacco is such a scourge on our community that constant and refreshed effort is needed to limit the harm caused to Australians.

I couldn't agree more, which is why we must call out false claims by lobbyists that reductions in smoking prevalence have stalled or slowed as a means of aggressively promoting e-cigarettes as a quit method. As Associate Professor Renee Bittoun from the Woolcock Institute, who established one of the first smoking cessation clinics in Australia, said, 'Australia has one of the lowest rates of smoking in the world. We manage smokers well. There is no need to introduce a new nicotine product into the country.'

Now, let's debunk a myth: the claim that e-cigarettes are safe or less harmful than smoked cigarettes. There is no scientific basis for this claim. The health impacts from exposure to foreign substances—for instance, asbestos—can take decades to appear, and there is growing evidence to suggest that long-term inhalation of e-cigarette liquids or vapours is likely to pose health risks. Worldwide, millions of young people, who on previous trends were otherwise at no risk of harm from smoking or e-cigarettes, are using e-cigarettes, and many are now smoking because of e-cigarettes.

What goes into e-cigarettes? We don't know. Labelling of e-cigarettes and e-liquids has been found to be incomplete or inaccurate. Products have been found to contain chemicals that were not listed on the label, or the label has stated incorrectly that they didn't contain potentially toxic chemicals despite analysis confirming their presence. There might also be wide variations between the levels of nicotine stated on packaging and the amount contained in e-liquid. One study comparing identical models of e-cigarettes found nicotine content varied by up to 12 per cent within batches and up to 20 per cent between batches. What we do know is that e-cigarette liquids or vapours might also contain potentially harmful chemicals that are not present in smoke from tobacco cigarettes, that e-cigarettes might expose users to metals such as aluminium, arsenic, chromium, copper, lead, nickel and tin, that the rise in popularity of e-cigarette use has corresponded with an increasing number of reported nicotine poisonings due to exposure to or ingestion of e-liquids, and that e-cigarette use exposes both users and bystanders to particulate matter that might worsen existing illness or increase the risk of developing cardiovascular or respiratory disease.

I'm going to finish with the words of a leading expert, Professor Matthew Peters. He says:

The long-term effects of vaping are still unknown. However, short-term effects include onset of pneumonia and other lung diseases. Australia has done fantastically well to reduce smoking rates. Current rates for people in the 14-to-17 age bracket are between three and four per cent. These figures are the envy of the world, and there is a desperate need to avoid introducing a product that risks increasing rates.

We must protect young people from this scourge of nicotine.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Rob Mitchell): The time allotted for this debate has expired. The debate is adjourned, and the resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

Manufacturing

Mrs McIntosh (Lindsay) (11:17): I move:

That this House:
acknowledges the role that Australian manufacturing businesses continue to play in ensuring our nation has vital supplies, including food and personal protective equipment, especially during the pandemic when global supply chains were disrupted;

(2) recognises that a vibrant manufacturing sector is important for our economic security; and

(3) congratulates Australian manufacturing businesses on their ongoing efforts to adapt to the current circumstances, keep people in jobs, support local supply chains and contribute to our national economic recovery.

To back Australian manufacturing, we must leverage the strengths that give our industries a competitive advantage. The new era of Australian manufacturing will focus on Australia's strength, where we compete on quality and value not just price. The Morrison government's $1.5 billion modern manufacturing strategy will evolve with industry to maximise our opportunities by leveraging our advantages and generating a national manufacturing industry that will create and sustain jobs. I'm so pleased that this industry will, I believe, have a heart in Western Sydney. That's why this strategy will target national manufacturing priorities, where we can exercise our advantages, take hold of emerging opportunities and address strategic interests, particularly in advanced manufacturing.

Australia does recognise these advantages and the quality and value of Australian manufacturing. Recent data shows that over 95 per cent of Australians associate the iconic Australian Made logo, the golden kangaroo, with high-quality products and local jobs. I launched my petition to back Australian manufacturing to harness this groundswell of community support alongside my advancing manufacturing task force in Western Sydney, collaborating with leaders in industry and education to address the barriers facing local manufacturers and to explore opportunities to unlock their potential and create more local jobs—pragmatic ways to get advanced manufacturing off the ground in Western Sydney.

The demand for Australian made has never been stronger. The modern manufacturing strategy is about making sure we take advantage of this opportunity to build a strong, resilient, thriving and internationally competitive manufacturing industry.

Western Sydney can be at the forefront of this new era of Australian manufacturing. We have the existing networks of established manufacturers and the investment to support emerging industries and start-ups. In Lindsay we have over 600 manufacturers. I've been meeting and speaking with many of them on an ongoing basis. Some of them are: Grant Engineered, Pluspec, SpanSet, Custom Denning, J Sinclair Engineering, GPC Electronics—doing wonderful things in our community at the forefront of manufacturing in the future. I'm so proud that this government is backing these local manufacturers.

Throughout this pandemic, they have been resilient, they've been adaptable and they've been determined to stay in a position where they can respond on the other side. Many manufacturers proved their adaptability to the conditions and jumped at the opportunity to produce critical supplies of personal protective equipment, or PPE, to combat the pandemic. They wanted to go above and beyond, and do something for our community.

Australian manufacturers have created hundreds of millions of protective masks, almost 450 million, through our domestic manufacturing production capacity in 2020 alone. Textiles and clothing companies have converted their outputs to produce thousands of surgical gowns and engineering firms have been making bottles for hand sanitiser.
Based in Western Sydney, Australian manufacturer ResMed has delivered more than 5,500 ventilators and contracted a group of Australian manufacturers and engineers to make 2,000 invasive ventilators here in Australia, with over 99 per cent of the components being Australian made. The growth in this sector has been aided by the Advanced Manufacturing Growth Centre register which helps businesses, hospitals, GPs and community groups to find suppliers of critical products in response to the coronavirus. By increasing access to potential customers and equipping our response to the coronavirus, it shows how the Morrison government's strategy to support businesses to get on with what they do best will create more jobs and strengthen our national resistance.

As we emerge from coronavirus, there can be no economic recovery without a jobs recovery. Australian manufacturing will play such a key role in creating more local jobs. We're investing in this new era in Australian manufacturing to bolster our own national resilience to future shocks in global supply chains. We're investing over $107 million in the Supply Chain Resilience Initiative and we know that manufacturers have the potential to strengthen the resilience of our national economy and to create jobs. Our economic plan will make it happen. The hardworking aspirational manufacturers in Lindsay and across Australia can know the Morrison government is backing them with the policies and support they need to be more competitive, to scale up, to expand, to thrive and to create more jobs.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Rob Mitchell): Is the motion seconded?

Ms BELL: I second the motion and reserve my right to speak.

Ms SWANSON (Paterson) (11:22): I'm proud to support this motion, because I am a firm believer in Australian manufacturing. In my electorate of Paterson we're leading the way in ensuring our nation has vital supplies during this pandemic.

At the start of the pandemic I was contacted by Greg Whiteley, chairman of Whiteley Corporation. Whiteley is a global leader in infection prevention, being one of the largest manufacturers of sanitation products in our country. During this pandemic they have focused on preventing the spread of COVID-19 by manufacturing far beyond standard production levels, shoring up the supply of infection prevention products across industry and government. In layperson's speak, they have kept our hospitals clean and helped many individuals keep their hands clean as well. Whiteley have been supplying our health service and many local industries to ensure that surface disinfectant and sterilant products are available to meet increased hygiene measures that COVID-19 has warranted.

Many in my community have been concerned about the risk of transmission via contaminated surfaces, and we know from the research that the virus can survive anywhere from one to five days depending on the surface material. Thorough surface cleaning and disinfectant have been able to ensure that many potentially contaminated surfaces are left clean and hygienic, ultimately reducing the spread of COVID. Whiteley has conducted a vast number of disinfectant tests against a wide array of contaminated surfaces, making sure they're left clean and hygienic, and ultimately reducing the spread of COVID-19. Whiteley has, over the last 25 years, ensured public safety is at the heart of everything that it does. Whiteley has also assisted our region with its commitment to collaborative research programs, recently announcing a collaboration with the University of Newcastle in developing advanced manufacturing for med-tech in our region, the beautiful Hunter. The project will research
advanced manufacturing technology to increase local production capacity, particularly during times of great need, which we've all witnessed in the past 11 months.

Not only is Whiteley a great local success story, they're, indeed, an industry leader in innovation and global infection prevention. I want to commend Dr Greg Whiteley and his team on the work they've have done to keep my community and our country safe. Without Whiteley, many of the major hospitals across Australia would not have been sterilised adequately to cope with this pandemic. That is something we can be incredibly proud of coming out of the Hunter region. In the Hunter, we are proud manufacturers and we want to see this government understand our needs and invest in manufacturing, not neglect it.

Ampcontrol is another leader in local manufacturing. It is a fantastic success story. It was born out of an electrical company that serviced the coal industry. Earlier this year, a team of Hunter engineers and health professionals, led by Ampcontrol, won a state government contract to build emergency ventilators that would ensure hospitals across our state would have the equipment to meet the worst possible outcomes, should the virus spread. When CEO, Rod Henderson, received the call to arms, he and his fantastic team wasted no time in developing an emergency ventilator. The prototype was ready quickly for clinical testing and to be rapidly manufactured as necessary. Rod received a call from state government representatives in March this year. When asked if he could manufacture a ventilator prototype that could be rapidly scaled up to as many as 600 units if needed, he said he took a deep breath and replied, 'Yes; we'll give it a crack.' Well, Rod, you have certainly given it more than a crack with your team. If that doesn't sum up the Australian mantra of looking after your neighbours and having a go, I really don't know what does. I get goosebumps as I think about Rod and his team and how they truly stepped up at Ampcontrol when we needed them most. The project commenced with 20 Ampcontrol engineers, biomedical and clinical specialists from the John Hunter Hospital, and Newcastle University's Faculty of Engineering, and they have done a brilliant job. Examples like this remind us that governments must acknowledge not only the role manufacturing plays in this pandemic but the role it plays in driving our nation forward.

Ms BELL (Moncrieff) (11:27): Indeed, this government does agree with the role that manufacturing plays in the COVID recovery. When I discuss with constituents of Moncrieff the new era of manufacturing, they are very supportive of improving Australia's manufacturing capabilities. It's also clear that Australians support a bright future for local manufacturing. In fact, nine out of 10 Australians believe that Australia should produce more products locally. Of course, achieving this will require effort and a sustained commitment to that bright future. I'm speaking about the government's $1.5 billion Modern Manufacturing Strategy for the new era of manufacturing in this country. I believe in it for the Gold Coast. There are already 14,000 jobs on the Gold Coast directly attributed to manufacturing and the industry is already worth $7 billion on the Gold Coast: So there is bright future for my electorate of Moncrieff when it comes to the manufacturing sector. There are many reasons that a vibrant manufacturing industry is good for Australia, but the main one is, of course, jobs, and that's what we're here for: to create jobs for Australians, including those in my electorate of Moncrieff.

From my family history and growing up in South Australia, I know about the importance of manufacturing jobs. It was a Liberal and Country Premier, Sir Thomas Playford, who set
up Elizabeth as a manufacturing hub. I see the member for Boothby is in the chamber. She would agree with me that he also set up the Electricity Trust of South Australia and the South Australian Housing Trust to ensure that factory workers could afford to live in low-cost housing.

My parents, my grandparents and my brothers were all recipients of social housing and of those manufacturing jobs at the Elizabeth and Woodville plants of General Motors. My parents had great opportunities, my mother working at Levi Strauss, and created opportunities for my family and indeed for me to then move on. My parents saved up for their very modest first home and then of course extended opportunities for their children—and, of course, me here today as the member for Moncrieff. It all comes back to Premier Playford setting up manufacturing in South Australia.

But, of course, manufacturing jobs won't be the same as they were for my family growing up. They will be the new incarnation of manufacturing jobs. Manufacturing jobs are changing, not just because of a changing world but also because of the opportunities. Right now we are all acutely aware of the importance of manufacturing for our sovereign capabilities, for defence and for medical supplies in our country, building up capabilities that are vital now and to build resilience for our future.

The changes I speak of today are broader changes to all types of manufacturing in Australia. Manufacturers are already making those changes. The changes are happening at home in Moncrieff. A great example is Patterson Glass in Nerang, in the western part of my electorate. Like so many businesses around Australia, they were reaping the benefits before COVID hit. But, along with 10,400 businesses in Moncrieff, they needed JobKeeper to keep going, to keep their staff employed and, importantly, to keep their business primed and ready to now recover. The confidence gained in keeping the team together is at the heart of the JobKeeper success in Nerang, in Moncrieff, in the great state of Queensland and indeed across our great country.

Patterson Glass are now back on track. The managing director, Marc Wheway, is the kind of business leader that would have kept the business going regardless—he is a great leader—but he knows, as does the Treasurer and the Prime Minister, and as I know as his local member, that we want more than just survival for Australians; we want Australians to thrive. JobKeeper has not only helped survival; it has primed business to bounce back with the speed that would not otherwise have been possible. Patterson Glass previously received a manufacturing modernisation grant to help with their output and to help put on more employees in their business—to increase capacity so that they can have better outputs and put on more employees. The sort of automation that they implemented with their modern manufacturing grant has created those extra jobs, and there are many other things that Patterson Glass are doing.

Whilst those on the other side of the House pine for the good old days, as the daughter, the granddaughter and a sister of factory workers, I want to see results in the manufacturing sector. It is not good enough to provide sentiment and nostalgia, and it's not good enough to throw away money wildly out the door with no plan. We have a plan. (Time expired)

Ms TEMPLEMAN (Macquarie) (11:33): I welcome a focus on manufacturing with this motion—belatedly, seven years into this government, it is great to have them talking about it. COVID has certainly been a threat for some businesses and an opportunity for others.
Macquarie is home to about 550 manufacturing businesses—everything from biscuits and lavosh, to caravans, windows and glasshouses and the major packaging company WestRock. We have a large number of small manufacturers with up to five employees and family businesses, often where it isn't unusual to find a husband and wife or a parent and child partnership in action, through to the medium-sized businesses that, despite growth, remain very firmly in a family's hands. I want to talk about a couple of these businesses—the people who make stuff—and the commitment they had to their staff when COVID hit, how much they needed support and how they have pivoted.

Frank and Olga have the Teardrop Camper Company. They make fantastic campervans with very comfortable inner spaces to sleep in—much more upmarket than a tent. Frank took a punt in his South Windsor factory. He built seven of them at the start of COVID. That punt has paid off. He is getting orders sight unseen from all over the country to support people in their desire to travel. For him, it was a decision and a gamble to upgrade, and it has paid off.

I'm also fortunate to have several gin distilleries in the electorate. At the request of the government, the Wild Hibiscus Flower Company converted its Gingle Bells Gin distillery to produce medical-grade hand sanitiser. In normal times, their gin's infused with botanicals, but for COVID it was the sanitiser that was infused with lemon myrtle—one of the most pleasant sanitisers to use—and there's a steady supply in my office. So they really stepped up, and, equally, I hope the community supports them now by making sure you've got the wild hibiscus to go into your champagne.

Another distillery, the already award-winning Karu gin distillery in Grose Vale, manufactured hand sanitiser and donated it to essential services, including police and food services, way back in March. It was established in 2017 by young husband and wife team Nick and Ally, who wanted to do something to help. They produced 100 litres, working with the tax office and an analytics company to get it quickly out the door. Speaking to Nick on the weekend at their cellar door, they're on the way to being not only a maker but a tourist destination.

During COVID, I also talked to Karen and Ben Lebsanft from Kurrajong Kitchen. They're the makers of award-winning lavosh which are stocked in major supermarkets right around the country. When I talk to them, it reminds me of how my dad used to talk about the staff who worked with us in our shop when I was growing up. Karen and Ben value their staff. In the early days of COVID, their aim was just to keep their staff on and to keep people employed. They were thrilled more recently to be awarded a federal Manufacturing Modernisation Fund grant. That's allowing them to upgrade their production so they can be more competitive overseas. Theirs is a growing manufacturing business, and it's already employing two generations. They started in 1993 and have been absolutely determined to keep food manufacturing in Australia.

COVID has certainly reinforced for all of us how important it is to have control of production on our own soil. I think that's probably what disappoints me about what the government brought out in its budget this year. It was touted as a major boon for Australian manufacturing, but the six priority areas identified were the same ones identified by Labor in 2012 and adopted in 2013. If the Abbott-Turnbull-Morrison governments had stuck to those key manufacturing areas, rather than getting rid of the plan in 2014, manufacturing in this country would already have more thriving businesses employing thousands of people. We
might still have a car-manufacturing industry if the coalition actually cared about keeping manufacturing jobs onshore.

I hear them talking a lot about manufacturing, and I welcome that, but even today I'm not hearing specifics. What we learnt from the industry minister recently is that only $40 million of the $1.5 billion commitment the government has made will be spent this financial year. That's less than three per cent that will be spent between now and June next year, at the height of a recession. We see the same pattern in another announcement in the budget, the claim of $2 billion in new spending for the R&D tax incentive. In actual fact, the government's simply restoring the $1.8 billion it had planned to cut. Yet again, sadly, what we're seeing are words but no action, and manufacturing in this country deserves more.

Ms FLINT (Boothby—Government Whip) (11:38): This year we have been reminded of the critical importance of Australian manufacturing. With the disruption of global travel routes and supply chains, access to vital medical equipment and personal protective equipment for our frontline health professionals was threatened. In response, Australian manufacturers, including fantastic South Australian companies like Detmold, rose to the challenge. Our domestic manufacturing capacity for surgical masks has surged from just two million a year before the COVID-19 pandemic, with 61.9 million surgical masks being made in the month of September alone. This pandemic has clearly highlighted that the demand for quality Australian made products is stronger than ever.

Australia's manufacturing sector is a vibrant part of our economy and a vital component of our economic recovery plan. It is key to almost every supply chain and adds value across all sectors. This is why the Morrison government is backing our manufacturers with the $1.5 billion Modern Manufacturing Strategy. The strategy is a key feature of our government's JobMaker plan and will harness Australian manufacturing capability to drive our economy recovery and future resilience. This is very welcome news to the 481 manufacturing businesses in my electorate of Boothby, who employ over 3,600 South Australians.

Boothby has a strong history of manufacturing, especially in the suburb of Tonsley. Tonsley was once home to Australia's Mitsubishi production plant, and since its closure in 2008 the district has been reborn with the establishment of the Tonsley Innovation Precinct, focusing on high-tech and advanced manufacturing. I am a regular visitor to Tonsley, which is also home to Flinders University and one of our best TAFEs in South Australia, to view the exciting work of many of the local manufacturing success stories in the area.

Micro-X is one such business. They design, develop and manufacture innovative lightweight X-ray imaging systems right here in Tonsley in South Australia. Led by managing director Peter Rowland, Micro-X focus their efforts on mobile X-ray technology. Micro-X currently have two X-ray units in production, the Nano and the Rover. These products are fully integrated digital mobile X-ray units, with the Nano to operate in the public health-care space and the Rover for use in military hospitals.

In addition, Micro-X is continuously developing and leveraging their X-ray technology for further uses, with a number of projects in development for both commercial and defence purposes. One product in particular which is very exciting is their brain imaging CT scanner for stroke diagnosis, which is small enough to use within an ambulance. The scanner will be able to play a vital role in point-of-care diagnosis, providing paramedics the ability to scan a patient on site and to determine whether the stroke is from a blood clot or a bleed. Such
diagnosis is pivotal within the first hour, the so-called golden hour, of a stroke, when the chances of survival and mitigating long-term brain damage are at their highest. I look forward to having one here when the technology is further developed and rolled out. This technology is currently being trialled in collaboration with RMIT University in Melbourne through the mobile stroke unit project. It has far-reaching potential for diagnosis and treatment of other traumatic brain injuries. The scanner is set to be a game changer for paramedics in the treatment of stroke patients, which could be used by first responders around the world.

A short walk from Micro-X is SAGE Automation. They are at the forefront of automated technologies that integrate seamlessly with communities. In August I toured SAGE’s Tonsley facility with Damian Hewitt, the general manager for transport and smart cities at the company. At the site I was able to test out their Matilda smart transit hub system. Using a combination of smart technologies, Matilda addresses the last-mile problem for urban transport. The last-mile problem is the issue of moving people from a transport hub to their preferred destination. Matilda runs on a solar battery and assists commuters by connecting them with real-time public transport arrivals, nearby ride shares and bicycle hire stations. Earlier this year SAGE also received a federal government grant of almost $200,000 from the Road Safety Innovation Fund to investigate the deployment and evaluation of smart school zone systems. This is going to keep everyone using our school systems much safer.

Ms OWENS (Parramatta) (11:43): I am pleased to stand and talk about manufacturing because it's an incredibly important area, particularly given the changes in manufacturing that we have seen across the world in the last 10 to 15 or even 20 years. When globalisation really picked up, people moved factories offshore, but now what we are seeing around the world is expertise in particular areas and the fragmentation of the supply chain and places elsewhere in the world focusing on small parts of the supply chain and becoming regional experts in that. Yet what we have got in Australia is a manufacturing policy—even now that the government has announced a new one—that is really decades behind where it should be. We have seen a government that abolished Labor's manufacturing plan back in 2014 and has replaced it with a smaller version now, some seven years later. We have had a government that essentially bullied Holden to leave the country at the very time when the supply chains for car manufacturing were fragmenting in such a way that we were actually in a very, very good place. Also, the dollar was high at the time. We had manufacturing at that time under pressure because of the high dollar and we lost viable companies because of that. Now, seven years later, we've got the member for Lindsay standing here and moving a very important motion and saying, 'We're in a new era of manufacturing.' Well, the world has been in a new era for a long time, and it's really too little, too late. I want to focus on that for the moment.

We have a government that's announced a $1.5 billion advanced manufacturing plan—sounds great. We've got a crisis at the moment. We need jobs. We need stimulus, and they've come in with manufacturing—too late, but good. But then you look at the detail—with this government you always have to look at the detail. It might be $1.5 billion over four years, but this financial year, when the crisis is here right now, it's $40 million—$79 million in budget for this year, an underspend of $40 million. That's it for manufacturing in Australia. 'New era,' says the member for Lindsay—$40 million this financial year. That $1.5 billion is spread out over four years and $800 million of it is going to the grants program for an estimated, according to the minister, 10 companies. So in the great new era of manufacturing, $40
million has been spent this financial year when we have a crisis that is seeing manufacturers shut their doors, and $800 million will go to 10 companies over the next four years. That's what we have here. That's what we have in this plan.

We also have an announced $2 billion for R&D—sounds good. They've pulled money out of R&D. They haven't been doing really well, so $2 billion for R&D sounds really good until you realise there's a bill before the House right now that cuts $1.8 billion. It sounds like they've just changed their mind and announced it as new money. Again, when you hear this government talk about anything, you have to question the detail because the detail is nearly always different to the headline announcement.

Australia, historically, has been really good at manufacturing. We've seen some bad years recently. We've seen companies go in COVID. We've also seen, over the last seven or eight years, some major international trends that cause difficulties for some of manufacturers and we've lost a lot. But in my electorate we have some amazing ones. We have Thales, one of our big defence manufacturers, based in Rydalmere. It's an extraordinary one, and because it works with really fine quality ceramics we've have seen a ceramics industry grow up around it. Wherever you have one really good company with fragmented supply chains, you have other companies that grow the skill base around it.

We've got BluGlass, LED technology. It's still what I call pre profit. It's incredible new technology. They're called BluGlass, but they're now a world leader in green LEDs. They have companies all over the world that buy LEDs of various frequencies from Rydalmere—an extraordinary company.

We have Baxter's medicinal-grade saline, the last remaining one in the country. There's an area, if you're talking about resilience and the capacity to respond, where the government might look to make sure that we have medicinal-grade plastic, medicinal-grade salines—all the things that we need in a crisis—manufactured in Australia, because we have lost them over the last seven years and we have one left. It's a nice announcement, but look at the detail. The new era was some time ago. It's a wee bit late and it's too little.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Claydon): The time allotted for this debate has expired. The debate is adjourned and the resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

Tasmanian Health System

Mr WILKIE (Clark) (11:48): I move:

That this House:

(1) notes that:

(a) the Tasmanian public health system is fundamentally broken and that is directly resulting in prolonged illnesses and avoidable deaths;

(b) this dire situation is despite the Tasmanian health system receiving more funding from the Commonwealth Government than the national average;

(c) independent Tasmanian public policy analyst Martyn Goddard estimates that, since the Tasmanian Government came to power in 2014, health and hospitals have been short-changed by $2 billion of GST money being diverted from Tasmania’s public health system;

(d) Tasmanian hospitals are the worst-performing in the country, despite heroic efforts from staff;
(e) the latest state government figures show that 11,342 people are waiting for elective surgery—the most urgent category one patients, who should be treated in 30 days, have to wait an average of 130 days for their procedure;

(f) mental health services are another significant area of chronic under-investment, resulting in poorly treated and untreated illnesses causing great suffering and sometimes suicides; and

(g) there is precedence for the Commonwealth Government to intervene in the Tasmanian health system, for instance the take-over and hand-back of the Mersey Hospital; and

(2) calls on the Commonwealth Government to refer Tasmania’s failing health system to the Productivity Commission to:

(a) conduct a public inquiry to identify the root causes of Tasmania’s failing health system; and

(b) formulate a solution to fix the systemic and cultural problems within the Tasmanian health system.

Regrettably, there is an urgent need for federal intervention in Tasmania's ailing public health system and, in particular, there's an urgent need for the federal government to direct the federal Productivity Commission to do a review of Tasmania's public health system and to help Tasmania by laying out a blueprint for reform. That's not to say that a string of Tasmanian governments haven't conducted audit inquiries, spent money, put band-aids on or done different things to try to fix Tasmania's public health system, but regrettably none of it has worked. Indeed, it has now become commonplace for emergency department doctors and nurses at the Royal Hobart Hospital to warn how bed block and the ramping of ambulances is disrupting quality health care and even resulting in unnecessary deaths. To illustrate this point: last fiscal year in Tasmania over 1,800 patients waited over 24 hours just to be seen in the emergency department. No wonder the AMA is also cautioning about this situation. The AMA notes that waiting lists for elective surgery at the Royal Hobart Hospital are now the worst in over 20 years.

We don't need to go to organisations like that to get a sense of things; we could just look at the state government's own figures. Indeed, by the state government's latest figures, there are 11,342 patients on the elective surgery waiting list. That's out of a total population of only half a million people for the whole state—11,342 Tasmanians on the elective surgery waiting list. Remarkably, those who are on the category 1 waiting list are waiting, on average, 130 days for their surgery, when the clinically recommended waiting time is to be no more than 30 days.

They're numbers, but remember that behind all these numbers are human stories. For example, the elderly man, a constituent of mine, who's been waiting for hip surgery for ages and is in so much pain and is so disabled that he needs to call on his neighbours to change his socks. There's nothing elective about that. It's a human tragedy. Or, just last week, the mother of four who contacted my office when, a day before she was scheduled for urgent colon surgery, her surgery was cancelled. This woman can't work; she's in extreme pain, she suffers embarrassing bowel movements and her surgery was cancelled last week, and the state government thinks that's okay.

Mental health is especially problematic. I could give you some shocking demonstrations of just how bad things are, like the man who cut off his finger to ensure he would be admitted to the Royal Hobart Hospital to get the mental health care he was calling out for. Or the example of a man found dead in the bushes outside the Royal Hobart Hospital not that long ago, who
had twice been turned away from the hospital when he was desperately calling out for mental health treatment.

The government says it's on the job and all's well, and to his credit last week the Premier did announce $45 million to boost elective surgery. Frankly, it's a bandaid when the public health system has such systemic structural and funding problems. That's why today I'm calling again—I've done it before unsuccessfully—for federal intervention, not to disrupt the Tasmanian public health system but to help the Tasmanian public health system, to get an independent body like the Productivity Commission to go in with all its know-how. It's not unprecedented for federal intervention in Tasmania—for example, Prime Minister Gillard agreed to my request for a $325 million funding boost. And we've had the episode of hospitals being taken over, handed back and all sorts of things. We need the Productivity Commission to step in.

I'll take this opportunity again to call for the closure of one of Tasmania's three northern hospitals. We have three hospitals in the north and one hospital in the south. Three hospitals for half of the population and one hospital for the other half of the population. We have too many hospitals and they are underfunded. I call again on the Tasmanian government to shut one of the three northern hospitals, which would leave three well-funded hospitals instead of four underfunded hospitals. We've got to stop the band aids. The Tasmanian government has got to look to the feds for help. The community has got to understand that we've got to stop putting band aids on the public health system. We got to fix it. Until we fix it, people will continue to suffer unnecessarily; people will continue to die unnecessarily.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bird):** Do we have a seconder for the motion?

**Ms Collins:** I second the motion and reserve my right to speak.

**Mrs ARCHER (Bass) (11:54):** I certainly won't rise and say that all is well in the Tasmanian health system. There are deeply complex issues within our state health system. As the member for Clark has identified, we have a small population, a geographically dispersed population, that is ageing and has high rates of chronic disease. I have spent much of my time, since being elected, fighting for better health outcomes for the northern Tasmanian region, and, in particular, access to GP services.

There are significant challenges, but there are many people dedicated to improvement, and some positive progress has been made. Just a few days ago, as was mentioned, the state government, led by the Minister for Health, Sarah Courtney, announced a boost to the state's elective surgery capacity in the state's budget, helping more Tasmanians to receive that surgery quicker. A $45½ million investment will be made in elective surgeries over the next 18 months, delivering more surgery for more Tasmanians, which will reduce waiting times, bring down the waiting list and drive better outcomes for patients. The new funding, together with the previously announced $15 million provided through the Commonwealth, means the health service will deliver an estimated 8½ thousand additional elective surgeries for the Tasmanian community. This is a huge boost to surgery capacity, with an estimated 19,000 surgeries now planned for the 2020-21 financial year.

For the Launceston General Hospital, located in the heart of my northern Tasmanian community, the state has delivered 542 additional FTE staff since coming to government in March 2014, which is a 30 per cent increase. This includes more than 270 nurses, 48 new full-
time allied health professionals and 90 additional doctors. Significant progress has also been made on the $20 million Ward 4K redevelopment at the LGH, with stage 1 almost completed and stage 2 underway. Importantly, stage 1 includes two negative-pressure rooms that have airlocks and ensuites, allowing patients to isolate; the hospital's first ever bariatric room for adolescents; a new adolescent lounge area; and a contemporary schoolroom to support learning by patients across primary and secondary age ranges.

It has been a highlight for me this year to work with the state government to deliver the $6.3 million for a new LINAC and CT scanner at the LGH. The new scanner, at the WP Holman Clinic, will provide clinicians with new equipment to help design the best and most precise treatment plans, improving patient outcomes. This new scanner will help to provide treatment for over 600 new patients every year. It's the first piece of equipment delivered through the state and federal governments Radiation Oncology Health Program Grants, and $28 million is being invested to upgrade the state's ageing oncology equipment.

I note the member for Clark's reference to chronic underinvestment in mental health services, and I think there is a lot of catch-up to do in that space. I've spoken here, and in the House, a number of times on mental health and access to increased mental health services as they're of particular interest to me. There has been a lot of work done in this area, and there have been some advances made. A $10 million investment for an adult mental health hub in Launceston is a commitment I secured during the last election and is something that I'm really passionate about. It will ensure the delivery of much needed services in our local area to try to fill some of those gaps. Progress is being made on that, and I firmly believe it will make a demonstrable difference in our region. I hope it will take the pressure off the hospital system, particularly the emergency department.

Over the last decade, the federal government has provided significant funding for headspace in Launceston to assist with the facilities and staff needed to meet that ever-increasing demand for mental health services, and I appreciate the government's willingness to listen to the needs on the ground in my electorate and to respond accordingly. Last year we committed $630,000 to headspace Launceston to meet the growing demand from young people through the provision of extra clinical services such as structured psychological interventions, group interventions, family counselling and intervention clinics. That funding specifically allowed for an additional clinical psychologist and a project officer, which are much needed roles in that organisation.

Unfortunately, five minutes is not enough time to address this issue in detail, but I did want to take a moment, in wrapping up, to commend the dedicated health professionals in northern Tasmania, and Tasmania generally, who have gone over and above this year in what has been a very difficult year.

**Ms COLLINS** (Franklin) (11:59): I know that my time is going to be very limited here, but I do want to say a big thank you to all those people working in the Tasmanian health system. Unfortunately it is the incredible staff in the system that are holding the system together. There are clearly significant structural issues in the Tasmanian health system. What we just heard from the member for Bass, with all due respect, was a list of more band-aids, not the structural reform that's needed. The Tasmanian Liberal government need to take responsibility and they need to do the structural reform required in the Tasmanian health system to ensure that all Tasmanians get access to the health services they need, when they
need them. What we know is happening at the moment is that people are waiting inordinate amounts of time. They are getting worse. They are getting more and more unhealthy because of the amount of time they have to wait, whether it be for physical health issues or, particularly, mental health issues. The number of people who contact my office concerned about their children or grandchildren who cannot get mental health support in Tasmania is incredible. To wait in an emergency department for three days when you have suicidal ideation is completely unacceptable. Whatever the Tasmanian state government and the federal Liberal government are doing is clearly not working and is nowhere near enough. That is the bottom line.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Claydon): I apologise for having to interrupt the member for Franklin. You will be given leave to continue speaking when the debate is resumed. Unfortunately the time allocated for this debate has expired.

BILLS

Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2020-2021
Consideration in Detail

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Claydon) (12:04): Before I give the call to the minister to propose the schedule for the order of consideration of the portfolios, I would like to remind all members of the purpose of the consideration-in-detail stage and outline the way it is expected to proceed. Shortly, the Federation Chamber will be asked to agree to a proposed schedule for consideration of portfolios. This may need to be varied, but it is a useful guide to assist ministers and members to arrange their commitments. Consideration in detail is a debate, and the call shall be alternated between the government and non-government sides, as always. Even though this debate sometimes takes the format of question and answer, this is not question time. Ministers and government backbench members both will be considered as speakers on the government side and should bear this in mind when they seek the call. All speakers are required to be relevant to whichever portfolio is being examined, but there is no requirement of direct relevance in respect of any response. It might be practical for ministers to respond to more than one speaker when they seek the call. I note that this general arrangement has applied in recent years and has seemed to allow maximum participation at this stage of the debate. Each minister and member will have up to five minutes to speak each time they are called, but they may wish to speak for a shorter time. Ministers may wish to make an introductory statement when debate for their portfolio begins, but, as they are not moving amendments, that is a matter for them to decide. Members might also be aware of some administrative documents that are circulated when consideration in detail begins. To avoid confusion, let me say that any documents showing times allocated for debate on portfolios are informal and indicative only; chairs will not be seeking to enforce these times strictly. Those are the terms of reference for us to conduct this consideration in detail now.

The Federation Chamber will now consider the Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2020-2021 in detail. In accordance with standing order 149, the Federation Chamber will first consider the schedule of the bill.

Mr SUKKAR (Deakin—Assistant Treasurer and Minister for Housing) (12:04): It might suit the convenience of the Federation Chamber to consider the items of proposed expenditure

FEDERATION CHAMBER
in the order and groupings shown in the schedule which has been circulated to honourable members.

_The schedule read as follows—_

Treasury
Finance
Education, Skills and Employment
Education, Skills and Employment—Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business
Industry, Science, Energy and Resources
Health
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications—Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts
Defence
Defence—Veterans' Affairs/Defence Personnel
Social Services
Social Services—National Disability Insurance Scheme/Government Services
Attorney-General's
Foreign Affairs and Trade
Agriculture, Water and the Environment
Agriculture, Water and the Environment—Environment
Agriculture, Water and the Environment—Resources, Water and Northern Australia
Home Affairs
Prime Minister and Cabinet
Prime Minister and Cabinet—Indigenous Australians

Mr SUKKAR: I indicate to the Federation Chamber that the proposed order for consideration of portfolios estimates has been discussed with the opposition and there has been no objection to what is proposed.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Claydon): Is it the wish of the Federation Chamber to consider the items of proposed expenditure in the order suggested by the minister? There being no objection, it is so ordered.

**Treasury Portfolio**

Proposed expenditure, $1,203,774,000

Mr SUKKAR (Deakin—Assistant Treasurer and Minister for Housing) (12:05): As you have outlined, I rise to speak today on the Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2020-2021, in particular to highlight some of the measures contained in the bill, including the appropriations to the Department of the Treasury, the Australian Taxation Office, the Australian Bureau of Statistics and other significant portfolio agencies. Obviously, we all know that, this year, the Australian economy has been hit catastrophically by COVID-19. The hit to our economy has been devastating in its nature. As was outlined in the budget forward estimates, we're expecting that unemployment will peak at eight per cent in the December quarter. The
government has of course responded in an unprecedented way, with $299 billion worth of direct economic support measures to help cushion the blow and to save jobs and livelihoods.

The 2021 budget builds on this work that has been put in place throughout the year, delivering a number of key measures and programs to help propel the Australian economy through the recovery phase of the pandemic. Most notably, this includes the $74 billion JobMaker Plan. Of central relevance to the JobMaker Plan is the JobMaker hiring credit. This is a $4 billion program over three years, being administered through the ATO, to establish a hiring credit. A key component, as I said, of the JobMaker Plan, this hiring credit will encourage tens of thousands of Australian businesses to employ new staff. The money is payable for up to 12 months for employers who hire a recipient of the JobSeeker payment aged between 16 and 35. New hires under the scheme are required to work for at least 20 hours per week to be eligible, and the expectation, as outlined on budget night, is that the hiring credit will support around 450,000 positions for young people, helping them bounce back from the effects of the pandemic.

In my own portfolio of housing, the appropriations bill will also support budget measures designed to boost support for housing and to support jobs in the residential construction sector. In the budget, we've built on the great success of the First Home Loan Deposit Scheme, which allows first home buyers to purchase their first home with a deposit of as little as five per cent. On budget night, we announced the creation of an additional 10,000 guarantees, up until 30 June 2021, which can be used by first home buyers to purchase a newly constructed home. This measure is not only supporting first home buyers, as the First Home Loan Deposit Scheme has done so successfully, but also ensuring that those purchases fuel jobs in the residential construction industry. We believe that these measures, along with the $688 million HomeBuilder program—the First Home Loan Deposit Scheme measure in particular—will support a continued pipeline of activity.

Obviously tax reform was a significant component of the budget, with $17.8 billion in personal income tax relief to support the economic recovery. Of this, $12½ billion will be delivered in the next 12 months. Around 11.6 million individuals will receive a tax cut in this financial year, 2021, and Treasury estimates that it will create an additional 50,000 jobs by the end of 2021.

We've also put in place significant measures to support businesses to invest. As part of the Economic Recovery Plan, we've put in place temporary full expensing for businesses with turnover of less than $5 billion. This will of course improve cash flow for businesses and encourage those businesses to invest in productivity-enhancing and business-growing plant and equipment. We've also put in place temporary loss carry-back so as to ensure that, rather than having to wait years to get the benefit of their tax losses, if they do make it through the pandemic, businesses will be able to get access to the benefits of those tax losses immediately. We've also put in place superannuation reform and a range of other measures, all designed to get Australians back into work and to get businesses investing again.

Mr CLARE (Blaxland) (12:10): I want to ask the minister about construction jobs. The Australian Bureau of Statistics has reported that in the first six months since the pandemic hit the number of carpenters employed across Australia has dropped by more than 12,000. The same report from the Australian Bureau of Statistics has said that in the six months since the pandemic hit the number of bricklayers working has dropped by more than 9,000, the number
of painters working has dropped by more than 10,000 and the number of sparkies, electricians, working has dropped by more than 11,000. That's a lot of tradies out of work, and the projections for the next six months and beyond aren't crash hot either.

The minister would be familiar with a story that was published in *The Australian* on Friday, 'Builders facing jobs carnage'. That report refers to a report commissioned and published by the Australian Construction Industry Forum that came out last week. It's forecasting that another 42,000 tradies could lose their jobs in the next seven or eight months. That's a lot of tradies who work on building sites building houses and apartments for other Australians. Now, I know that the minister will say what he always says—that is, that HomeBuilder is the miracle cure-all for all of this. He'll say, 'It's fantastic.' He'll say, 'It's extraordinary.' But the problem is this: even if the HomeBuilder scheme meets the targets that the government has set for it, and 27,000 people sign up by Christmas, that in and of itself is not enough to save these tradies' jobs.

Treasury, the minister's department, have told us—they said it a couple of months ago and they repeated in estimates only two weeks ago—that they forecast the number of homes built this financial year will be substantially lower than last financial year. Last financial year, we built 170,000 homes across the country. Treasury are predicting that that will be as low as 140,000 homes this financial year. If fewer homes are built, that means that fewer tradies will be needed to build them. It's important to remember here that these Treasury forecasts have the HomeBuilder scheme factored into them. In other words, even with the HomeBuilder scheme working as expected, the housing industry will still shrunk, and that means job losses. That's why I'm asking the minister and I'm asking the government to do more here. The housing industry has called for the scheme to be extended, and so have I. But that, in and of itself, is not enough. The scheme needs to be amended and fixed to deal with some of the problems inherent in it.

Sydney is a good example. Sydneysiders aren't getting their fair share out of the scheme at the moment. New South Wales makes up about one-third of the country, but it's only getting one-fifth of the grants. It's not hard to understand why. It's not easy to get a house-and-land package in many parts of Sydney for $750,000 or less. Members here will know that very, very well. So I'm asking the minister to consider making the same sorts of changes to this scheme that he recently made—and that we supported—to the First Home Loan Deposit Scheme. Lift the cap in places like Sydney where it's needed, and the scheme will be more successful. But it's not just that. Changes also need to be made to how the scheme works for apartment construction. If there's one part of the housing industry that's suffering more than most, it's apartment construction. The HIA predict it to drop by about 40 per cent this financial year. If you're buying an apartment off the plan, this scheme doesn't work well for you at the moment. So I ask the minister to consider changes to that as well.

If the government really wants to help save these tradies' jobs, it needs to invest more in social housing. Our international borders are shut. Migration has stopped, at least for a while, and that means that the population isn't growing as fast. That suppresses demand for new housing. If you want to keep these tradies working, and demand for private housing is down, it makes sense to invest in public housing. There's no lack of need or lack of demand there. I know the minister will say the same thing that he always says—that this is the job of the states. The states have already put an extra billion dollars into social housing. Ultimately, it's
not about whether it's the job of the state government or the federal government; it's about the jobs of those tradies: carpenters, electricians, plumbers, bricklayers—people who are running out of work, and the HomeBuilder scheme is not doing enough to save all those jobs. So I ask the minister again: will the government consider investing more in social housing to protect the jobs of those tradies?

Ms HAMMOND (Curtin) (12:15): I'd like to take this opportunity to raise a number of issues with the minister regarding the government's measures to rebuild the economy from the COVID-19 recession. I'm sure that the minister is aware that, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the rate of employment in my electorate of Curtin was extremely high and, outside the city of Perth, it had the highest number of small- to medium-sized businesses in WA, being in excess of 26,000. Like the rest of Australia, the pandemic has hit the people in my electorate extremely hard. To get some sense of that, in February, there were 1,981 people in Curtin receiving JobSeeker. By May, the number of people in Curtin receiving JobSeeker had, sadly, climbed to 5,297. And, while the number of people on JobSeeker in Curtin is slowly coming down and stands at roughly 4,800, these figures show that there are still many people in Curtin who are actively looking for work.

The 26,000 businesses in my electorate have worked very hard to keep their businesses going and to keep people employed. They are grateful for the initiatives which have been put in place to support them. I note that the government's JobKeeper payment has supported 7,300 businesses in Curtin, making sure that they kept connected to their employees through the worst of the months that we had. The cashflow boost has helped around 6,500 small and medium businesses, helping businesses in Curtin to stay afloat. One business owner told me that, in the very week he received the cashflow bonus, he was just about to close the doors and sack everybody, but this enabled him to keep going and get through the worst time. I'm really pleased to say that he's now back trading to about 85 per cent of his pre-COVID levels.

Thousands of businesses have used the instant asset write-off to do things ranging from upgrading their facilities, which was a great initiative when they were shut down, to installing new IT operating systems and replacing old and outdated equipment. I note that none of the business owners I've spoken to want a handout. They don't want to have to rely on government. One told me, 'I set up my own business so that I could do something I love on my own terms and to be financially independent.'

Australia has benefited from 29 years of economic growth and this puts us in a good position to address the economic downturn we are now facing. However, having had 29 years of economic growth also means that the economic recession we are now facing, not just here in Australia but globally, is actually more confronting. For good reason, the people in my electorate, like the majority of people across Australia, are concerned about their own financial security in the years ahead and, more generally, about the economic future of our country. In order to assist everyone facing the brunt of this economic downturn right now, the government has implemented numerous measures, which the minister has outlined. However, to ensure that our recovery is as fast and as thorough as it can possibly be, we also need to implement new measures which will give people confidence in the future. It is only with this confidence that people will take the steps they need to take to rebuild the economy, whether that's increasing consumer confidence and encouraging people to spend money personally or...
increasing business confidence and encouraging businesses to continue to invest in business and employ people.

There are approximately 150,000 people in my electorate of Curtin and more than half of them pay income tax. As I said before, there are in excess of 26,000 small- and medium-sized businesses and all of those businesses pay a multiplicity of direct and indirect taxes. I ask the minister to inform the chamber how the Morrison government is supporting hardworking Australians across Australia by providing simpler, fairer and lower taxes.

Mr THISTLETHWAITE (Kingsford Smith) (12:19): On budget night, the Treasurer spruiked that this budget was all about jobs. What a load of rubbish! Millions of Australians are out of work, and, this government expects—from its own budget figures—that 160,000 additional Australians will lose their jobs before the end of the year. But this budget does very little—in fact, next to nothing—to get those people back into stable employment. In fact, the early withdrawal of support for jobs by this government is only going to prolong the downturn for many in our community and exacerbate the pain for many who are doing it tough at the moment.

I will give you an example. I represent the electorate of Kingsford Smith, which of course, has Kingsford Smith airport in it. It's the economic powerhouse of our area—with 30,000 direct jobs. At the moment, the airport is on its knees. A couple of weeks ago, I met with a delegation of Qantas workers who had recently been sacked by the airline—2,500 loyal, hardworking Qantas employees, who had been sacked by our nation's carrier, are having their jobs contracted out to a foreign corporation for lower wages and conditions. This is corporate immorality at its worst. And what does this government do to support those Qantas workers? Zilch—absolutely nothing. There is no support for them whatsoever in this budget.

Many of those that I met with are older workers. Four of the employees that I met with had more than 20 years service for Qantas. A couple of them said to me, 'Aviation is all that I know.' They're in their late 50s and early 60s, and they were asking me, 'What support is there for me from this government to get me back into the workforce?' I had to say to them, 'Unfortunately, for older workers like yourselves, there is nothing in this budget to support you.' So I ask the government, on behalf of those Qantas workers and the hundreds of thousands of other elderly workers in our community: what are you going to do to support them to get them back into work as quickly as possible? The government will say, 'Oh, we've got the JobMaker hiring credit.' It comes with a $4 billion price tag, but it's only available for those workers under the age of 35. Of course, we know that older workers fall back onto JobSeeker, but the government, again, plans to reduce the rate of JobSeeker back to poverty levels. So, instead of people being able to have the income to support them to get out into the workforce and try and get work, they're spending all of their time simply scrounging around trying to make ends meet and survive—instead of being out there in the jobs market.

Guess who's electorate has the most Qantas workers of any of all of our representatives in the House of Representatives? It's the Prime Minister's—the electorate of Cook. He has more Qantas workers than all of us, yet he refuses to meet with a delegation of Qantas workers and hear their story about how they've been affected and why they're not getting support from this government. It's an absolute disgrace. Those who've worked for this company for decades, paid taxes and helped build the credible name of this airline are out on their backsides and in the unemployment queues with no support from this government at all. There is no support
for older workers in the budget, and I ask those opposite: what do you say to those older workers when they come asking you for support?

As I said, the government claim that they're all about jobs. But one of the groups that's been dramatically affected by the recession is women. What has this government done to support women in the workforce? Well, I'll tell you what they've done: they cut penalty rates. Who are the people who work predominantly in the hospitality and service industries? They're women. And that's the thanks that they get from the government—cuts to penalty rates, so that they take home less pay every week to support their families. That's this government's support of women in this budget. And now you've got a group within the coalition who are now walking around saying that women shouldn't get an increase in their superannuation as well. Well, that's just great—let's make it even harder for women to retire with a credible nest egg into the future by cutting the compulsory rate of superannuation for those who are doing it tough during this recession! It doesn't make any sense at all. If this government was all about jobs, it would put something in the budget that supports older workers and supports women instead of the continuing rhetoric that it is supporting jobs when we all know it's complete rubbish.

Mr FALINSKI (Mackellar) (12:24): Thank you to the member for Kingsford Smith. I will tell the member for Kingsford Smith what really doesn't make sense. It doesn't make sense that you would force people to put more money into industry super so that millionaire fund managers can get paid more money. It doesn't make sense that the regressive Left come into this parliament day after day after day and lecture us about people on low incomes and people who are from disadvantaged backgrounds, so they can give more money to their mates in industry super so they can pay themselves more money. The answer of the regressive Left is always the same: look after our donors and everyone else can go to hell.

You can stand here and talk about women retiring into poverty, but what you don't want to talk about, what IFM doesn't want to talk about, what industry super doesn't want to talk about, is the tens of millions of dollars that they pay year in and year out in corporate sponsorships, in corporate facilities, quaffing on wine, throwing back the food at the AFL—they all went up there to Queensland. What do their members ever see? Don't come into this chamber and lecture anyone about how they're interested in the retirement of their members. How many of their members could get into Queensland in the last six months from New South Wales? The answer's none. From Victoria? The answer is none. But somehow everyone from industry super who wants can go up there, no doubt with the tens of millions of dollars in corporate advertising. Greg Combet is more famous now than he ever was when he was the minister for climate change under the regressive Left.

That's the problem with you guys on that side—sorry, members opposite. You keep talking about how you want to help people, but everything you do only makes their lives worse. This parliament should be all about expanding—

Dr Leigh interjecting—

Mr FALINSKI: The member for Fenner raises facts. Let's go to the facts.

Mr Sharma interjecting—

Mr FALINSKI: Thank you, Member for Wentworth.
The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Claydon): The member for Mackellar might be wise to listen to the chair rather than his colleagues.

Mr FALINSKI: As always, Madam Chair! The member for Fenner wants to know about facts. Here are some interesting facts. The interesting fact is this: as Treasury pointed out, our superannuation system saves about $9 billion in pension payments but costs $38 billion in fund management fees. That, by the way, is three times what Australian households pay for electricity and energy prices—three times. And do those opposite come in here and demand we get a better deal for the people on low incomes and from disadvantaged backgrounds? Or do they stand up for the ongoing fees and charges of the multimillionaire funds managers in industry super. We know what they do. I'm sure it has nothing to do with the tens of millions of dollars that they will receive in political donations over the next 10 years.

An honourable member interjecting—

Mr FALINSKI: Unfortunately it's not garbage. I wish it were untrue, but the truth is that's exactly what's happening. They are putting their donors ahead of the interests of ordinary Australians, and they do it every single time. We know that if you actually want to increase the health and welfare of ordinary Australians, you do that through economic settings that encourage innovation. We know that that happens when you allow people to take a risk and when the risk pays off they get to keep the rewards of that risk. The first thing those opposite do is, if anyone is ever successful, stand up here and say, 'We need to increase taxes on those people.' They wanted to tax them $387 billion more at the last election. You also need to allow people, when they fail, to at least have the capacity to be forgiven for that failure. This government has introduced innovations in insolvency laws, which are still to be passed, that will allow people to get forgiven when they make mistakes. My question to the minister is—

An honourable member interjecting—

Mr FALINSKI: Thank you for the prompting! My question is: can the minister update the chamber on the economic recovery plan for Australia?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Claydon): We got there!

Dr LEIGH (Fenner) (12:29): In her book *Generation Less*, Jennifer Rayner talks about the impact on young Australians of the economic policies that have been pursued under this government. As she points out, younger Australians have suffered rising underemployment rates. Their wealth, relative to older Australians, has fallen. They've suffered through experiencing higher student debt, a tougher housing market and a tougher labour market. It used to be that the typical university graduate could count on going into a full-time job. Many now find themselves going into part-time work. The educational debt and the housing debt that has been accrued by what she calls generation less has only increased.

Coronavirus has hit the labour market particularly hard for young Australians. As a labour market snapshot by Jeff Borland—summarising his work with Michael Coelli at the University of Melbourne—points out, there's been a substantial deterioration in employment outcomes for young Australians, with their employment-to-population ratio falling by four percentage points in the decade to 2019, while the rate for people 25 and above has increased by one percentage point. They point out that it's a matter of the crowding out of the young, and that you see higher part-time employment and long-term unemployment rates for young Australians.
This is reflected in work overseas. Write-ups of research by Eduardo Porter and David Yaffe-Bellany note the impact on young Americans of scarring in the labour market, the impact of entering a labour market at a time of recession. The impact of scarring, according to research done by Treasury, headed by Daniel Andrews—then at Treasury and now at the OECD—can still be seen up to a decade later. Jesse Rothstein's research on US college graduates shows that, by 2018, those who landed jobs in 2010-11, following the 2008 financial crisis, had a lower employment rate than people the same age who graduated before the recession hit. That impact can see people stuck, increasingly, in insecure low-wage jobs.

We've also seen significant education shocks. Research by Lee Elliot Major and Stephen Machin for the Centre for Economic Performance looks at the learning losses for disadvantaged pupils in British schools. Building on the work that's been done on the summer learning loss, with pupils lagging when they return to school after the three months summer break, they're suggesting that that could be significantly exacerbated for disadvantaged students. That holds true for university students whose universities are doing their best in the face of funding cuts from the government to maintain online learning, but students know that 'Zoom University' is no substitute for proper face-to-face tuition.

The risk for young Australians is very real, and yet we've seen from this government a series of policies which has acted to disadvantage young Australians. In their book What Happens Next? Reconstructing Australia after COVID-19, editors Emma Dawson and Janet McCalman outline a whole series of interesting research findings, many relating to the impact on young Australians. In her chapter on population policy, Liz Allen says, 'The sad reality for too many young Australians is it takes the bank of mum or dad … to break into the housing market.'

The government has population projections which look heroic when it comes to considering the rollout of the vaccine. I ask the minister what the assumptions are about vaccine rollout that underlie the budget's population projections. Population projections under the budget have net overseas migration falling 71,600 in 2020-21, but only 21,600 in 2021-22. I ask the minister: did Treasury model different scenarios in this in the event that a vaccine wasn't in place by late 2021?

Mr SHARMA (Wentworth) (12:35): The federal budget delivered last month lays out a comprehensive economic recovery plan for the nation. The COVID-19 pandemic, on top of the tragic loss of life that it's caused, has also been the biggest shock to hit the global economy since the Great Depression. The global economy is forecast to contract by some 4½ per cent in 2020. In the last major economic crisis to hit this world, the global financial crisis, the world economy contracted by only 0.1 per cent.

There have been 32 million cases of coronavirus, in nearly every country in the world. So far this year COVID-19 has killed well over one million people. In a normal year, malaria kills around 600,000 people, HIV-AIDS kills 950,000 people and suicide results in around 800,000 deaths. COVID-19 has already exceeded each of those. The economic shock of COVID-19 has been equally profound. It has been the biggest shock to hit the global economy since the Second World War. As I said earlier, the IMF expects the global economy to contract by some 4½ per cent. The US economy is expected to contract by around four to five per cent, Japan by five per cent, the euro area by eight per cent and the UK by around 10
per cent, and New Zealand has already contracted around 13 per cent. In fact, the only major
economy that is forecast to grow through 2020 is China.

The 2020-21 budget outlines measures to help cushion the blow of the pandemic to
accelerate the recovery and to help rebuild our economy for the future. It builds on previous
support measures, including JobKeeper, JobSeeker, cash-flow relief for small businesses and
early access to super. All up, these measures will amount to some $507 billion in government
fiscal support since the onset of the pandemic. This is one of the biggest fiscal stimuli ever
delivered by a government.

I know this year has been hard for many Australians, but we are emerging from this crisis
intact and together. Of the 1.3 million Australians who lost their jobs or had their hours
reduced to zero in April, over half of them are now back at work. 446,000 jobs have been
created over the past four months. Consumer confidence has been up for four months straight.
Just this month, consumer sentiment jumped 11.9 per cent in a month-on-month basis
following an 18 per cent jump in the previous month. While the economy is expected to
contract by 3.75 per cent in calendar year 2020, it's expected to recover in 2021 and grow by
4.25 per cent. Unemployment is expected to peak at around eight per cent in December and
then begin to come down.

These are sobering figures, but without direct government support it's estimated that
unemployment would have reached 12 per cent and stayed there. And though it's little
comfort to those Australians doing it tough, Australia has fared well in terms of managing
both the health and economic impacts of this crisis. Our deaths from COVID-19 are
significantly fewer than other developed countries and our economy has weathered the storm
better. We entered this crisis in a strong fiscal position, having restored the budget to balance,
and even with additional spending our net-debt-to-GDP ratio will remain low by world
standards. Just last month Australia had its AAA credit rating reaffirmed. We will manage
this debt burden by restoring jobs, by growing the economy and by positioning Australia for
future industries.

This budget lays out our strategy to rebuild our economy and secure Australia's future. The
budget's supporting households, bringing forward stage 2 of our income tax relief, increasing
the low-income tax offset and lifting the tax thresholds. As a result, more than 11 million
Australians have gotten a tax cut backdated to 1 July. The budget's helping with job creation.
There's a new JobMaker hiring credit to encourage businesses to hire younger Australians,
payable for up to 12 months and available to those employers who hire Australians on
JobSeeker aged 16 to 35. The budget is providing investment incentives, with businesses
having a turnover of up to $5 billion able to write off the full value of any eligible assets they
purchase for their business, with no limit on the value of assets eligible for full expensing.
Businesses will also be able to offset losses from this year against profits made in prior
financial years back to 2018-19.

The budget's caring for the vulnerable, providing record funding for hospitals, schools,
aged care, mental health and disability services, with additional money for the National
Disability Insurance Scheme, the doubling of the number of Medicare funded psychological
services available, 23,000 additional home-care packages and supplementary payments for
age pensioners. The budget's also providing help with affordable housing, with an expansion
of the First Home Loan Deposit Scheme and an additional $1 billion in low-cost finance to
support the construction of affordable housing, on top of the $4.6 billion provided annually in rental assistance.

My question for the minister is: can the minister please update the chamber on how the government's JobMaker Plan, including the JobMaker hiring credit, will lead to our jobs recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic?

Mr BANDT (Melbourne—Leader of the Australian Greens) (12:40): My question is to the minister is: why does this budget actively choose a future of high unemployment and low wages for the Australian people when it could be bringing down unemployment to the level that we had in this country in the years between World War II and the 1970s? Why is the Treasurer satisfied with a goal of six per cent unemployment instead of two per cent unemployment, which is what used to be considered full employment in this country?

One of the things that we've learnt throughout the response to this pandemic is that government expenditure can bring down the level of unemployment. The last government speaker just made a big point about how it was forecast to be 12 per cent—but government expenditure and finally realising that a surplus wasn't the be-all and end-all—but the government decided to put jobs first. When the government did that it brought down unemployment—that could have been 12 per cent—to eight per cent. The last government speaker made a big point about that. If the government can bring down unemployment by four per cent why aren't we aiming for a target of well below two per cent unemployment in this country? Why are we content, in this government, with a high unemployment future of at least six per cent for the foreseeable future, which is what the Treasurer has said would be his goal?

This is going to have a huge impact for young people in particular, because, going into this pandemic, nearly one in three young people either didn't have a job or didn't have enough hours of work—and that figure has gone up to closer to four in 10. It is going to stay high if the government continues with its approach of actively choosing high unemployment.

There are things this country needs. We need more social and public housing so that people have a roof over their head. If we invested in public housing, we'd create jobs. Build half a million new public housing homes and you create 40,000 jobs, plus 4,000 apprenticeships, over the next 10 to 15 years. Build us to get to 100 per cent renewable energy, expand the aged-care and university sectors instead of cutting them and you lift unemployment.

My question to the government is: why persist with at least six per cent unemployment, which translates to two million people in this country either not having a job or not having enough hours of work when we have learnt from this pandemic that government investment can bring down the level of unemployment? So why not?

My question is: why does the budget not include a jobs guarantee for young people? Young people could be guaranteed a job on nation-building, planet-saving projects that would tackle the climate crisis, tackle the inequality crisis and help us get out of the economic recession that we are in as a result of coronavirus. In other words, if the doctor tells you that you have got three things wrong with you and that they can give you a medicine that fixes all three or a medicine that just fixes one of them you take the medicine that fixes all three. We have got that medicine. It is called government investment, government investment in nation-building projects that could help bring down our emissions, reduce inequality in this country and get
unemployment back to two per cent. That's the level that it was for decades between World War II and the 1970s. This government is now actively choosing an unemployment level of closer to six per cent. It says it is comfortable with a target of closer to six per cent.

I want to reiterate the point that the government is choosing two million people either having not enough work or having no job at all, when it has just admitted that through investment it could bring it down even lower. It's going to be a devastating blow and create a lost generation of young people. Imagine being a young person at the moment trying to find a job in your area if you are in the area of hospitality, arts or entertainment? It is going to be a long road for you to find secure and stable employment.

The government has just admitted, through its speakers, it could bring down the level of unemployment lower if it wanted to. It is just choosing not to. Not only is that going to be bad for young people and for the one million Australians at the moment who don't have a job—that this government has turned its back on and decided to keep them unemployed—but it's going to be bad for everyone else's wages as well, because the higher unemployment is the harder it is going to be for people in jobs to get good and decent wages. This is going to put a brake on wage growth. My question to the government is: why are you actively choosing to lock in high unemployment and low wage growth in these budget papers when with significant government investment we could get back to full employment in this country and tackle the challenges this country is facing?

Mr SUKKAR (Deakin—Assistant Treasurer and Minister for Housing) (12:45): I thank all of the speakers who have asked questions—the members for Wentworth, Curtin, Mackellar, Fenner, Kingsford Smith, Blaxland and Melbourne. I might touch on a few points. The member for Curtin asked a series of questions in relation to how our tax plan is supporting businesses and individuals. As I said at the outset, $12½ billion in tax cuts are flowing to 11.6 million Australians in this financial year and a further $5 billion or so in the following financial year as part of bringing forward our tax plan and tax reductions. That of course is going to support aggregate demand throughout the economy. In addition, for businesses, the instant expensing of assets for 99 per cent of Australian business, which ensures that tax losses are able to be utilised essentially immediately as opposed to having tax losses that may or may not be available in future years, is going to ensure that businesses have the cash flow that they need.

In relation to the members for Wentworth and Mackellar, they are right in their statements, particularly the member for Wentworth, that Australia has weathered the crisis well by international standards. We've had our AAA credit rating reaffirmed—one of only nine countries to do so—and we've seen 446,000 jobs created over the last month. This shows that not only the JobMaker Plan outlined in the budget but the work on successive economic policies that the government has put in place throughout this calendar year have cushioned the blow and have set us up for recovery.

In relation to some of the other contributions, the member for Fenner asked a series of questions, and he also quoted a number of very notable people. One person he quoted was Jeff Borland, who I might say is somebody whose opinions and writings are known to many people in this chamber. I note that Jeff Borland said:

…JobMaker hiring credit is a definite hit: the timing is right, the target group is right and it is reasonable to think that the program will work.
It's wonderful to see the member for Fenner quoting the work of somebody who has been so complimentary of the JobMaker hiring credit.

The member for Kingsford Smith spoke about affected workers in the airline industry and about women more broadly. I would say to the member for Kingsford Smith: the 11.6 million individuals who will benefit from income tax cuts will benefit from tax cuts that are gender neutral. To suggest that women will not benefit from them is, I think, quite insulting.

To the member for Blaxland, who spoke about the housing industry and a range of other issues, I'd say that the HomeBuilder program and the First Home Loan Deposit Scheme are doing precisely what the government and what the industry have asked for in ensuring that in the second half of 2020 the industry, which was hitting a cliff, has had sufficient demand—indeed, in some parts of the country, record demand—to ensure that their workforces can be maintained. In some jurisdictions, workforces are not just being maintained; they're growing. Perhaps where the member for Blaxland and I agree is that there is no set and forget in this policy space. We will be watching the industry very closely, but we're very pleased to see thus far that the industry—they're words not mine—have benefited greatly and are indeed, in some instances, flourishing under the policy settings, including, as I said in my opening remarks, the First Home Loan Deposit Scheme, which will be helping not just first home buyers with an additional tranche of 10,000 guarantees but the industry as well.

The member for Melbourne spoke about employment. As I said in my opening remarks, we are expecting to see unemployment peak in the December quarter of this year at eight per cent. Over the forward estimates, we expect, based on Treasury estimates, unemployment to be getting back to six per cent, at which point in time the fiscal strategy of the government will naturally change. The idea we can turn it on a dime, which seems to be the suggestion from the member for Melbourne, I think, is wishful thinking and obviously comes from somebody who's part of a political party that never has to make these decisions or live in the real world of what would realistically happen.

We are very keen to make sure that we get unemployment down as low as we possibly can. That's what everything contained in this budget is focused on doing—empowering individuals, increasing aggregate demand and supporting businesses who employ those Australians and create the wealth that we all rely on.

Proposed expenditure agreed to.

Consideration in Detail
Finance Portfolio

Proposed expenditure, $818,533,000

Mr SUKKAR (Deakin—Assistant Treasurer and Minister for Housing) (12:50): Decisions by the government, prior to the COVID pandemic hitting, improved the budget bottom line by some quarter of a billion dollars over 10 years, to 2023, and this has put us on a better and more sustainable fiscal trajectory. This position of fiscal strength has enabled us to provide record levels of crisis support into the economy in response to the pandemic. We've provided unprecedented levels of support for businesses, families and individuals. Without the important repair work that we undertook in our first six years of government, we wouldn't have been able to throw this fiscal firepower at it. Australia therefore stands out amongst
advanced economies for its low infection rates and comparatively strong economic outcomes. The budget is therefore our plan to get our country out of recession and back into jobs.

Importantly, consistent with our values, the budget also recognises the need for a private sector led recovery. Jobs aren’t created in a vacuum. In this budget, we’ve seen $74 billion worth of support measures, as part of the JobMaker Plan, which will drive the strongest possible private-sector-led economic recovery. This aims to support around one million jobs over the next four years. The JobMaker hiring credit, which I’ve spoken about in relation to Appropriation Bill No. 1 2020-2021, is a $4 billion commitment essentially providing a wage subsidy for businesses who employ somebody between the ages of 16 and 35 on JobSeeker. It will ensure that those businesses are able to invest in skilling, upskilling and reskilling Australians. There's a $1 billion JobTrainer Fund to create more than 340,000 free or low-cost training places and, importantly, $1.2 billion to create 100,000 new apprenticeships and traineeships, with a 50 per cent wage subsidy for businesses who employ them. Since the start of the pandemic, the government has also committed to investing an additional $14 billion in new and accelerated infrastructure projects over the next four years, and we expect that these projects will support a further 40,000 jobs.

The pandemic has also accelerated Australia’s acceptance and use of digital capabilities. In November 2019 the Prime Minister recognised the opportunities that a digitally enabled economy presented, when he established the Digital Technology Taskforce. In 2021 the government is seeking to boost Australia’s productivity further, including through support to transition Australia into a leading digital economy and to invest in training to prepare Australians for the inevitable jobs of the future, which will be part of the recovery. The $796 million Digital Business Plan will drive adoption of digital technologies by supporting SMEs and their enterprising capability, reducing regulatory barriers and making it easier to do business digitally with government as well.

As we’ve all seen, the pandemic has also brought forward demand for faster broadband speeds, making it feasible to enhance the NBN network where emerging demand in the market justifies it. The ultrafast service will help stimulate economic recovery and add more than $6.4 billion to annual GDP from 2024. As I outlined in relation to appropriation bill No.1, bringing forward a significant tax relief for hardworking families, focusing on low- and middle-income earners in particular, puts more money into their pockets and supports aggregate demand throughout the economy. As I’ve said, it’s significant that $12½ billion of those income tax reductions will flow through the economy in this financial year and the remainder in the next, which ensures that the support is being provided when the economy and confidence requires it the most.

The ATO and a number of agencies are also investing heavily. The ATO is providing information to business and private-sector suppliers on amending their own systems to ensure that businesses, tax agents and others are able to engage with the tax office in a more digitally focused way, reducing the compliance burden and ensuring, from a revenue collection perspective, greater transparency and, of course, greater following of the rules.

Mr STEPHEN JONES (Whitlam) (12:54): I thank minister for his contribution. I note the minister has two big white folders on the desk over there and I note that there are staff supporting the minister with several volumes of white folders with lots of red tabs and lots of information in them. I would like to ask the minister, who is so well supported, if he can tell
us: how much is his government spending each year on contractors and consultants? We have asked the Department of Finance officials on several occasions how much they are spending on contractors and consultants and they cannot tell us. Perhaps the minister, who has some big folders in front of him, can assist us with that question. It's no small issue.

The government like to tell us how good they are at managing money. This is the same government that managed to blow $27 million of taxpayers' money on the Leppington Triangle that was valued at $3 million. The Prime Minister got outraged that the head of Australia Post spent $20,000 on some very expensive watches, but didn't get outraged that his government had spent $27 million—I retract that—wasted $27 million in what looks like a very dodgy land deal in Western Sydney. That's not cause for outrage. The same government was roundly condemned by the Australian National Audit Office for its sports rorts affairs, and I'll have some further questions on that. But we'd like to know why they cannot tell us how much money they're spending on contractors and consultants. It's a very good question. It goes to the heart of good management. We know that 40 per cent of the Department of Veterans' Affairs workforce—that's four in every 10 workers—are external consultants. If you have any veterans in your electorate who are wondering why they can't get a decent or consistent answer from the Department of Veterans' Affairs, four out of every 10 of the staff are external consultants. The National Disability Insurance Agency has 200 senior executive service staff employed by labour hire agencies. You would think that might be an outlier, but it's not. Right across the service, we have similar examples of massive spending on consultants, labour hire companies and contractors, and the government can't even tell us how much it's costing. We can tell you what it is costing the patients and what it is costing the customers.

There's no better example than in the agency that is charged with the job of overseeing aged care in this country. During the height of the crisis we saw the importance of this. More than 700 people died in aged-care facilities and many more were kept in conditions that left them alone, scared and isolated. It was a national tragedy. There wouldn't be a member in this place who wasn't touched by it. Oversight of aged-care homes is the responsibility of this government. This is the cost of the policy, and they can't tell you how much they're spending on contractors and on labour hire, but it's going up and up. Thirty per cent—that's three in every 10—of the staff working in the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission are casuals. Is it any wonder they can't get a policy out? Is it any wonder they can't oversee quality within the aged-care sector? Thirty per cent of the staff in the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission are casuals. Most of them are employed by labour hire companies.

It gets worse. Staff at the commission are being provided to the commission by the very same labour hire company which provides the staff to the aged-care homes—a red-hot conflict of interest. If they could argue that this was good value, maybe they could convince us that this was good economic management. What makes it worse is that we are paying more for less. We're paying more for these contractors, more for these consultants—more for the labour hire—than we would if they were directly employed. So my question to the minister is: how many, and isn't it true that it's going up? (Time expired)

Mr HASTIE (Canning) (13:00): On 1 July this year, at the Australian Defence Force Academy, the Prime Minister gave a speech on the 2020 Defence Strategic Update. In it he outlined a 10-year plan—a funding model for the ADF which would give certainty in a
changing strategic environment. A total of $575 billion will be committed to Defence over the next 10 years, including $270 billion of new spending towards complex defence acquisitions. In that speech, the Prime Minister said that, post-pandemic, the world in which we live will be poorer, more dangerous and more disorderly, and that, as a sovereign country and a regional power in the Indo-Pacific, we are going to see increased geopolitical competition, we're going to see rapid military modernisation across the region and we're going to see more grey-zone tactics being employed.

In other words, we need to be prepared for a tough decade ahead, and the government's funding model provides certainty to the Australian Defence Force over the next 10 years. In fact, by 2021, we are going to increase our defence spending budget to two per cent of GDP. This is necessary in a changing world where our security and sovereignty can never be taken for granted. Critical to this shift in our defence posture will be a strong economic recovery post COVID-19. The 2021 budget advances the government's plan for Australia's economic recovery.

The first phase of the government's revised economic and fiscal strategy is the COVID-19 economic recovery plan. It helps get Australians back to work and boosts our prosperity as we emerge from this crisis. Critical to the plan is the JobMaker Plan and the COVID-19 response package. This budget provides $74 billion in measures under the JobMaker Plan to drive stronger economic recovery and to drive down the unemployment rate. It will help drive and boost private sector growth and job creation, recognising that a strong economy is critical to a strong sovereign Australia, with a strong Defence Force to safeguard our interests over the next decade.

There some key things in the JobMaker Plan and the 2021 budget which will help get Australians back into jobs. We're spending $310 million on research and development and we're introducing a tax incentive to support Australia's economic recovery. We have the Modern Manufacturing Strategy. We talk a lot about defence sovereign industry. We need to increase our manufacturing base here in Australia. If we're going to be truly self-sufficient and sovereign, we need more manufacturing jobs in this country, and we're committing $79 million this coming year towards that. We have a research package. We've investing in new energy technologies. We have a digital business plan. We're helping out our agricultural exporters, which I know is important for you, Deputy Speaker, in your part of the world, improving their ease of doing business with markets, particularly in Asia. We're securing Australia's liquid fuel stocks. We're deregulating and, of course, we're funding a gas fired recovery. Gas is critical to delivering low-cost, reliable base-load power, not just for manufacturing but for hundreds of thousands of small and medium businesses across this great country of ours.

Importantly, procurement is a critical part of what we do as a government, and the COVID-19 situation has put a lot of pressure on small to medium businesses. The economy is an ecosystem, and one impact in one sector affects the whole thing. So some suppliers to government are struggling to meet their contractual obligations with agencies, and this in turn puts at risk their financial viability, their ability to retain staff and also their supply chains. I know the government has responded. The former Minister for Finance, Mathias Cormann, has done a lot in this space. We've engaged with industry stakeholders, represented on its procurement consultative roundtable, on matters directly affecting industry. But, because the
finance portfolio is responsible for procurement policy, I have a question to the minister today regarding the government's approach to paying its bills to suppliers as fast as possible. Can the minister representing the finance minister please advise what steps it has taken this year to lift its game in paying suppliers, including speeding up payments to small business suppliers?

Mr STEPHEN JONES (Whitlam) (13:05): The government has provided $5.7 billion in funding to over 30 grants programs or funds, some of them new, some of them existing, in the 2020 budget. Some of these funds have themselves been the subject of what can only be described as notorious pork-barrelling. In earlier contributions I've referred to the sports rorts program. The Australian National Audit Office did a review of this scandal ridden program and found that 73 per cent of the projects had not been recommended to government by Sport Australia. That's 73 per cent! We know that there was a communication between the minister's office and the Prime Minister's office. We can be absolutely certain that this money was distributed not on the basis of sporting or community need, but on the political needs of the coalition running into a hotly contested election. We know that in this case the former Deputy Leader of the National Party and the former minister responsible for sport was asked to fall on her sword on behalf of government, to cop the bullet and resign her position because of this notorious sports rort affair.

We also know that the tentacles of rorts extended far beyond the Deputy Prime Minister's office. We know that the National Party has been asked to take the heat for the Liberal Party in this instance, and we know that the Deputy Leader of the National Party was forced to resign. Many may say that this was, perhaps, unfair because the real culprit in this affair was the Prime Minister. The real culprit in this affair was the head of the Liberal Party, the Prime Minister, who was calling the shots in this notorious sports rorts affair, where more than seven out of every 10 program grants were not recommended.

We saw the examples. We saw the example of moneys being granted to sports clubs for female change facilities where the club didn't have a female team; whereas you had other eligible grantees who did have female sports teams and who were after a change room for their facilities because they didn't want their daughters having to get changed in the bush behind the paddock. They got overlooked. They got overlooked because they didn't meet the political criteria which were determining the allocation of funds under this notoriously rorted program.

We also know that the government has fought tooth and nail against establishing a federal anticorruption commission because they do not want these sorts of programs interrogated by an independent body. We know that the government set up a whitewash inquiry to fit up the former Deputy Leader of the National Party in relation to the sports rorts affair.

In the context of all of that it is deeply concerning that the government has set up another $4.7 billion in grants programs, tipping more money into these buckets that already have a big question mark over them. Can the government confirm that it has provided $5.7 billion in funding to over 30 new or existing programs in these areas? Can the government confirm that 94 per cent of the grants from the Building Better Regions Fund issued in the months leading up to last year's election went to coalition-held seats? I'll say that number again: 94 per cent of the disbursements from the Building Better Regions Fund, in the lead-up to an election—absolute coincidence, I'm sure!—went to coalition-held seats. The $207.7 million allocated to this fund in this year's budget is at risk of further pork-barrelling. So the question to the
government is: what processes is it going to put in place to ensure that we don't see a repeat of the notorious 'sports rorts' affair? Are we going to see another example of Leppington Triangle, where a Liberal Party mate and donor gets $27 million for a $3 million program—

(Time expired)

Mr STEVENS (Sturt) (13:11): It was my pleasure, in the second reading debate on Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2020-2021, to make some comment about the response to the budget, as I was able to go and meet with businesses, particularly, in my electorate in the week or two post the budget being delivered by the Treasurer and the measures being understood, absorbed and communicated throughout my community. I just want to briefly make it clear that business sentiment in my electorate, and in the whole state of South Australia, has only increased since then, in the last few weeks.

Last week we had a very reputable business confidence survey in South Australia released that showed the largest increase in business confidence in the history of that polling process, that market research, which is conducted by BankSA, which is obviously a significant financial institution in South Australia. The business community in my electorate and my home state has responded so overwhelmingly positively towards the measures in this bill. In particular, I have to say that it so enjoyable to hear stories from businesses who are now saying, 'I am proactively making investment decisions that I would not have made if it weren't for the measures in the budget that are making a huge difference,' particularly the instant asset write-off, the uncapped write-off, which has led so many businesses to have the confidence to go out and incur expenditure. They know, of course, they'll be able to immediately write off the value of those eligible assets. That makes it a huge incentive to bring expenditure forward.

The tax clawback measures as well mean businesses are going to be receiving cash flow they hadn't anticipated much sooner, by applying current accumulated tax losses to a previous period instead of a future period. It's these sorts of things that are going to lead—as they already have and will continue to, in my view—to an unlocking of business investment that is going to be a key driver for bringing us out of the economic challenges that have been thrust upon us because of this coronavirus pandemic. In fact, some of the statistics we're seeing in my home state are showing that, in some sectors, we're seeing a dramatic improvement on this commensurate period last year, before the pandemic challenges confronted us economically.

The budget has been extremely well received by small businesses in my electorate but also more generally in my community. There is a strong sense from the people that I speak to in my electorate that we are saying to the private sector, 'We want you to create the jobs that we need to bring us out of the struggles that we've had and make us, in fact, more prosperous and stronger than we were before we went into this challenge in March.' What we've done is say to the private sector, 'We want to back you, to give you confidence to make decisions, to give you incentives to make decisions, particularly significant investment decisions. We want to help you employ people.' The incentives to employ someone who is currently on JobSeeker and under the age of 35 are really important, because we can never forget that traditionally it is younger people, who go onto the employment queues very quickly, who can take the longest to come off them, and, whether it's fair or not, there is at times some stigma from employers towards people in this category. So the incentive payments that we've announced for businesses that employ people off the JobSeeker roles in that category, I think, is completely commendable, and I look forward to seeing the evidence of the success of that. It
will make a huge difference in making sure we don't have engendered youth unemployment for a long period of time, which was certainly the case as we came out of the early 1990s Keating recession.

As someone who takes a keen interest in electoral matters, and being a member of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters, I'm pleased to see we're putting some important resources towards the Australian Electoral Commission, the AEC. We've been asked to consider what challenges they may confront if we have to conduct a future federal election where some of the current challenges such as social distancing and community restrictions are still in place. It may be that, by the time we go to the next election, we need to provision for that. So I would like to ask the minister a few questions on the main finance portfolio budget measure that provided $96.7 million to the Australian Electoral Commission for ICT upgrades. Can the minister representing the finance minister please explain what kinds of projects will be included in this upgrade, how has the COVID pandemic impacted election staffing and other election logistics challenges, and how new IT tools will provide an improvement on the present methods for managing collection operations?

Ms MURPHY (Dunkley) (13:16): On the Department of Finance website, it describes the Department of Finance as a partner in 'public sector governance and managing public resources'—two incredibly important roles which, under this government, have been undermined time and time again. The federal government has a procurement policy, and when one looks at procurement on the website of the finance department, it says:

In 2018-19 there were 78,150 contracts published on AusTender with a combined value of $64.5 billion.

That's a huge amount of taxpayers money, but also a huge amount of money to wield in our economy, in our country, for the benefit of our people; to grow our economy; to have an economy that is sustainable, and investment that mitigates the impact of climate change and doesn't increase it; and to use taxpayer money wisely. But, sadly, under the current government, we have seen undermining and cuts to parts of the Public Service that should be delivering those things for the Australian people, and, importantly, to the parts of the Public Service that oversee the delivery of those things, to make sure that they are done fairly, properly, without pork-barrelling and without corruption.

We all know, because we've heard about it time and time again over the last few months, about the way this government has punished the Auditor-General for uncovering things like sports rorts. It has taken an extraordinary public intervention, one might think, from the Auditor-General to point out that the ongoing cuts to the ANAO will have ongoing limits on his ability to do his job properly. And that's not important for a political reason; it's important for democracy. It's important for the people who vote for those of us privileged enough to be in this chamber to believe in the system and to have trust in the system. The Auditor-General isn't just there to uncover wrongdoing, although he has been incredibly successful at that lately, it must be said; the Auditor-General is also there to safeguard trust and therefore to safeguard democracy. We only have to look at what's happened to other Western democracies around the world over the last few years, and the election that we've all just witnessed in America, to know what happens when a significant part of your community loses trust and faith in not just the people who are in public institutions, but the public institutions themselves. That's why it's so important that the government establish an integrity
commission that is real and that has teeth, because to do anything other than that would be to continue down that path of undermining trust, as well as undermining the capacity of institutions to hold government to account.

The Mandarin, in October, suggested that, based on reports, about $1.4 billion in real terms has been cut from accountability institutions over the last decade or so federally and that funding as a total percentage of federal budgets has dropped from what I would say is a paltry 1.1 per cent or so to 0.6 per cent. That's a trend that has to stop. My question for the minister is: will this government commit to using its procurement policy, that $64 billion or so of investment opportunities that are on the tender website, to do what our regulators, APRA and ASIC, are asking other investors to do and to commit to reducing climate emissions and to commit to ESG principles—environmental, social and governance principles—to make sure that government money is spent not just on the infrastructure and the projects that are needed at any one point in time but also on the infrastructure and the projects that will deliver long-term ESG benefits to the taxpayers in this country?

Mr SUKKAR (Deakin—Assistant Treasurer and Minister for Housing) (13:21): I might deal with a number of the questions in a job lot. I want to thank the members for Canning and Sturt as well as Whitlam and Dunkley for their questions. In relation to the specific questions from the member for Canning, the government obviously agrees with his points that the earlier payments of government bills contribute to a faster flow of capital throughout the economy and of course have a greater benefits for those recipients of those government services. So ensuring that the government pays our bills on time to private sector suppliers is important. That's why, from 1 January 2020, some of the larger Australian government agencies started to pay their electronic invoices to suppliers within five days. This applies to contracts valued up to $1 million where a supplier and Commonwealth agency both use the internationally recognised framework for delivering these e-invoices. If an Australian government agency fails to meet this requirement of paying that bill within five days, then it's liable to pay interest on any of those late payments.

The ATO is providing information to businesses and private sector suppliers in relation to the use of various accounting software. This means that suppliers have the technology they need to send invoices in the correct form—again, ensuring that there are no unnecessary delays. This has led to many accounting systems providers adopting the new international standards for e-invoicing, allowing their clients to exchange data directly. Again, government is mandating to some extent and then driving a greater uptake of that particular technology, not just with those who are contracting with government but also more broadly in the private sector.

The member for Sturt had some specific queries in relation to the Australian Electoral Commission and ICT upgrades. This is the most significant measure for the Finance portfolio in the 2020-21 budget. As we've all seen—and have probably been reminded of in recent days—the Australian electoral system is one of the best-regarded electoral systems in the world, and we need to invest in our system if we're to manage risks and live up to contemporary public expectations. The AEC has worked with the government to actively plan for modernisation of its ICT systems for the past three years. We've, of course, provided previous funding to support this work, and the further allocation of $96.7 million over three
years will facilitate that modernisation agenda. The first tranche of upgrades will modernise key election capabilities for supply chain management and a temporary election workforce.

The member for Whitlam had a succession of questions. I might just touch on the use of consultants, which I think he commenced with in his first question. And of course the government's committed to delivering services as efficiently and effectively as possible, and this will include the use of consultants to deliver special services. I might just note, though, to the member that it's already mandatory to include data on consultancy spending in agency reports. This is a requirement imposed by section 17AG of the Public Governance Performance and Accountability Rule. We recently made bipartisan changes to extend this requirement to all contracts so that they have to be published in the 2021 annual reports, and some agencies are already doing that.

I might also remind the member for Whitlam—not remind him, probably inform him, given his statements seem not to understand this—that the value of consultancy contracts in real terms in 2018-19 was in fact $91.6 million lower than it was in 2009-10. I'm not an expert on the member for Whitlam's career, but if he was a member of that government then the government of which he was a member had higher real spending on consultants than this, which obviously means his criticisms apply much more harshly to the government of which he was a part of. So I'm very pleased to inform him that, in real terms, that spending is down.

I'd say to the member for Dunkley: on procurement, of course, we're balancing a number of objectives, getting the best bang for buck for taxpayers and fuelling industry wherever possible, and that's what our procurement policy does.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Rick Wilson):** I thank the minister. I call the member for Whitlam. Before you start, I'll inform you that the Federation Chamber debate will be interrupted at 1.30.

**Mr STEPHEN JONES (Whitlam) (13:26):** The government has an unfortunate habit of saying one thing but doing the opposite, and we see in this budget the very same thing. I'd like to remind the minister that the government has presided over a doubling of the debt before the pandemic hit, despite saying that they were going to get the debt under control and have a surplus in their first budget—that was back in 2014. They've never delivered a surplus, and the budget is in deficit for as far as the eye can see.

The government was elected on a promise of getting the budget under control, but clearly it's no longer under control. It's out of control. Both net debt and gross debt have doubled, and that was before the pandemic hit. Does the gross debt or the net debt, Minister, peak in dollar terms at all over the medium term; and what is the government's plan to fix this?

**Mr SUKKAR (Deakin—Assistant Treasurer and Minister for Housing) (13:27):** As I outlined in my opening remarks, the incredible work that the government did in the six years leading up to the pandemic ensured that Australia had a sound fiscal position from which to respond. It was that sound fiscal position that has allowed us to provide unprecedented support throughout the pandemic. Firstly, to cushion the blow, we saw the succession of economic packages which culminated in the $101 billion JobKeeper program that then moved into the budget, which outlines the pathway back to economic growth and job creation. And there's been a significant cost associated with that.
If the member for Whitlam is suggesting that the government should spend less, then he should outline what programs we put in place in response to the pandemic was spending that shouldn't have been undertaken. The member for Whitlam doesn't have the courage to ever suggest that, so therefore no-one can take him seriously with his claim. The reality is—and Australians understand it; we all understand it in this room—that the fiscal position that was put back on a strong foundation by this government over six years has enabled us to do what we're doing. Yes, the fiscal support that we've put in place is monumental. We don't shy away from that for one moment, but we are able to do it. It will fuel economic growth. It will fuel jobs. That's what Australians expect, and in the end that will be the pathway back to fiscal rectitude because, without a strong economy, without a strong labour market, you don't have a strong budget. We understand that. That's why this budget is so important for Australia's future, and I commend it to the House.

Proposed expenditures agreed to.

**Procedures suspended from 13:30 to 16:00**

**Statements by Members**

**South Australia: Vocational Education and Training**

Mr ZAPPIA (Makin) (16:00): The South Australian Marshall Liberal government is determined to dismantle the TAFE sector in South Australia. When it came into office in 2018, the Marshall government immediately closed down several TAFE colleges, including three in my region. Now it wants to cut the number of courses currently provided by TAFE and outsource those courses to private training providers, some possibly from interstate. At a time of widespread skills shortages, after hundreds of millions of dollars were rorted by shonky training providers in the past and after billions of dollars were cut from training by the Morrison government, the Marshall government wants to make it more difficult and ultimately more expensive for skills training in South Australia. Whilst there are credible private sector training providers, particularly those run by industry sectors, TAFE's accessibility and credibility make it a preferred trainer for many employers and employees. The South Australian Marshall Liberal government is obsessed with its ideological privatisation agenda, with no concern for job losses or the loss of services. The TAFE cuts are short-sighted penny pinching by a government that has no vision and no strategy to rebuild South Australia, at a time that South Australia desperately needs confidence-building political leadership.

**COVID-19: Chief Health Officers**

Mr LAMING (Bowman) (16:01): I'm glad that we have informed opposition members on the other side, as I want to refer to the CHO-Premier contrivance that has driven what have turned out to be eight different responses to COVID. I remind everyone—I'm sure there's agreement—that there is only one set of public health evidence, and we shouldn't have advice to premiers that leads to eight different approaches. That may well be the federated approach here in Australia, but the medical advice has not been done appropriately and hasn't been relied on centrally.

*An honourable member interjecting—*

Mr LAMING: I'll give an example to the physician over here. How do you refuse the mother of twins to enter a state to attend a hospital based on public health advice? How do
you refuse a woman the right to be there to bury her father based on some spurious public health advice? How do you justify this on public health grounds? These CHO's were used as political appendages to meet the political needs of their poll-driven masters. What we needed was an advisory body with expertise far broader than any one CHO can have. When the Queensland CHO says, 'I am overwhelmed with the unsustainable number of applications,' then you clearly need a better approach.

Honourable members interjecting—

Mr LAMING: The interjections come from a state where the CHO has done a great job, but it is not so in Queensland, where we saw too much pressure put on the CHO. We have had abhorrent decisions made. The prevarication leading to the death of a twin was absolutely unacceptable. People died as a result of the advice. There should have been far stronger advice. We need to make CHO advice public the minute it is given to a Premier.

COVID-19: Arts and Entertainment Industry

Mr BURNS (Macnamara) (16:03): At the start of the pandemic, artists and those in the entertainment industry watched as the Prime Minister made announcements on the restrictions and limits on people gathering. When you take away the ability for more than 500 people to gather, that means you take away the ability for many artists and entertainers to work, and in an instant their income is taken away from them. In an instant a huge sector, of $111 billion, was shut down because of what was needed in this pandemic. But there was some hope that maybe this government would come around and support those in the arts and entertainment sector. Of course, we all remember that famous press conference where the Prime Minister stood next to his friend Guy Sebastian, in June, to announce a $250 million support package for the arts. That $250 million looks great on a media release. It looks fantastic on a media release. It's been 137 days since that media event, but how much has been spent? Not a dollar. Not a dollar for our artists and entertainers. Not a dollar for the people who have been unable to work because of the rules of the government as part of this pandemic. And Guy Sebastian, three weeks ago, said on Twitter that he has requested an update from the Prime Minister's office, because he knows that he was used as a political pawn by this government. They are all announcement and no delivery, and now Guy Sebastian has been caught up in their act.

Travel Agents

Mr JOYCE (New England) (16:04): The other day, I was in Armidale and a lady chased me down the street. She was a travel agent, and travel agents are getting absolutely smashed during this pandemic. We must be able to do something further to help them. Travel agents are a unique case. It's not that they're not busy; they're flat out. They're flat out dealing with cancellations. They're flat out trying to deal with the problems of vouchers and finding out how people can redeem them. With this problem, they're becoming a bank, because they don't get the money back; all they get is a credit, but the clients want their money back. We have to do what we can to assist these people further. I believe that, as we move out of this pandemic, there are some issues which we can wind down quicker, but there are some issues which we must have another look at, and travel agents are one of those. I'm going to put my shoulder to the wheel with my colleagues. It's great to hear the support of the member for Curtin. We understand this and we have brought it up with the minister. We have brought it up in the joint party room. We're trying to make sure that we do whatever we can to keep people such
as Chris Watson, Paul and Leigh McLennan, Neal and Vicki Kembrey, Anna McMurtrie and Teree George in a job, in business and in a vital part of the New England community.

**Chifley Electorate: Coral McLean Awards**

Mr HUSIC (Chifley) (16:06): Every year, I host the Coral McLean Awards, which recognise the contribution of women in our community in building better neighbourhoods or improving the quality of lives of people across the Chifley electorate. This year I was particularly determined to hold the awards, given the circumstances of the pandemic and the extra effort that's been provided through this period of time. I want to acknowledge the efforts of three women in particular in the Chifley electorate. I start with the winner, Nene Brown, who won the Coral McLean Award. Nene is a small-business owner who, at the height of the pandemic, made low-cost, home-cooked meals for local pensioners and struggling families, many times out of her own pocket. Monica Wasif was named as Chifley Young Woman of the Year for her role as chair of her school's student leadership council, leading students on numerous fundraising projects. And Rachael Hanlon, a long-time member of the Blacktown City Lions Club, received the MP Recognition Award, because I know firsthand of the contribution she's made to fundraising, supporting Blacktown and Mount Druitt Hospital, driving Indigenous reading collections and working on local initiatives to tackle domestic violence. I congratulate them all on their dedication and the difference they've made, along with the people who were nominated, all in the spirit of Coral McLean, after whom the awards were named. Coral McLean was known as the 'Mother of Mount Druitt' for her enormous contribution to the community. Again, I congratulate every one of them for their help and effort.

**Canning Electorate: Men's Sheds**

Mr HASTIE (Canning) (16:07): I encourage Men's Sheds across Canning to apply for funding under round 21 of the Morrison government's National Shed Development Program. Round 21 of the Men's Shed program will prioritise applications with a strong health, wellbeing or safety emphasis in light of COVID-19 and the needs of the sheds in the recovery period ahead. Additionally, IT equipment and training will be prioritised to facilitate increased connectivity for our sheds. Men's Sheds make a really important contribution to the health and wellbeing of our community, particularly for men. It's a great way to develop friendships and enjoy mateship and the community that the shed brings. Funding will give sheds in Canning the opportunity to upgrade their equipment and facilities. This will help them to become safer for members and even more valuable to their community. The Commonwealth has a strong track record of support for Men's Sheds in Canning, including $200,000 under the BBRF for the construction of Waroona's new Men's Shed, and over $40,000 in support of the new Pinjarra shed. On Saturday, a week ago, I was there to celebrate the anniversary of the opening in Pinjarra. I want to congratulate Rob Hodgkinson and his team at Pinjarra Men's Shed for all the work that they have done in our community. I urge Canning's local sheds in Boddington, Waroona, Serpentine-Jarrahdale, Falcon, Rolleston, Pinjarra and Mandurah to apply. Applications for the current funding round close on Friday 27 November. Get in quick.
HMAS *Parramatta II* Memorial

Ms OWENS (Parramatta) (16:09): COVID-19 restricts our numbers to many events. So on Sunday 22 November a much smaller group than usual will gather at the HMAS *Parramatta II* Memorial at Queens Wharf Reserve. There, we, and many more online, will honour the men who served on HMAS *Parramatta II*. The ship was escorting a convey to resupply the allied garrison at Tobruk when it was sunk by a German submarine on 27 November 1941. The ship's magazine exploded shortly after the torpedo struck, and the ship sunk within minutes. One hundred and thirty-eight crew members were killed, including 130 Australians. There were 24 survivors. The last known survivor, Harold Moss, died after a short battle with leukaemia in July 2011.

Those of us born in Australia after the 1950s are indeed the lucky ones. We have very little experience of war. But, make no mistake, our inexperience was paid for by sacrifice—lives lost and lives lived; in partners who lost their life partner or welcomed back a stranger; children who did not get to grow up with their dad and some who don't remember them; and the men and women who served in conflict who are forever changed.

On Sunday 22 November I am going to reflect on an awful modern truth: that we lose more veterans from suicide these days after their return than we do from conflict. So, when our veterans ask for a royal commission into veteran suicide, we could do no better than to listen to them. They know what war is like and we don't. (Time expired)

Perinatal Anxiety and Depression Action Week

Ms HAMMOND (Curtin) (16:11): This week is Perinatal Anxiety and Depression Action Week. Started 15 years ago by PANDA, this week helps to raise awareness of perinatal mental health and encourages parents, healthcare providers and the community to have conversations about perinatal mental health.

While, for most people, becoming a parent is a time of incomparable joy, it is also one of the most significant life transitions anyone can experience. During pregnancy and 12 months after the birth of a child, there can be stressors, emotional upheavals and huge challenges arise in the life of parents. Sometimes these are part of the normal experiences of parenting, such as loss of sleep, but sometimes they can be more serious. The stats show us that perinatal mental illness affects one in five expecting and new mothers and one in 10 new fathers—equating to roughly 100,000 Australians experiencing a perinatal mental illness each year. It does happen. It doesn't mean you're a bad parent. And there is help available. In my electorate of Curtin, some of the providers available that can provide help are Ngala community centre in Mt Claremont, Meerilinga at West Leederville, St John of God Subiaco's Raphael Service, King Edward Memorial Hospital, and the Statewide Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Program.

Thank you, PANDA, for the work that you do to continue to raise awareness and ensure that parents can access the support they need, and thank you to all the child health nurses who helped me.

NAIDOC Week

Mr JOSH WILSON (Fremantle) (16:12): Standing here on the land of the Ngunnawal and Ngambri people as a representative of an electorate that is part of the land of the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation, I am glad that today marks the beginning of NAIDOC Week,
and I pay my respects to the elders past and present of all First Nations people of Australia and the current and emerging First Nations leaders, especially in my community.

I love the power and the clarity of the theme of this year's NAIDOC Week, 'Always was, Always will be'. In the words of The Little Red Yellow Black Book—which I recommend to everyone—'NAIDOC Week is about every Australian celebrating the First Australians, the oldest surviving cultures in the world.' In my community, in Walgalup and Beeliar—or Fremantle and Cockburn—the week will feature a range of events, including a Noongar language singing workshop, the Noongar Olympics and author event featuring Stephen Kinnane, whose award-winning book Shadow Lines is the story of his maternal grandparents, Miriwillung woman Jessie Argyle and Englishman Edward Smith.

In addition to celebration, this week is an opportunity to focus on how much further we can go and how much further we should and we must go, walking together on the path of reconciliation and respect, the path to full and equal social and economic inclusion in the life of this country for First Nations people. That's why Labor continues to honour the process that occurred in 2017, the Uluru Statement from the Heart, and its commitment to achieving voice, treaty and truth.

Moore Electorate: Westfield Local Heroes

Mr GOODENOUGH (Moore) (16:14): I rise to recognise the three Westfield Local Heroes for 2020, selected at our local shopping centre Whitford City—Dara Mills, Azelene Williams and Lorraine Lekias—for their outstanding contributions to our community. These inspiring local leaders were nominated by and voted for by the community. Each of their affiliated organisations will be awarded a $10,000 grant to help support and further their important work.

Dara Mills, a member of the Mullaloo Surf Life Saving Club, campaigned for four years to have a universal beach access mat installed at Mullaloo Beach to enable people with disabilities and limited mobility gain access to the beach. The federal government made this project a reality with a grant under the Stronger Communities Program, and Dara will use her new grant to upgrade the beach access wheelchair for the surf club.

Azelene Williams is an author and qualified counsellor who actively advocates against bullying in schools, with her daughter Sian Williams, and domestic violence through her counselling practice, community work and books.

Lorraine Lekias founded the charity Fostering Help to provide material items to foster children and advice to their carers. Lorraine has 20 years of experience as a foster mum and has five foster children. We are very fortunate to have such dedicated and caring volunteers in the Moore community.

International Travel

Dr LEIGH (Fenner) (16:15): For two years, Dipy Malik and her husband saved up to pay the $10,000 fee for a sponsored parent visa. It was granted on 25 January 2020, the day before Australia Day and India's Republic Day. Mr Malik's father, Shyam Lal Khatri, is 84 years old. The visa allowed him to stay in Australia for five years. As a result of the COVID-19 travel ban, Mr Khatri has been unable to travel to Australia. Yet the government won't refund the fee and won't extend the visa.
Labor recognises why the government has put the travel ban in place. Unlike the Morrison government's attack on interstate travel bans put in place by premiers, we haven't criticised the government's international travel ban. But it's not fair that thousands of people have paid for parent visas that can't be used.

If a business had promised to provide a service to customers and couldn't deliver, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission would expect them to offer a refund or a deferral. The Morrison government should hold itself to the same ethical standard that it expects of the private sector. There's one solution that's simple and fair: if someone on a sponsored parent visa cannot enter Australia due to the travel ban, then the visa should be extended by the duration of the travel ban.

**Lyne Electorate: Saxby's Stadium**

Dr GILLESPIE (Lyne) (16:17): Recovery from the bushfires that ravaged the Mid North Coast of New South Wales is gathering momentum. I was pleased to meet at Taree Saxby's basketball stadium, which was built in the early 1980s by volunteer labourers and a government-guaranteed loan, guaranteed by Mr Yarad of Yarad's Menswear. He turned up for the big announcement of a $8.2 million state and federal government grant out of the bushfire economic recovery plan funds.

Taree's Saxby's Stadium, which is very heavily used, has reached capacity, but it's being transformed, courtesy of this $8.2 million grant, into the Iron Arena. It will have another three courts, making it a five-court multisport, multi-event arena. Not only will basketball flourish there, but there will be futsal, netball, trade shows and entertainment events. It's got the capacity to hold 1,300 people. It will drive multiple event based tourism and multiple sport based tourism into our regional economy. Retail, food outlets and accommodation will all benefit. It's a great announcement. Congratulations, Steve Atkins, for the great work in making this happen.

**Queensland: Storms**

Mr DICK (Oxley) (16:18): On Saturday 31 October, when Queenslanders were voting in the state election, over 1,700 properties in the Springfield Lakes and Ipswich area, which fall into the Oxley and Blair electorates, were affected by severe storms and hail damage. Some areas reported hailstones of up to 14 centimetres—the size of shotputs. Hundreds of families have been displaced out of their homes for six to 12 months indefinitely.

In a year when people have reduced their insurance premiums due to COVID, this unexpected natural disaster has left so many Australians completely displaced. Last week I spoke with distressed residents in my electorate to assure them that we are looking after them and doing everything we can. We're talking about $200 million in insurance claims already. I have let residents know that I will be standing with them to ensure they are looked after at this tragic time, when their houses have been completely collapsed and their belongings have been totally ruined alongside cars and other valuable items. Some are yet to find accommodation.

Having written to the Prime Minister and spoken with Minister David Littleproud last week, I'm hopeful that the federal government can offer more financial support to residents and local businesses. I visited the recovery centre at Springfield Lakes a couple of times last week alongside our state member, Charis Mullen, and our Queensland Premier, Annastacia Palaszczuk. I'm pleased to see state funding come through. I want to thank all the volunteers.
at the YMCA, particularly Bec Andlemac; the school principal, Greg Corrigan; the mayor, Councillor Teresa Harding; all the SES volunteers; the fire brigade; and the ambos who have been on site to help residents. To Springfield Lakes residents: we won't leave you behind.

**Boothby Electorate: Price Memorial Oval**

Ms FLINT (Boothby—Government Whip) (16:20): On Saturday 31 October 2020 it was my absolute pleasure to officially open the new facilities at Price Memorial Oval in Hawthorn alongside my good friend the very hardworking member for Elder, Carolyn Power MP, and the mayor of Mitcham, Dr Heather Holmes-Ross. The upgrade has transformed this community facility, supported by a Morrison Liberal government grant of $385,000. I want to especially congratulate the Sturt District Cricket Club on raising $35,000 and the Mitcham Hawks Football Club for their $24,000 contribution.

This year has been so tough for all of our local clubs, but Sturt and Mitcham kept fundraising throughout the year to ensure the project was fully funded. By working together towards this upgrade, the Sturt District Cricket Club and the Mitcham Hawks Football Club, their players, volunteers and families can now enjoy the fantastic new facilities at Price Memorial Oval. The extensive upgrade includes: renovation of a section of the clubrooms to create a new viewing area; new footpaths and grass; the construction of a new grandstand pavilion; the installation of solar panels to reduce power costs; and, importantly, new changerooms, which the Sturt District Cricket Club and the Mitcham Hawks Football Club will use to support their male and female teams and visiting teams as well.

In closing, I acknowledge the considerable efforts of Sturt District Cricket Club chair Robert Young, Mitcham Hawks Football Club president Carsten Gabrisch and project manager David Bartlett, who all worked tirelessly to see this project funded and completed. Congratulations to all.

**Qantas**

Mr THISTLETHWAITE (Kingsford Smith) (16:21): Qantas is at it again. The once proud national airline is sacking even more of its workers. From a workforce of around 29,000 at the start of the year, Qantas made 6,000 workers redundant a few months ago. Then it followed up with the despicable outsourcing of the jobs of 2½ thousand maintenance workers to a foreign corporation, on lower wages and conditions. Late last week we got yet more job losses from Qantas, with its decision to permanently close its service and sales desks at all its airports and lounges. This means the loss of another 100 Qantas jobs. It means passengers will be left to deal with cancellations and last-minute booking changes themselves or through a call centre. The removal of customer service staff will be hard for older passengers and people with disability.

Qantas is an important part of the fabric of Australia. It is a 100-year-old company that Australians are rightfully proud of. I say to the board and the management of Qantas: don't trash that good reputation that your company has with the Australian people.

The Morrison government unfortunately has stood by and allowed this to occur, despite the fact that the most Qantas workers actually live in the Prime Minister's electorate. This morning I was proud to stand in solidarity with affected Qantas workers and other aviation staff here at Parliament House to call on the Morrison government to intervene here, to get to Qantas and save their jobs and to come up with a plan for aviation.
Mackellar Electorate: Love for Lachie

Mr FALINSKI (Mackellar) (16:23): The Northern Beaches community never ceases to inspire me. The Pittwater not-for-profit Love For Lachie has managed to raise more than $200,000 for children's brain cancer research during its annual charity golf day event. This philanthropic not-for-profit was established in honour of a beloved member of our community: Lachlan Muldoon. Lachie was the son of Tanja and Brendan, adoring older brother and friend to many. Lachie fought bravely but lost his battle to an aggressive form of brain cancer in 2015.

In Australia, the tragic reality is that brain cancer kills more children than any other disease. This form of cancer kills more people under the age of 40 than any other. The impressive amount of funds raised during this event will go towards three separate clinical trials which are desperately searching for a cure to this horrible disease. Specifically, the trials will be targeting paediatric brain cancers of the high-grade glioma category, this being the deadliest form of brain cancer in children. Not only will this further the research within the field; the clinical trials will provide many children Australia-wide with access to the latest trial and treatment options.

Although Lachie lost his six-month battle with cancer, an impressive legacy lives on and fights against this disease in his name. On behalf of many members of the Northern Beaches community and cancer patients now able to access leading treatments, I would like to thank the Love for Lachie charity for all their strength and gallant fundraising. (Time expired)

Defence Procurement

Mr GOSLING (Solomon) (16:25): We need to break the defence procurement cycle of always retrofitting capabilities at great financial and strategic cost. The ADF should not get platforms decades too late and for the wrong war. The armed reconnaissance helicopter program has become the Airbus Tiger replacement program, which is actually a chance for us to get this right. The leading options, both from the United States, are the Boeing AH-64E Apache Guardian and the Bell AH-1Z Viper.

If, as the government says in its 2020 Force Structure Plan, we need to prepare for more naval and amphibious operations and we need helicopters fit for that purpose, the Viper is the clear winner, as it's the first helicopter to be fully marinised. It comes fully compatible with naval ship systems. It's a clear stand-out. That's not from me; that's from the Royal United Services Institute. Its airframe doesn't need extensive maintenance to fly after exposure to sea salt. They can hit the beach flying, with immediate ground support to the troops. At $2.36 billion, they also give the best bang for buck, but, with a 20-year life of type, they are much better than the Apache, which is over $3 billion.

So why did the government do a deal with Boeing at AUSMIN in July? (Time expired)

Parer, Mr Justin

Mr ENTSCH (Leichhardt) (16:26): It gives me pleasure to pay tribute to Cairns businessman Justin Parer, managing director of BSE Maritime Solutions. Mr Parer's name has been synonymous with Cairns' marine industry for more than two decades now. Justin built BSE Maritime Solutions up to be one of our city's biggest shipyards and a maritime maintenance powerhouse. Justin has been a tireless and passionate supporter of the Cairns marine industry through his advocacy across both state and federal governments, with the
express aim of putting Cairns’ marine precinct on the map. He has certainly achieved that in spades.

Last month, Justin decided to call time and sell his company to global shipbuilder Austal. Austal, a tier 1 contractor, was recently awarded a $324 million contract to build an additional six Cape class vessels. This is on top of the 12 OPVs currently under construction. This acquisition now provides Austal with a dockyard and ship-lifting capacity in north-eastern Australia, including the world’s second-largest mobile boat hoist. Austal’s CEO, David Singleton, has confirmed the Cairns slipway will support existing contracts, including the 21 Guardian patrol boats built for the 13 Pacific nations. This places our city on the cusp of jobs in a maritime maintenance boom—one whose occurrence Justin played a significant role in ensuring. I say thank you very much, Justin, for a job well done.

ACT Australian of the Year Awards

Mr DAVID SMITH (Bean) (16:28): In NAIDOC Week 2020, with its theme of 'Always Was, Always Will Be', I would like to congratulate two constituents of my electorate of Bean—Pat Turner, a proud Arrernte and Gudanj woman, and Caroline Hughes, a proud Ngunawal woman—for their nominations in the ACT Australian of the Year awards. Both are strong Aboriginal women who have dedicated their lives to championing Aboriginal culture, health outcomes and Indigenous education.

Ms Hughes has worked with the Yurauna Centre, expanding its capacity and ensuring it meets the needs of the community. Caroline is a firm believer in the power of education and has gone above and beyond in her role as a professional educator. Caroline also serves as a member of the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body, representing and advocating for her community.

Ms Turner has long been an advocate for Indigenous health, working with all levels of government in the pursuit of health justice. As the CEO of NACCHO, she has driven outcomes for those most vulnerable in our community and delivered meaningful, lasting change. Significantly, Ms Turner has sat as an adviser on the Indigenous voice to parliament. As one of the Uluru Statement from the Heart's fiercest champions, she has consistently stated that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians must choose who speaks for them, how that happens and on what issues. On behalf of the Bean electorate: thank you, Pat and Caroline, for what you do. You are champions of our community.

Nicholls Electorate: Fruit Industry

Mr DRUM (Nicholls—Chief Nationals Whip) (16:30): The coming fruit harvest in the Goulburn Valley is in jeopardy due to the lack of available labour to pick and pack this fruit. The fruit harvest in the Goulburn Valley has traditionally relied upon the working holiday-makers, the backpackers and also some from the Pacific island nations in the Seasonal Worker Program. Backpackers have dropped from the usual 130,000 at this time of the year to the roughly 67,000 we currently have. There seems to be a shortfall of 26,000 workers that we need. The coalition at a federal level has tried to tackle this shortage by providing extra time in Australia to current working holiday-makers. We’ve tried to engage further countries in the Seasonal Worker Program. We’ve got relocation incentives of $6,000 for people who want to move into the agricultural regions to get involved in this work, and some more incentives for those on youth allowance. The Minister for Agriculture, Drought, and
Emergency Management has said we have pre-vetted 22,000 Pacific island workers who are work ready and ready to come out here, but the Victorian government needs to get on board, accept this offer and do what it has to do. It needs to make a clear statement from the minister for agriculture that the chief health officer and all the health ministers involved are fully in sync with this program. We don't want a situation where Victoria starts blaming everybody else.

**Weston, Lieutenant Olive, OAM**

Ms RISHWORTH (Kingston) (16:31): Today I rise to pay tribute to local and Australian hero Olive Weston and to give my sincere condolences to her loved ones following her death. Olive served as a nurse in World War II, helping to treat over 23,000 troops in New Guinea before applying her nursing skills to assist casualties of Pearl Harbor. Her impact and service were so great that her incredible story was told in her biography, *Olive Weston: the Heroic Life of a World War II Nurse*. But her service did not stop there. Following the birth of her beloved son, Steven, Olive set about improving the conditions and attitudes that confronted people living with disability. This led to her establishing Community Living Project, an important organisation that helps people living with disability to live independently, and it continues to impact the lives of many this day. When I met Olive, she was passionate as ever about helping people with disability. She also continued her lifelong work to improve the lives of others as an active advocate with the Port Noarlunga Christies Beach RSL. Indeed, Olive was the driving force behind the RSL launching what could have been one of the first ever honour rolls dedicated to nurses. I've previously spoken in this parliament about Olive's achievements, and I hope that she rests in peace. Her contribution to this country will never be forgotten.

**Stirling Electorate: Safety Direct Solutions**

Mr CONNELLY (Stirling) (16:33): When the men and women of our Australian Defence Force transition into civilian life, there are two key determinants of success. One is supportive family and friends and the other is a job. Employing a veteran is not an act of charity, though; it's actually simply good for business. Increasingly, employers are realising that employing a veteran lets them tap into the skills that are always in high demand, like discipline, teamwork and leadership.

Last week I visited a local business in my electorate of Stirling, Safety Direct Solutions. A former Army mate of mine, Owen, works there and is helping to contribute to their future vision in a big way. SDS work in the fields of security, emergency management, medical and training services, and all of those skills were on display when they helped me to abseil off a three-storey platform in their headquarters at Balcatta. I was a little nervous at how eager everyone seemed to be to throw me over the edge, but I was very grateful that they put a safety harness on me first! This also helped to demonstrate some of the crossover skills in leadership, teamwork, planning and, of course, some practical management skills. SDS recognise that their business is benefiting from hiring veterans. I encourage other businesses to get out there and tap into the skills, the attitudes and the knowledge of those committed Australian men and women as they separate from our Defence Force.
Adelaide Holocaust Museum and Andrew Steiner Education Centre

Mr GEORGANAS (Adelaide) (16:34): Today the Adelaide Holocaust Museum and Andrew Steiner Education Centre is being officially opened in my electorate of Adelaide. It's the culmination of decades of hard work by the Jewish community, in particular Andrew Steiner OAM. Andrew Steiner is a Holocaust survivor, and has spent his life educating students about this tragic period in history. It's fitting that the launch is taking place today, on the anniversary of Kristallnacht or, in English, 'Night of Broken Glass', which occurred between 9 and 10 November 1938 when Nazis torched synagogues; vandalised Jewish businesses, schools and homes; and killed close to 100 Jewish people.

The museum will serve as a reminder of those atrocities, which should never be repeated, by the Nazi regime. This is more important than ever, given the rise in anti-Semitism, racism and hate speech that we are witnessing around the world today. The museum stands as a reminder that we all have a role in ensuring that it never ever happens again.

I sincerely congratulate all those involved in making this museum a reality, including: Greg Mackie, the CEO of the History Trust of South Australia; the Catholic Archdiocese; principal and foundation partner, Gandel Philanthropy; the Jewish Community Council of South Australia; Sue Drenth, who oversaw the development phase; and, of course, Andrew Steiner OAM, and the museum's board.

Hardman, Ms Louise

Mr CONAGHAN (Cowper) (16:36): Today I'd like to congratulate Louise Hardman, founder of Coffs coast company Plastic Collective for being named as one of the four nominees in the New South Wales section of the Australian of the Year Local Heroes award. Louise truly is a local hero, whose bravery to back her dream of stopping waste plastic from entering the ocean is becoming a reality.

In 1992, when working as a zoologist for the Solitary Islands Marine Reserve, near Coffs Harbour, Louise lost a green turtle in her care. She performed an autopsy, and found large amounts of plastic debris in the turtle's stomach and other organs. From that moment on, Louise has worked tirelessly on her dream of stopping waste plastic from entering the ocean. Key to achieving this goal was Louise's desire to change people's attitude towards plastic.

Here Louise is aligned to our government's goal to take responsibility for our waste, and to use it to drive a $1 billion waste and recycling industry. In February, the Plastic Collective received a grant of almost $2.5 million from our government, through the Cooperative Research Centres Projects, to further develop the company's mobile plastic shredder and extruding machine. Congratulations Louise, I wish you the very best at tonight's New South Wales Australian of the Year 2021 awards ceremony. You're already a winner in our eyes.

International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife

Dr HAINES (Indi) (16:37): Well, 2020 is the International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife, and, as the year draws to a close, I want to pay tribute to them in this House. Midwife is an ancient word, meaning 'with women'. And in 2020 midwives have been there for those women feeling so alone in pregnancy, in childbirth and in navigating their new family without the usual face-to-face love and support of grandparents, aunts, uncles and friends.
Across every emergency department, and in hospital wards, aged-care facilities, mental health outreach, GP practices, COVID-testing clinics and home-based care, there have been our nurses. Record numbers signed up to return to practice. It has been all hands to the wheel. They are the cornerstone of our pandemic response, the backbone of our healthcare system, whether it be Debbie Rogers leading her team in Alexandra; Anna Van Uden leading the midwifery team at Albury-Wodonga Health; Leonie McLaughlin and the nurse educators at Mansfield District Hospital; or our young Indi nurses Hannah Nolan, working at the Royal Children’s Hospital, or Lucy Macleish at the Royal Melbourne Hospital; or our aged-care specialists Steve Voogt and Heila Brooks, seconded for their expertise to respond to the Melbourne crisis.

Our nurses and midwives have made an enormous difference in the lives of people in my electorate and beyond. To all those nurses and midwives in Indi and across Australia and the world: for your expertise, care and compassion in this uncertain year, and every year, we are grateful.

Climate Change

Ms BELL (Moncrieff) (16:39): Manufacturing needs affordable, reliable energy to produce more jobs for families. In Moncrieff, whether I'm talking to a parent working hard to meet their mortgage payments and school fees or a business owner trying to rebuild in the wake of the pandemic, the message I get on energy costs is clear: families have to make ends meet and families care about emissions. Families in Moncrieff need the government to be balanced and sensible. We need calm, methodical, sustainable action. They worry about the hysterical messages from the Greens that advocate drastic action on climate change in a manner that is either grossly ignorant or callously indifferent to business and family budgets. In Moncrieff, businesses and families know that, to deliver results, our government is committed to our position and clear on our plan. Labor's divisions don't allow them to move to any sort of sensible position. We know that the few sensible voices on the other side are battling those that align with the hysterical position of the Greens. That's why Labor refuses to commit to a 2030 emissions target. Those on the other side refuse. Even if they did commit, the good people of Moncrieff would be rightly sceptical that a party so divided cannot be trusted to achieve targets in a sensible and measured manner.

The coalition consistently sets, meets and beats emissions targets and will continue to do so with technology investments, not with taxes. That translates to affordable, reliable energy in parallel with lower emissions— (Time expired)

Health Care

Ms SWANSON (Paterson) (16:40): I've spoken about health and the looming medical crisis in my electorate on many occasions in this place, and I think COVID-19 and the global pandemic have shown us one thing: if you have your health, you have one of the principle keys to the kingdom. Since the last federal election, I've seen an endless stream of doctors and practice managers come to my office, email me and reach out. They are desperate. Coalition governments at both state and federal levels should be ashamed of the mess they have made of health care. They have made it incredibly difficult for regional GPs and our health service. The government's Modified Monash Model, while I understand the detail in it, has not worked for some regional communities, and mine is one of them. It is the census data that forms the road map for regional health, and sadly this road map undermines local doctors, like those in
my electorate, and disincentivises doctors moving to our area—and we so desperately need them.

My community already has mass waiting lists, with many practices from Maitland and Port Stephens closing their books. The locals can't get an appointment, let alone the influx of tourists we will see coming to our magnificent part of the world in the coming Christmas and New Year period and throughout the year. We love people coming, and we want them to be able to receive expert medical care while they're in Port Stephens and in my electorate more generally. The reasonable request from junior doctors—(Time expired)

**Dawson Electorate: Road Infrastructure**

Mr CHRISTENSEN (Dawson) (16:42): During the recent Queensland election we saw a lot of misinformation being bandied around by the Labor Party. One of the bigger lies was that the Morrison Liberal-National government's recent budget provided nothing for the Bruce Highway. The 2020-21 year allocation just in my electorate of Dawson provides for the Bruce Highway a share of $20 million for the upgrade strategy; $26.4 million for blackspots, rest areas and safety upgrades; $156 million for the Bruce Highway safety package; $1.5 million for the Goorganga Plains upgrade planning; $93 million for the Haughton River floodplain upgrade, or the Haughton bridge upgrade; $919,000 for the Jumper Creek upgrade; $2 million for the Mackay northern access upgrade; $14 million for overtaking lanes; $13 million for pavement widening; over $20 million for road operation improvement projects; $4.7 million to continue the Burdekin bridge upgrade; and $12.6 million to complete Mackay Ring Road stage 1. What Labor mean when they say 'nothing' is over $364 million in my electorate alone.

But funding for roads doesn't stop there. There's also $29.6 million for the Shute Harbour Road under the Roads of Strategic Importance initiative, and more than $5.8 million for local councils through the Roads to Recovery Program, Bridges Renewal Program and Black Spot Program—(Time expired)

**Blair Electorate: Focal Community Services**

Mr NEUMANN (Blair) (16:44): I want to congratulate Focal Community Services, headquartered in Ipswich, for their amazing efforts to innovate and ensure people living with disabilities and their carers can feel engaged, supported and included. Focal's original name was Friends of Challinor Aid League. It was established in 1974, when people leaving Challinor Centre living with disability and their families and friends in the community wanted to make sure they were cared for and had opportunities in life. Since then Focal have provided services and support for people with disability, including accommodation, respite, advocacy and community services.

Four years ago Focal brought in Mickael Blanc as the CEO. When I first met him he came across as someone with determination and real vision to grow the organisation along with the NDIS. Under his leadership Focal have now grown to cover 600 residential or clients—or friends as they call them—with 200 staff across Brisbane, Redlands and Logan.

Last week I was proud to join Mickael, staff, service providers, families members and friends—along with Betty, who was an original board member—to open the new community hub in Booval in Ipswich in my electorate. The hub is a bright and welcoming place where clients can hang out, undertake training, visit with service providers and receive friendship
and nurture. It's a safe and comfortable environment. Congratulations to Focal. It's fantastic to see the growth. I want to congratulate everyone there for the work done in South-East Queensland by Focal.

**Australian Bushfires**

Mr CRAIG KELLY (Hughes) (16:45): Last week 3 November marked the 40th anniversary of when five volunteers of the Sutherland Shire headquarters bushfire brigade, which had the call signal Heathcote 81, tragically lost their lives while fighting a bushfire at Waterfall along the Uloola Track. The crew of headquarters 81 consisted of 26-year-old Steve Crunkhorn, a deputy captain of headquarters brigade, who was also an electrical engineer residing at Heathcote—Steve was in charge of the crew that day—24-year-old Gregory Rolfe, a banker who lived in Engadine; 21-year-old Vernon Stedman, a wood machinist who lived in Heathcote; 21-year-old William Cummings Jr, a gardener who lived in Miranda; and 19-year-old David Marshall, who was also a deputy captain of the headquarters brigade and an electronics technician who also lived in Heathcote. Their loss reminds us of the dangers of the Australian bush. In the Sutherland Shire we have the magnificent bushlands around us, but we need to be reminded of the dangers of it and we need to be ever vigilant. We also pray for their losses. We hope that we have a bushfire season this year without any further tragedies.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bird): In accordance with standing order 43, the time for members' statements has concluded.

**BILLS**

**Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2020-2021**

**Consideration in Detail**

Education, Skills and Employment Portfolio

Proposed expenditure, $3,461,202,000

Consideration resumed.

Mr GEE (Calare—Minister Assisting the Minister for Trade and Investment and Minister for Decentralisation and Regional Education) (16:47): This is the budget that saved Australia. Strengthening our economy, creating jobs, creating landmark infrastructure investments, guaranteeing essential services, building our capability as a nation—these are the hallmarks of this budget. This is a budget which creates educational opportunities so crucial to our economic prosperity. To this end, our government is continuing to support the delivery of quality early childhood education to Australian families and funding certainty for schools and universities, while delivering more higher education places and short courses. We on this side of the aisle believe that every Australian should have access to world-class education.

I'm pleased that we've secured a 36 per cent growth in funding for students in regional schools through to 2029. We are providing historic levels of funding, with an estimated $70.9 billion in total Commonwealth funding for schools in regional and remote Australia over the decade to 2029. Overall the government is investing a record $314.2 billion in recurrent funding to schools through to 2029.

We're focused on the implementation of the Gonski and Napthine reforms, supporting quality teaching in school leadership, insisting that literacy and numeracy remain essential elements of high-quality education and increasing transparency for parents and data for...
schools through NAPLAN. On top of near record and growing funding for schools, the government has committed an additional $146.3 million to deliver a range of projects to help support students, families and school communities impacted by COVID-19, with a focus on disadvantaged students.

The McCormack-Morrison government wants more Australians to undertake a degree, learn a trade, study a vocational qualification, upskill with a microcredential, start a business or get a job. This budget sees new investments in university places, research and key research infrastructure, including: $1 billion to fund research at Australian universities to drive the discovery of new products, ideas and innovations to power our post-COVID-19 recovery; $550.3 million for additional university places and short courses; and, through the Job-ready Graduates Package, an additional $400 million for regional universities.

The McCormack-Morrison government is investing a record amount in child care and early learning in this budget—$9.4 billion, increasing to $10.3 billion in 2023-24. Our once-in-a-generation reforms have delivered a 3.2 per cent reduction in out-of-pocket expenses for families. Ninety per cent of families using approved child care receive a subsidy of between 50 and 85 per cent. Seventy-one per cent of families are paying no more than $5 per hour, and, within that number, almost one-quarter are paying no more than $2 per hour.

Australia is going to need more teachers, more nurses, more engineers, more agricultural scientists and more IT professionals. The best thing we can offer our young people impacted by COVID-19 is a pathway to a realistic job and the economic conditions where jobs are created. As a parent, I know that high-quality teachers are an essential part of a well-functioning education system. It's important that we continue to improve outcomes in education and attract the best possible people to the teaching profession and then provide the necessary supports for ongoing training and continuous improvement. There are measures in the budget to address these issues.

Our government has laid out its plan to close the educational gap between regional students and their city based cousins. We're creating more university places for Australian students, with more support for regional students and universities. We're focused on stronger relationships between higher education and industry and less expensive degrees in areas of expected job growth. That is the focus of the education portfolio, and that is why I am a passionate supporter of this budget. We know how difficult this budget has been for parents, for students and for teachers. I want to take this opportunity—

An opposition member interjecting—

Mr GEE: The member opposite doesn't care about the impact that COVID-19 has had on our education system or our teachers and our students and their parents.

An opposition member interjecting—

Mr GEE: You should just sit there in silence, sir, and listen to this.

An opposition member interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bird): Order! Both members, please.

Mr GEE: I want to acknowledge the important work of our teachers through COVID-19 and I want to thank them, on behalf of our government, for everything that they have done. I want them to know that we value them and we support them. We understand how stressful it's
been. This government has delivered a budget which supports schools and students, but particularly those schools and students in country areas. I want to make particular mention of those country schools, teachers and students, that have been doing it so tough through COVID. Once again we thank them, and I reiterate that this is the budget that saved Australia.

Mr PERRETT (Moreton) (16:53): Griffith University has a campus in my electorate. Sadly, it announced last week that it would be cutting almost 300 university jobs—300 households hit hard by a hard-hearted government's culture war. Griffith University is just the latest university forced to make staffing cuts. Universities Australia estimate that, by the end of this year, 21,000 university jobs will be lost. What a Christmas gift this will bring to the nation! Universities, like many other businesses and organisations, have been hit hard by coronavirus. International students were locked out by the Prime Minister—in fact, he told them to go home—resulting in a loss of revenue of around $4.8 billion for this year alone. Then the Morrison government deliberately locked the public universities out of JobKeeper, changing the rules three times to ensure they couldn't access the $130 billion wage subsidy program. Prime Minister Morrison could have stopped the job losses—academics, tutors, admin staff, library staff, catering staff, ground staff, cleaners, security—but he did not.

Regional universities, in National Party seats, will be hit hardest. Regional universities support 14,000 jobs in regions being hit by trade embargoes, but the Morrison government chose not to help a sector that is our fourth-largest export industry. To rub salt into the wound, the job-ready graduates reforms have now been passed by the Senate, cutting $1 billion from universities already struggling—'reforms' that make it harder and more expensive for students to go to university. The stated aim of the job-ready graduates reform is to get more students studying maths, science and engineering, but it won't achieve this noble aim. In fact, it will have the opposite effect. The reform will incentivise universities to offer more humanities courses and fewer maths and science courses, because they will receive more funding for the non-priority courses, including humanities, than they will for the priority courses, like maths and science.

Currently, universities receive $28,958 resourcing to teach a science course. Under the new reforms, they will receive $24,200 resourcing for that same course—a cut of $4,758. Many students will be worse off, and some will pay double for their degrees. It's unlikely that making courses cheaper will create an incentive for students to study maths, science or engineering. Students should not be making their future study choices based on the cost of the degree. Saddling students with a mountain of debt before they commence their career will potentially create a disincentive to study—this, when our nation needs our best and brightest to step up, now more than ever.

By 2025, Australia will require another 3.8 million university qualifications. We need our universities to be skilling up students for jobs for the future. Universities need government support, not constant cuts, and students need to be inspired to study the course of their choice without the burden of crippling debt. The government has promised to fund 39,000 new university places by 2023, but it is cost-shifting university education to students by ramping up student debt, with individual students paying an extra seven per cent of the total cost of these courses.

The class of 2020, those graduating next week, has had an exceptionally difficult year. They have not had the benefit of spending as much time with their peers, due to COVID-19
restrictions. Sport, cultural events, formals, schoolies et cetera have been cancelled or changed terribly. Many classes have been undertaken online, which is not always ideal. The usual stresses of year 12 have been exacerbated by anxiety about an invisible enemy that has so far caused more than a million deaths around the globe. Families have been separated by travel restrictions. Grandparents are isolated or dead. To top it off, the Morrison government is making it harder and more expensive for this graduating class of 2020 to go to university.

I ask the minister at the table: is it fair that, after the year 12 from hell, this government should saddle 40 per cent of university entrants from the class of 2020 with higher university fees? Is it fair that, after the year 12 from hell, the Morrison government should shift the cost burden of providing more university places to our students?

Mr LAMING (Bowman) (16:58): This is a valuable opportunity to ask a couple of questions about education in regional Australia. I want to touch on health and medical research, as it pertains to education. I also want to talk about the budget allocated for early education, school education and university education and the impact of COVID on school attendance in regional Australia. Then, finally, I want to look at the permanent residency arrangements that exist for those that choose to study and work in regional Australia. They're all key questions that I think this government is finally attuned to.

First of all, in the area of early education, I'm really grateful the minister mentioned the significant changes that we're seeing as a result of surveys for out-of-pocket costs for those in early education. While many of us have our views formed by some of the more outlying costs of attending early education in the inner city, the reality is it's a very different picture in regional Australia, where in many cases there's a real occupancy challenge to remain viable. It was an interesting point the minister made that 71 per cent of Australians are paying less than $5 an hour for early education and about a quarter of that cohort are paying less than $2 an hour. That is an extraordinarily affordable investment for a large proportion of Australia to be able to attend the highest-quality early education that we do enjoy.

No-one on this side forgets that early education fees went up by 58 per cent under the previous government, at a time when we justified that based on improvements in quality in the Early Years Learning Framework. That's really important. We paid more, but we got more. So it's a bit cheap to be getting a lesson from the other side about affordability of early education when we effectively gave them somewhat of a leave pass to more than increase, by more than 50 per cent, early education fees on the pretext of quality. So, we have a quality sector and we never want to lose sight of that.

If we talk about affordability, we need to understand the variable impacts within that sector from urban out to regional. I speak as an outer metro MP where many of my childcare centres struggle with satisfactory occupancy to remain viable, and through COVID that's been an additional challenge that's been met by a range of measures, including JobKeeper.

In school funding the coalition's record is extremely strong. The minister touched on that as well. My question pertains specifically to regional school education and in particular the Choice and Affordability Fund, where the coalition set aside, particularly for the Catholic and independent sector, additional funding to do what can't be done. The reason that they are not eligible for the Choice and Affordability Fund is that, rather than increasing funding over the next decade by five per cent per annum for state education, we're doing it at 6.8 per cent. That difference is way more than the Choice and Affordability Fund, Member for Moreton. What
we have is for the Catholic and independent sector in a tailored way to be able to alter their service provision models to allow for what is a new way of measuring parental socioeducational benefit, and that's obviously in the wings as well. Some day in the future, not 2100 but in 2029, this nation, a decade from now, can say: the same student with the same need in the same sector will be given the same amount of government support. That is such a fundamentally fair proposition that's constantly been avoided. We prevaricated on this topic until this government came along and took that hard conversation.

We want to make sure that those regional school systems in particular—the minister will be interested in Catholic, Lutheran, Uniting and Anglican schools that are working in the regions to provide an alternative to public education which is utterly legitimate, welcomed and recognised by the Australian population—are ready for that transition to 2029. That funding of $314 billion over the next decade may well be $22 billion this year in 2020 but rising to $24 and $26 million. These increases across the OECD, when we look at it, Minister, are some of the greatest education funding increases that we are seeing across the OECD. It's very important.

I want to attach to the minister's areas of interest in regional Australia the fact that we know from welfare reform that just eight hours a week for the standard configured family at the current minimum wage in Australia is sufficient to be above the poverty line. That's the fewest number of hours you need to work of any OECD nation by a long shot, and it tells us that if education can be tuned in regional Australia to connect to work we only need to obtain, remarkably, not 18 but eight hours a week to take an average family above the poverty line. It's an extraordinary figure and it means that our system is unique in comparisons between the OECD. Across research, school education and early education—and I didn't get to university funding—these are areas we're most concerned about and particularly with a COVID overlay on those questions.

**Mr PERRETT (Moreton) (17:03):** The recent budget included funding of $39.8 million to expand the Clontarf Foundation's academy program for Indigenous boys and young men. Unfortunately, there was no money in the budget for similar programs for Indigenous girls. I visited Clontarf academies in five school locations recently: Ambrose Treacy College in Brisbane in the electorate of Ryan; Thuringowa State High School and Heatley Secondary College in Townsville; and Yarrabah State School near Cairns and Trinity Bay State High School in Cairns—which is actually my wife's former school. They were all very impressive, Minister, and the principals of all those schools value the benefits that the Clontarf programs bring to their students—and I say that upfront.

Clontarf academies provide a safe space for Indigenous boys at those schools—a place that is their own. They encourage attendance at school and provide reward through activities. I'm particularly impressed with the transitional program that Clontarf provides for its students as they finish their time at school and move into employment or further study.

Clontarf boys are Clontarf boys for life even when they're men. Their alumni can, and do, come back to the academies years after finishing school for support, advice, assistance or just to say g'day and also to help out those students at school.

I visited some truly remarkable schools when I was in North Queensland last week, including the schools that are lucky to have the Clontarf academies. However, only two of the many schools I visited hosted the Stars academy program for Indigenous girls. This
remarkable program is incredibly valuable for the girls who participate in it. I met some great young women at those schools. One senior Stars student who was about to finish this year from hell explained to me the valuable assistance she received from the Stars academy to help prepare her for her transition from high school. She told me that Stars had given her confidence, support and a close friendship group, and she knows that she will always have somebody to turn to if any problems arise after she leaves school. The Clontarf Foundation and Stars Foundation staff do amazing work. I give a big shout-out to the many who I met last week and in the few weeks before that. They do incredible work with these young Indigenous students.

Sadly, while the Clontarf Foundation has received this additional funding announced in the budget the Stars Foundation has not. One school with the Stars Foundation told me that their numbers are capped, and although they have many more Indigenous young girls who want to join the program they can't. At another school, a principal told me he would dearly love to have a Stars Foundation at his school but he has not been granted one. His school has more than 250 Indigenous girls, with no program for them. But there is a Clontarf academy for the 300 Indigenous boys at that same school. It's grossly unfair that Indigenous girls are not being provided with the same advancement programs as Indigenous boys.

The Closing the Gap target that we talk about every year for school attendance is not on track. School attendance rates for Indigenous primary school students are about nine percentage points lower than for non-Indigenous students, and in secondary school that gap increases to around 17 percentage points. There is a gap in school attendance rates for both Indigenous boys and girls, yet, in analysis recently published by The Conversation, between July 2014 and July 2019 nine programs that aimed to improve school attendance for Indigenous students received a total of almost $124 million but only four of the nine programs were for Indigenous girls, and those four programs received only $40 million—just one-third of the total funding. The four programs for Indigenous girls combined received just over half of the funds provided to the Clontarf Foundation for Indigenous boys—I'm not trying to say either/or; we obviously need to do more for the girls.

I ask the minister at the table: why are Indigenous girls not being provided the same advancement programs as Indigenous boys? Why is there unequal funding for advancement programs for Indigenous boys and Indigenous girls? The minister, like me, obviously values the program run by the Clontarf Foundation, or he would not have provided further funding in the recent budget. Why won't the minister provide the same funding for a similar program such as the Stars Foundation, the Johnathan Thurston Academy or the others—they're just the two that I know about—for Indigenous girls and young women?

Mr Leeser (Berowra) (17:07): I'm pleased to have the chance to put some questions about early childhood education. As I go around my electorate, I'm constantly impressed and amazed with the quality and the hope-filled, patient way that early childhood educators serve each and every child in their care. Millions of children and their families benefit each week from the high-quality child care provided in this country. In 2020, the work they quietly do every year has deservedly received more attention. We've been made more aware of the fact that we just can't do it without them.

During the early days of the pandemic the sector adapted at incredible speed. Centres introduced new hygiene practices to try to keep their children and staff safe. Many faced
uncertainty about their staffing, with high numbers of temporary visa holders working in the sector returning to their home country. For most sectors there was also an instant loss of income, with families pulling their children out of care when they lost jobs or moved to working from home. Eighty per cent of the centre based day care and outside-hours school care services experienced a significant decline in attendance, losing at least 20 per cent of their children in those initial weeks. Thirty-one per cent of services had a decrease of over 50 per cent in attendees. With that loss came a crippling loss in income too. I commend the early childhood educators in my electorate for the incredible way they rose to the challenge we're facing, particularly in that early phase when their own health and financial security was not clear.

UnitingCare Galston Early Learning Centre is one example of an outstanding service in my electorate whose response to COVID has been exemplary. With a board led by the Reverend Geoff Smith, from the Galston Uniting Church, the centre is managed by the outstanding and much loved Dani Balmer. I quickly learnt how well-loved Dani and her team are in our community. Families from all walks of life contacted me to let me know that the centre was in a challenging position and needed help. I was pleased to visit the centre a few months ago and see for myself why the UnitingCare Galston Early Learning Centre is so well loved. The welcoming smiles on the faces of the staff and the happiness of all the children didn't falter despite the enormous challenges they've been dealing with. As one parent said to me, 'I just don't know how they do it.'

Another successful private provider in my electorate is Kindalin Early Childhood Learning Centres, run by Mark and Alison Wharton. They're grateful for the support of the federal government for the seven centres they run in the Hills area. While they're grateful for the support of the federal government, they want the New South Wales government to listen more to their concerns, particularly around excess regulation, in a year that's already been such a struggle for so many in the sector.

These are just two examples of the hundreds of great providers operating in my electorate. At last count, there were 9,000 children in my electorate who attended child care and another 2,000 attending preschool. Across Australia, over 1.4 million children and their families benefit from child care and preschool. They are the reason the Morrison government's relief package was so important. The package allocated $1.9 billion to support childcare services, making the provision of child care effectively free to families during the COVID-19 pandemic from 6 April to 12 July. This, combined with JobKeeper, helped services retain their staff and helped them keep their doors open. That was so important to so many of those services.

The childcare system that we have took years to design and finesse, and yet the minister had the enormous task of building a new system, for a completely new environment, in a matter of days. I commend Minister Tehan for his outstanding work and for the actions he took to ensure that the sector could carry on. We'd be in a very different place as a country if it were not for that quick work.

Kelly and Patrick Tunny, constituents who operate a childcare service, expressed what a relief that support was for them. They said:

We have managed to keep our doors open through this crisis which has meant some of our families, including nurses, teachers and supermarket workers have been able to keep working.
The government should be applauded for their commitment to early childhood education and care and small businesses through this difficult time.

As the relief package was implemented, the Morrison government also listened and plugged gaps and made adjustments to help centres keep their lights on and their doors open to children. Supplementary payments were made for services that were in unusual circumstances, with extra high demand, and therefore needed more support. During April and May, supplementary payments were further extended to support childcare operators who were not able to support their staff through JobKeeper. These extra adjustments were key to Galston Early Learning Centre and many others like them. One couple wrote to me after those adjustments, saying:

We were all relieved when the centre was informed about the payments that would enable the centre to stay open and the staff to remain employed. The parents recently surprised the staff with a thank you of flowers, gifts and speeches to pay tribute to the sacrifices they made to keep the centre running.

We're now in another transition, as we look toward returning to a more sustainable system as we move on from the early stages of the pandemic and the crisis it presented. My question to the minister is: can the minister explain how the government's record funding for child care will allow families to balance work and parental responsibilities going forward?

Ms RISHWORTH (Kingston) (17:12): This is a bit of a farce really. Where is the minister? He's not taking it seriously enough to turn up. But I will direct some questions to the minister at the table, and I hope he takes the next government opportunity to jump to answer them. Call me old-fashioned, but, when I came to this place, that's exactly what ministers did: they took consideration in detail seriously. There would be a couple of questions from both sides, and then the minister would jump to answer the questions. That's what accountability is. I hope that the minister will jump after my questions. I will be really brief, to give him the time to do just that.

Firstly, the government has been claiming that the out-of-pocket expenses are going down, but of course childcare fees increased 4.4 per cent between March 2019 and March 2020. Inflation went up by 1.8 per cent over the same period. The childcare subsidy is pegged to inflation, not fees. The question I have for the minister, firstly, is: did the value of the childcare subsidy decline over the year to March? It's a pretty simple maths question, and I hope the minister can answer it.

Secondly, the last ABS data before COVID showed out-of-pocket costs for child care increased by 6.2 per cent between the March 2019 quarter and the March 2020 quarter. They increased by 7.2 per cent over the December 2018 to December 2019 year. They increased by over seven per cent. Can you explain how the childcare system is working for families when out-of-pocket costs are growing? I invite the minister at the table to answer the question.

Dr ALLEN (Higgins) (17:14): The Morrison government's record funding for child care and universities in this year's budget has been welcomed and widely commended by young people and families in my electorate of Higgins. I am delighted that the Morrison government has invested record amounts in child care, with another $9.2 billion in this year's financial year, which will grow to $10.7 billion in the coming years. We're supporting around one million families with access to affordable childcare services. On top of this, the government has invested $900 million to help this important sector ride the bumpy wave that has been
COVID. Thanks to the reform this government has made, out-of-pocket costs for families have dropped by 3.2 per cent in the last two years since our new reforms were introduced.

This is in stark contrast to the record of those opposite, where massive increases in childcare costs were the norm. That was because the funding they provided went to increasing the cost of childcare services rather than to the hip pocket of taxpayers. Under Labor, the cost of out-of-pocket childcare expenses increased by more than 50 per cent. The policies of Labor drove costs in the wrong direction. This side of the House understands how to ensure that there continues to be downward pressure on costs to young families. Our government is providing support to those who earn the least and ensuring that the highest level of subsidy of 85 per cent goes to those who need it the most. In fact, 70 per cent of families have out-of-pocket expenses of less than $5 per hour per child, and nearly a quarter are paying less than $2 per hour per child for centre based child care.

I have been speaking to the parents of Higgins about this very matter. In fact, I've sent out a survey to all of those parents in my electorate and have asked them about child care. I've spoken to a number of them personally, including a local mum, Bridie, in South Yarra, who reiterated to me that she wants quality, accessible and safe childcare services for her two children. Bridie is a mum who, like me, knows that it can be hard to juggle parenting, working and ensuring her kids have access to the very best child care. She told me how grateful she is that we provided support for childcare services to remain open during COVID, knowing that they were businesses at risk of going out of business. She also noted that young parents are often dealing with financial pressures from many sources. In their early 30s, they are paying for a HECS debt and child care and shouldering new mortgages as they establish their families. So she's grateful that our government understands that out-of-pocket costs remain high, particularly in the inner city, and she welcomes our efforts to keep downward pressure on these costs, which will be even more important in the post-COVID experience.

This year has been a year like no other. As a mother of four young adults, I am pleased that the Minister for Education has been proactive in ensuring that this year's budget includes new investments in additional university places, fortifying the educational sector for the future. We all know that when a recession hits it hits the youngest hardest. We know that education is the key to getting a better job. If ever there's a time to invest in education as a country, particularly in higher degrees and VET training, now is the time. I am pleased that not only did the Minister for Education guarantee government funding through the COVID crisis, despite a significant downturn in international students; in this year's budget he's also committed new funding to universities. This is now at a record high, with over $18 billion in 2020 and $20 billion in 2024 under our Job-ready Graduates Package, which is also creating up to 30,000 new Commonwealth supported places next year and 100,000 new places by 2030. This investment, including $550 million for additional university places and short courses, will ensure that educational services are guaranteed and improved.

As a university professor, I'm also aware that the university sector does rely on international students to fund research funding. I'm very pleased to hear that the Minister for Education has committed a record amount of new funding to the university research sector—that is, $1 billion—which has been very welcomed by the sector. This will help our institutions discover new products, ideas and innovations, which will power the recovery efforts. Minister, with my background as a university professor, and with our wonderful...
research institutions doing such groundbreaking work, including supporting the fight against COVID-19, I would be very pleased if you could outline how the government is supporting our university research sector through the pandemic in this year's budget?

Ms RISHWORTH (Kingston) (17:19): I'll try again for some answers from the minister. He won't even answer the questions from his own side, let alone the questions that we are putting to him. I make a comment to the member for Higgins: it's a bit disingenuous to say that your families value quality and then criticise Labor's quality framework, which drove quality. Anyway, let's not let the facts get in the way of this. I'm also going to go to the mythical downward pressure on fees. My question, once again, is to the minister. In Senate estimates two weeks ago, the department of education said they expected fees to increase by 5.3 per cent this year. Do you think that the childcare system is working well when fees will be hiked up 5.3 per cent in the middle of a recession and inflation is going to be nowhere near that rate? This will mean that out-of-pocket expenses are going up. Isn't that true, Minister? That is one question. Also, Minister, once again in Senate estimates, the department of education confirmed that there will be a $165.9 million increase—we hear those on the other side bragging about this—but this increase in spending on the childcare subsidy is 100 per cent due to higher prices and fees. When will you admit that the childcare system is broken, locking too many families out of work? The out-of-pocket costs are rising. I really hope that the minister will give Australian families an answer to this and take the opportunity to do so.

Mr PERRETT (Moreton) (17:21): I was waiting for the minister to jump, but he's just composing his answer to the member for Berowra's probing question. I go to a recent survey conducted by antiviolence campaign group White Ribbon, which came to very disturbing findings about the attitudes of young men to domestic violence. Forty-two per cent of the 1,074 men surveyed aged between 18 and 34 did not recognise hitting, punching or restraining another person to be domestic violence. Non-consensual sexual activity, degrading and punishing a person or isolating them from their friends was also not considered by a similar proportion of those surveyed to be domestic violence. In Australia right now, one in two women have experienced being sexually harassed and women are almost three times more likely than men to have experienced violence inflicted by a partner since the age of 15. On average, one woman a week is killed in Australia by her intimate male partner. Women with additional disadvantages and inequalities experience even higher rates of violence.

In that context, I was very pleased to hear the Morrison government announce, in March 2019, funding of $2.8 million for a three-year antiviolence education campaign. However, the recent Morrison government budget that we're considering in detail now appeared to cut funding to this important campaign. We've since been reassured in Senate estimates that the full funding will be moved back into that fund and made available for the Respect Matters campaign, but we were also told in Senate estimates last week that Respect Matters does not yet exist and there is no time frame 'at this point' for these resources to be made available. It is now 20 months since the press release was made by the Morrison government minister and so far there's nothing to show for it. I don't know why I'm surprised. It's the same old pattern: big announcements and no follow-through; all photo op but no follow-up. Deputy Speaker, I'm sure you would agree that this issue is particularly important and it is urgent. The young men who were in year 11 when the announcement was made, when the press conference was held back in 2019, are about to leave their classrooms forever. The Respect Matters program will
be lost to that cohort of young men as they go out into society and, sadly, young women will be the real losers from the minister's unnecessary delay in rolling out this important program.

In 2020, women right across the pandemic world have become more vulnerable to all forms of gender based violence due to the COVID-19 health pandemic. It even has a name; it's called 'the shadow pandemic'. Data released from the United Nations Population Fund predicts that, for every three months the lockdowns continue, an additional 15 million cases of domestic violence will occur worldwide. Not only has the frequency of domestic violence increased; so has the severity of the violence. For children who have been locked in their homes and have witnessed family violence without the security of their usual routines and safe places to go to, this year will have been more frightening and more lonely and will have left real scars—physical and mental.

There has never been a more important time to deliver a program about respect and how to recognise family violence. I therefore ask the minister: why is the Respect Matters program not available to schools now? When will the Respect Matters program be made available to schools? Is the minister developing any other policies to address the fallout from the shadow of the pandemic on students who have been homeschooled this year?

Ms Rishworth (Kingston) (17:25): I haven't gotten anywhere with getting answers about fees for families. I know that many families will be very, very disappointed that they haven't been able to get an answer about what this government's plan is to reduce those out-of-pocket costs. Of course, without the answers, we can only assume the information I've given to the Federation Chamber is correct and that out-of-pocket costs are going to continue to increase over time, with no plan from this government. What we do know is that there was a report in The West Australian newspaper saying that the reason the government haven't acted—and this was from an unknown source—is that they wanted to convince taxpayers of the benefit before they reformed the system, and they said they were going to embark on a six-month informal education campaign. What is the time frame for this informal education campaign? What will it look like? How much money will be allocated? Will there be TV advertising? Will there be some focus groups? Will there be letters out to all parents? What type of education campaign will this take?

Alternatively, will the government consider Labor's proposal to make childcare fees cheaper, to improve the taper rates, to get rid of the annual cap and to make it easier for 97 per cent of families in Australia to afford child care? Will the minister accept our plan, our constructive suggestion? We've done the work for him. He doesn't have to do the six-month informal education plan. We've done that work. We've consulted widely. This is a policy idea that's been welcome right across the spectrum—by businesses, by economists, by trade unions and by families. So we've done the work for the minister. Will he accept our homework? We will support him in the implementation of that. Will he outline this informal education campaign? Senator Simon Birmingham actually denied it existed, so we're unclear about that. Will the minister also answer my questions about the fee increases that have happened, the eroding nature of the subsidy and, therefore, the increasing out-of-pocket costs? Into the future, what will this mean for families and how is the government going to deal with that?

Ms Liu (Chisholm) (17:28): I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the superb work that has been done and continues to be done by my colleagues in the coalition government in fostering an opportunity society through education supports, even during this
pandemic. As a woman who immigrated to this country and raised two children—both of whom are diving headfirst into successful careers and family lives—largely by herself, I know how vital education is to the health of our society as well as to the future economic prosperity upon which a healthy society depends. How we educate our children says a lot about who we want to be as a society. It says a lot about our aspirations—not only how much money is spent but whether that money is spent in a targeted, precise and efficient manner that will set Australia up well for the future.

Representing a multicultural electorate in Chisholm, I know that educational supports are imperative to helping integrate new arrivals into the Australian way of life. Childcare supports help kids to get that early cultural education and socialisation that sets them up for an emotionally secure future, while allowing mum and dad to keep working hard to put food on the table as well as be the best parents that they can be.

There can be no doubt that this year has thrown up unprecedented challenges and this coalition government has responded with tailored, targeted, specific measures to face up to this challenge. Let me tell you how this coalition government is levelling up educational opportunities for all Australians. We are providing record funding for child care: $9.2 billion in 2020-21 and growing to over $10 billion over the coming years. Our new Child Care Package represents the most significant reforms to the early education and care system in 40 years. We are providing a record $314 billion investment in schools over 2018 to 2029, representing an increase of 60 per cent per student over the same period from a 2017 base. This means record funding for all Australian schools, including government schools, Catholic schools and independent schools.

In my electorate of Chisholm I'm happy to say that schools have benefited greatly under the coalition government. A school that is quite close to my electoral office, Essex Heights Primary School, has received a substantial boost close to 25 per cent in government funding from 2014 to 2018 and that funding is expected to climb to just under 50 per cent by 2021. The Morrison government continues to deliver for all schools across Chisholm and Australia.

We are now continuing to boost our universities with record funding of $18 billion in 2020, which will grow to over $20 billion by 2024. As part of this, our new job-ready graduates program will create 100,000 new university places by 2030. Our Job-ready Graduates Package will gear our economy towards the future by increasing the number of graduates in areas of projected employment growth and demand that include teaching, nursing, health, agriculture, and, of course, the high-tech areas of STEM and IT—where we must work to turn our knowledge society into a dynamic, forward-looking 21st century economy.

Ms RISHWORTH (Kingston) (17:33): I'm still waiting for my answers—not just for me but for the families of Australia. The families of Australia are struggling despite what those on the other side say. They say: 'They've never had it so good', 'Childcare costs are completely manageable' and 'There isn't a workforce disincentive.' They should get out a little bit. They should get out and actually talk to families. They should get out and talk to families about their childcare costs that are going up and up. We know what the minister will do the next time that the details of fee increases are released; he will crow some great achievement. He will be talking about the period where parents didn't have to pay fees. Then very quickly he reintroduced those fees and then also allowed them to continue to go up. As we know from
Senate estimates—the minister refused to answer on this in question time today—it will go up by 5.3 per cent, well in excess of inflation.

As I said before, and this is a myth that keeps getting peddled by those on the other side, the subsidy is pegged to inflation, not the increase of childcare fees, so there's a gap there and parents are having to pay that gap. It's increasing quickly and making it harder and harder to afford. In addition, my question is: what is the government doing about the workforce disincentive rate that exists in the current childcare system? The previous speaker did say that this was a once-in-a-generation reform to childcare centres. That was the talking point from two years ago. You don't hear those on the opposite side usually use those talking points anymore, because parents are doing it tough.

But I haven't got any answer to the question on fees, so I'm going to move on. I'm waiting with bated breath, hoping the minister does answer those questions. But I would like to—

A government member interjecting—

Ms RISHWORTH: Are you going to do it next?

A government member interjecting—

Ms RISHWORTH: Yes. Next! He's going to keep going! In my next question I'm going to move on to preschools. It was a really historic moment when Labor were in government and we were able to lift the attendance in preschools to four-year-olds by our universal access program. Unfortunately, for seven years, this government has refused to provide long-term funding for preschools. The excuse that the minister—and previous ministers—has given is that there were attendance problems. As an excuse, that could go on for only three years because then it became a little boring. So then the minister said that they were waiting for a review of the national preschool program to be completed before they made a long-term commitment. That final report was released six months ago, and it was very, very clear that long-term funding—over a four-year-old period, for example—was critical to providing some stability and certainty for preschools, for states and territories, for enterprise bargaining and for everyone that was investing. The report was very critical of the Morrison government's short-term funding for preschools and called for the funding to be locked in for five years.

Unfortunately, during the COVID period the government slipped another announcement in that completely went against this report. So my question to the minister is: when will you adopt this report's recommendations and provide our children and teachers with the certainty they need and deserve? Has the government been having any discussion with states and territories about the long-term funding commitment? Why has the government ignored this report, with their most recent announcement being to extend it for only another 18 months? Why has the government ignored its own report, which COAG commissioned, to provide funding? When will our kindies, our preschools and our long-day centres, which deliver universal access, actually be given the long-term funding they need? When will families be assured that their children can get best prepared for school because the Commonwealth has coughed up its share of funding and has put it in the forward estimates and because we know it will be there over the next four years? Those are my questions to the minister. I hope that, if he can't answer the questions about child care and costs, he'll be able to answer the questions about preschool.
Mrs McIntosh (Lindsay) (17:38): In my electorate it's all about jobs and about getting our children educated and trained in the jobs of the future, including starting in the younger years. I want young people in our community to work in Lindsay, just like the member for Macquarie would aspire to her community not having to do that long commute out of the local area for work. With the Morrison government's unprecedented level of investment in Western Sydney, we're supporting existing businesses to take the next step, to grow, to back emerging industries and to create these jobs of the future.

To make sure we get the best outcomes from this investment, we need to equip local students with the skills and training they need so that they're at the forefront of these opportunities. Our plan is to create more local jobs and to deliver the education, the skills, the apprenticeships and the training that will enable local people to take hold of these opportunities, get these jobs and help Western Sydney lead our economic recovery from the coronavirus pandemic. In these emerging industries, science, technology, engineering and maths will play a key role. It's so great to go to schools across Lindsay and see how local kids are being educated in STEM and have a real passion for STEM. This leads to the jobs of the future. They're already paving the way, and this is really great to see.

We know that early childhood education is the key to unlocking the potential of our children before they go to school, and then stemming into learning as adults. It's critical that their development and their love of learning is nurtured at this early age. In Lindsay there are many childcare centres—we have 90 across Lindsay—that look after our children and nurture this early love of learning. The Morrison government is providing $453 million in 2021 to support access for up to 15 hours a week for preschool children in the year before school. This will benefit over 350,000 kids each year and prepare them for lifelong learning.

During coronavirus we saw how critical childcare centres were in ensuring that families could still work and manage looking after their kids. The Morrison government's support to the early childhood education and care sector throughout COVID kept this sector viable and ensured that care continued to be available for essential workers and families with vulnerable children. Our childcare package includes the most significant reforms to the early education and care system for over 40 years.

As a mum who has always balanced work for the last 16 years and has worked in the area of child care and playgroup, I've got a really good understanding of early childhood education and parental responsibilities. I know how important it is to get it right. All three of my children have benefited from child care. It has nurtured and developed their growth and love of learning before school. During the pandemic, I hosted a number of meetings with early childcare providers, and I know that the work we were doing to keep them in business and keep kids going to child care was so important. It meant that they didn't have to charge families a fee, including out-of-pocket or gap fees, and they could prioritise care to essential workers. I spoke to many child care centres. One of them in particular, the Explore & Develop early childhood centre at Glenmore Park, told me that during the coronavirus pandemic 99 per cent of the enrolments came back after that because of our support. This was something that was said to me across many of the childcare providers I have spoken to—that the support provided during the pandemic was really essential not only for keeping available places open and keeping children in child care but for returning enrolments as things open up throughout our community. So I'm really pleased about the care we're providing kids in
Western Sydney. It will be even better when we have more jobs close to home so parents don't have to do that long commute to work.

Child care is a really important thing for our community. Many parents, many families, use it. As I said, we've got 90 childcare centres across Lindsay. My question to the minister is: could you update the Chamber on the great support the Morrison government is giving our families through children's early learning opportunities through child care and preschool education?

Mr PERRETT (Moreton) (17:43): It was Teachers Day a couple of weeks ago. We thank teachers, as we do every year, for educating the next generation. But this year thanking teachers had a bit of extra oomph. Teachers have been so much more than educators this year. They were the constant, steady voice calming the fears of students and parents when they were suddenly shaken from their school routines. They were the experts in online learning, even if it was something they had not done before. And they've been frontline workers in the fight against COVID-19 and the risks associated with it.

Teachers and other school staff have done a remarkable job in stitching together the 2020 school year while it frayed at the seams. I do acknowledge that the minister at the table, before he was gagged by himself—did actually refer to teachers, and I second his comments about teachers.

It's been a year like no other, and we don't yet know what the fallout will be for students and how long that legacy will linger. We do know that during the initial stages of the pandemic the Morrison government wilfully ignored health advice and all but tried to bribe schools for purely political purposes. Thankfully, common sense prevailed and the Morrison government's $3 billion COVID relief for private schools that reopened to their students was actually rejected by the majority of schools. Only seven per cent of the Catholic system schools and 49 per cent of the independent sector took up the offer, even with the $10 million for soap and hand sanitiser for private schools contained in the special circumstances fund.

Only one-third of the $3 billion funding announced was actually spent. It's not surprising, as schools were being asked to reopen to their students in the midst of a pandemic. Schools were required to have 50 per cent of students back in their classrooms by the end of June and were given only a matter of days to decide whether to accept the relief funding. For some schools, reopening to students was contrary to their state health advice—for example, that provided by experienced chief medical officers like the magnificent Dr Jeannette Young in Queensland. This was yet another Morrison government announcement that faltered when it came to the follow-up. The Morrison government is always there for the photo but not for the follow-up.

The recent budget included a $25 million student support package—$25 million over five years to establish a fund to enable the government to respond flexibly and quickly to emerging priorities and educational challenges presented by COVID-19. That's the only detail contained in the budget. In Senate estimates, we found out that this $25 million fund is for a grant program, but so far there are no funding guidelines at all. The government doesn't know how it will spend $25 million, and we have no idea what this money will be spent on, who will benefit, who will be eligible and how it will be targeted. Will it be another sports rorts but for education?
I'm particularly concerned that some students will find it very difficult to catch up after such a disruptive year. The department said in Senate estimates that they had commissioned some early research on potential implications for extended periods of home based learning, and they advised that the research clearly indicated that there were likely impacts that would be felt. As a former teacher and from my own family's experience of home schooling a primary school boy and a high-school boy, I can easily see how the home-schooling experience would not have been ideal for all students—good for a few, I do stress, but with a sting in the tail for most. Students who are disadvantaged through their social, economic or health situation had an especially difficult time during home schooling, with many students now struggling to catch up with their classmates. We can't leave these children behind. The consequences may be devastating for these students.

So I ask the minister: when will the $25 million grant fund be expended, and who will be eligible? Will all schools be eligible for these grants or will only private schools be eligible? How will the government help students who have been left behind through COVID-19 home schooling? And how much of the $10 million special circumstances fund for soap, hand sanitiser and cleaning for private schools has been expended? Please provide a list of the schools that assessed this fund.

**Mrs WICKS** (Robertson) (17:47): The 2020-21 budget is focused on delivering the essential services that Australians rely on, including record funding for child care, preschool and our education and university sectors. This investment means more opportunities and better outcomes for students across my electorate of Robertson. The Morrison government is providing $9.2 billion in funding for child care this financial year, and our new child care package represents one of the most significant reforms to the early childhood education and care system in 40 years. Around one million Australian families are benefiting from this package, with over 70 per cent of parents to pay no more than $5 per hour in day care centres.

It's crucial that working parents across Australia have confidence that, if they choose to go back to work, their children will be supported with high-quality, affordable child care. This includes parents like Ross, a Central Coast resident with two children who have both been through child care. Ross said that the government's support for the sector was the difference between his wife returning to work or staying at home with the children. He said that it offered flexibility and enabled her to re-engage in the workforce.

The government also provided $1.9 billion to the early childhood education and care sector throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring providers were able to continue to operate and support essential workers and families with vulnerable children. Leah, from St John the Baptist Early Learning Centre in Woy Woy, said that the government's support for the sector was a lifeline, ensuring that her centre remained open and staff were able to continue to care for and support local families.

The government's commitment to deliver world-class education is not just limited to child care; it extends to record funding for schools and significant support for higher education. I note that the Morrison government is providing a total investment of $314.7 billion into schools between 2018 and 2029. This includes substantial needs based funding for government, Catholic and independent schools, designed to get the best results for students, parents and teachers.
Our university sector will also benefit from this budget with investment of over $18 billion in 2020, increasing to around $20 billion in 2024 under our Job-ready Graduates Package. This package will create up to 30,000 new Commonwealth supported places in 2021 and 100,000 by 2030, assisting graduates in areas such as teaching, nursing, health, agriculture, STEM and IT. Many people know this is an issue particularly important to my electorate on the Central Coast and very dear to my heart.

The government will also spend over $400 million over the next four years to increase opportunities for regional and remote students to attend university. Investment in world-class education through Commonwealth supported places, especially in regional areas, opens doors for students to allow them to pursue their dreams. In my electorate of Robertson the government committed $3.3 million in 2018 for additional funding for student places at the Central Coast Clinical School and Research Institute. This funding delivers around 150 Commonwealth subsidised places that will support allied health students, bringing the total number of student places to around 550. This means that students who are completing the HSC right now could study a medical degree in Gosford.

I've recently been contacted by a number of local parents who are thrilled about the opportunity for their child to be able to study medicine and other health degrees locally right where they live, meaning they no longer have to travel to university in Sydney or Newcastle. This not only means reduced travel times but more opportunities for students to pursue local study on the Central Coast, the very best region in the very best country in the world.

The government is also providing $252 million in 2021 for an additional 50,000 short course places and the largest single annual investment in higher education research, including an additional $1 billion to support research at local universities. This investment is important to ensuring Australia remains at the forefront of global research and development.

The Morrison government recognises the importance of education to our future generations, and that's why I believe that this budget provides record funding for our childcare, education, and university sectors, ensuring they continue to operate during the COVID-19 pandemic and grow into the future. I want to commend the Minister for Education on the work that he has done, and continues to do, in this sector. In closing, I would ask the minister to further outline to the Chamber the government's investment in Commonwealth supported places.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Gillespie):** I give the call to the member for Moreton, who I know will be brief because he's dying to hear from the minister!

**Mr PERRETT (Moreton) (17:52):** We've been waiting! The government announced the establishment of a new Higher Education Integrity Unit within TEQSA. Have additional staff been employed by TEQSA to carry out the functions of the Higher Education Integrity Unit? How will the unit go about investigating claims of cheating, and what plans does it have to meet this aim in the future? My final question is about rural and remote students—I know he'll be interested in them: what additional help will the government be providing to rural and remote students who may have fallen behind in their studies due to limited or no internet access, and will the government be providing any additional mental health support for rural and remote students?
Mr GEE (Calare—Minister Assisting the Minister for Trade and Investment and Minister for Decentralisation and Regional Education) (17:53): I will come to that shortly. I want to preface my comments with respect to a number of matters that members have raised, particularly with respect to child care. There have been a number of wild statements made by those opposite, which are very unfortunate—particularly the selective misquoting of Dr Baxter, who is the deputy secretary for early childhood and child care. Of course, in the quote that those opposite use, they conveniently omit the end of her statement, which says: 'out of pocket costs in that period are still 3.2 per cent lower than they were prior to the introduction of the CCS in July 2018'. The point is that out-of-pocket costs are still 3.2 per cent lower since the childcare package began in July 2018.

I think we need to remember that it was this government that actually saved the childcare sector during the recent pandemic. We know because, as local members, we saw those lines outside Centrelink and those folks were calling our offices, asking: what can the government do to help? We answered the call with $900 million of additional funding during the COVID-19 crisis. Obviously that crisis is still here and we're still watching it, but $900 million was what it took to keep the childcare sector going. So we won't be lectured by those opposite on what's needed for child care.

The member opposite asked: would we be adopting their policy? No, we won't be. That's the answer to the question; no, we won't. We will not be adopting their policies. We were there when the Australian people needed us, and we enabled 99 per cent of 13,400 services to remain open and viable. Given the circumstances, that's an incredible achievement. And in country Australia, $391 million was provided to 3,334 services in regional and remote areas. And in this budget that has just been handed down, we have a record $9.2 billion in funding for child care. We have saved this sector. There's record funding in this budget, and we recently announced additional support for Victoria's regional childcare sector, with around 700 services sharing an estimated $55.8 million from the early childhood education and care recovery payment.

We know that the federal government wasn't responsible for what happened down in Victoria; the Victorian government was. The whole hotel quarantine fiasco was very unfortunate, but we were there when Victorians needed us, when the childcare sector needed us, and we are still there working in that sector. A very important point to make is that when the childcare sector was on the brink of destruction, it was this government, with $900 million, that came to the rescue. We won't be lectured by those opposite on what our policies should be. We won't take any notice of their selective misquoting of Dr Baxter, which is very misleading.

My friends opposite also mentioned funding for the Clontarf Foundation. It's very important that we touch on that topic, because $39.8 million is going to the Clontarf Foundation to support an additional 2,000 places in their existing program by December 2022. That funding builds on the existing funding for Clontarf provided by the National Indigenous Australians Agency, the NIAA.

In respect of funding to support Indigenous girls in education, the NIAA provides more than $55 million in funding to 12 organisations via the Indigenous Advancement Strategy, or IAS. We will invest a total of $5.5 billion, through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school-funding loading, over 2018 to 2029. This funding is expected to benefit 234,000
students in 2020, so we are supporting this very important work and supporting education for Indigenous boys and girls. In my own electorate, we have a Girls Academy and a Clontarf academy. I see the wonderful work they're both doing and the differences that they're making to the lives of these young Australians. I'm very supportive of it.

This budget is a budget that has underpinned educational opportunities in Australia. And it's very important that we keep doing that, particularly—as those opposite know, although they were interjecting earlier when I was trying to make the point—as we've been through drought, we've been through bushfire and now we've been through COVID-19. I'm immensely proud of this budget. It's an excellent budget that delivers for Australians under the most trying and difficult circumstances. As I've just said, 2020 has been a year like no other. In my own electorate, we have seen bushfire—(Time expired)

Mr PERRETT (Moreton) (17:59): I will keep this brief. I did ask these questions earlier, and they're about the national integrity unit in terms of universities. My questions are very simple, and I will give the minister plenty of time to answer. How many additional staff have been employed by TEQSA to carry out the functions of the Higher Education Integrity Unit? How will the unit go about investigating claims of cheating? And what plans does it have to meet this aim in the future? You can give a short answer, Minister, in the very short amount of time left.

Mr GEE (Calare—Minister Assisting the Minister for Trade and Investment and Minister for Decentralisation and Regional Education) (17:59): I'm happy to take that question on notice and provide the member opposite with the answer in due course, but the point that I was making before—and as I said in my opening remarks, over the disrespectful comments of those opposite—was that it has been a very difficult year for teachers and their support staff and also students and parents, but this budget is the marker for the next phase of our economic recovery as a nation.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Gillespie): Order! The honourable minister's time has expired in relation to this debate. The Federation Chamber will now consider the Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business segment of the Education, Skills and Employment portfolio, in accordance with the agreed order of consideration.

Mrs ANDREWS (McPherson—Minister for Industry, Science and Technology) (18:00): I'm very pleased to open the debate tonight on behalf of the Minister for Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business. It has been a very tough year for Australian businesses and for workers. Through no fault of their own, people have lost jobs, and many businesses have suffered loss of revenue from the COVID-19 restrictions and lockdowns. From the outset, our JobMaker Plan put skills and training front and centre, and the 2020-21 budget includes extra measures to help Australians find work and help small businesses recover from the challenges presented by COVID-19. Some key measures include the $4 billion JobMaker hiring credit, which will be payable for up to 12 months for each new job employers create to hire eligible jobseekers aged 16 to 35. This is about creating new jobs and keeping our young people engaged in the workforce. We don't want to see a generation of lost workers due to COVID. We are also extending support for new apprenticeships, with the $1.2 billion Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements wage subsidy. This will fund an extra 100,000 new apprenticeships.
It would take much more time than I have today to outline the many ways we are supporting small businesses with this budget—not just the big-ticket items like the wage and apprenticeship subsidies I’ve mentioned or the instant asset write-off but a range of other support measures. For example, we’re investing over $19 million to encourage and support small businesses to digitise, we’re investing $7 million to help provide business and mental health support for small-business owners who are under increased financial and emotional pressure during the COVID-19 pandemic and of course we’re also funding a range of measures to help jobseekers as they search for employment. And we’re making it easier for jobseekers to manage their job search requirements online. Our government has a track record of job creation and support for skills training and small business, and I look forward to outlining this further.

Mr KEOGH (Burt) (18:02): Well, 2020 has been an amazing year, and we’ve been confronted by some huge challenges in our nation, starting with bushfires, followed by the COVID health crisis and the economic crisis that has followed from that. Therefore, creating jobs should be the Morrison government’s biggest priority right now. They cannot leave people behind or let them go it alone. It’s bad enough that their response to the pandemic has been too slow, too reactive and, admittedly, uncoordinated. But now they’ve delivered a budget that is racking up trillions of dollars worth of debt and doesn’t help create the additional jobs that Australians need. Unemployment has been too high for too long. We’ve now got a situation where, in the budget that the government handed down only a few weeks ago, they are foreshadowing that an additional 160,000 Australians will be added to the jobless queues by Christmas. The jobless rate itself won’t be going back to precrisis levels for more than four years. The Prime Minister has deliberately excluded 920,000 people aged over 35 and currently unemployed from the government’s hiring subsidy program.

Then, in Senate estimates only the other week, we found out that the Morrison government has also been found to be inflating the numbers of jobs that it will be creating under this budget. This JobMaker hiring credit not only excludes those over 35 but is actually expected to only make 45,000 jobs, or just 10 per cent of the 450,000 jobs that the government is claiming that the program will support. Treasury officials confirmed in Senate estimates that 90 per cent of the jobs that will be supported by the hiring credit will actually have occurred without taxpayer funded subsidies. The money will not even start flowing until February. While 450,000 people are eligible for the program, there will be only 45,000 new jobs that will actually be created under it. This revelation effectively means that this $4 billion program will cost nearly $90,000 per job, which is more than the average income of an Australian household. This is a further blow to businesses and jobseekers, who all need support during the hard economic times being confronted by the nation. Businesses need support to be able to bring on new jobs. People who are out of work need to see support in the economy for them to be able to get a job. The Morrison government love making announcements, but they seem to never deliver for the Australian people—450,000 out there in the headline, but 45,000 jobs down here in the real world.

Minister, given that your government’s budget is all about jobs, why is it that your government’s budget plan is for 160,000 more people to become unemployed by Christmas? What sort of confidence does a plan for more unemployment give Australians? The Treasurer delivered a budget where he said, ‘This is a budget about jobs’—and he was right—but the
government has admitted that the statistics, the measures in that budget, show that this 'budget about jobs' is about more unemployment, not less.

Mr VASTA (Bonner) (18:06): I'd like to thank the minister for her detailed speech outlining how hard our government is working to deliver much-needed support to Australian small businesses and those looking to learn new skills, re-skill and enter the workforce. Feedback from last month's federal budget has been extremely positive from Bonner's business community, particularly around our strategy to grow the manufacturing sector in key areas, which will create local jobs and be part of Australia's economic recovery. Supporting our local businesses, from our local cafes to homewares and produce, has never been more important. Every time we consciously choose to buy and support local, we are supporting local jobs. In Bonner, I am actively supporting our government's Go Local First campaign to ensure that supporting our local small businesses is front of mind for people starting to plan for their Christmas shopping.

As we know, small business is the engine room of Australia's economy, creating thousands of jobs and supporting major sectors including defence, manufacturing, tourism and more. Whilst Australia's manufacturing sector has been put at the forefront of our economic recovery plan, we know that this strategy will have a tremendous flow-on effect for the small business community, with local supply chains benefitting greatly from a growing manufacturing industry. The Morrison government are committed to supporting businesses and industries. We have passed 10 small-business tax concessions, which will make a tremendous difference to Australia's family small businesses. We have also provided more than $26.2 million to enable small businesses to access the benefits of digital technology and to look after themselves and their business as they manage through the stress of the COVID-19 crisis. This includes $19.2 million to encourage and support small businesses to digitise and $7 million to help provide businesses and mental health support for small-business owners who are under increasing financial and emotional pressure.

2020 has been a tough year, but Australians know that there is light at the end of the tunnel. During the pandemic, I was contacted by Tony from Matters in Gray at Mount Gravatt. This is a third-generation, family owned training college for hairdressers. Tony explained how JobKeeper had kept their business going and supported staff when they had to close down. I visited Tony and the team at Matters in Gray once restrictions eased and I'm very pleased to share that the story only gets better for this local, family owned training business. With our government support measures for apprentices and trainees, Matters in Gray will not only recover from the global pandemic but thrive from all the young Australians starting their hair apprenticeships. Local salons now have the incentives available to take on more staff and apprentices, and training centres like Matters in Gray will benefit greatly. The flow-on effect from our support measures are in plain sight and proof that they work. In my electorate of Bonner, 577 apprentices and trainees have been supported under the Supporting Apprentices and Trainees wage subsidy. I can't wait to catch up with Tony again for another update.

Recently I was very pleased to be joined by Senator James McGrath to tour Loadpro, one of Australia's and Bonner's hardworking businesses. Loadpro develops off-road haulage trucks, and their latest design, the X60 truck, has secured contracts with Australia's mining and construction industries for its efficient design. Ron got in touch with me last month to share some exciting news of an update, that their business was about to ship their first two
export trucks. Senator McGrath and I had the opportunity to see these trucks up close, and I can say: 'Wow! What an impressive product.'

From the start of this pandemic, our government's focus has been on getting through to the other side, and it was great to see businesses like Loadpro in Bonner not only surviving but thriving. My electorate has more than 500 manufacturing based businesses, and a $1.5 billion Bonner manufacturing strategy will help businesses like Loadpro to grow their business to create more local jobs and increase their opportunity to supply domestic and international markets. Since the release of the budget, I've been out in the community visiting local businesses and listening to their feedback, and I'm pleased to share that this budget has restored confidence in the small-business community and confidence in job security. Following our visit to Loadpro, Senator James McGrath and I visited The Manly Hotel to meet with some small-business owners to discuss the business measures and how they had fared during the local pandemic. I'm sure that the senator can attest to the fact that we heard some fantastic grassroots feedback.

Ms KEARNEY (Cooper) (18:11): Well, wasn't this budget the most Morrison budget going around! In terms of the critically important skills sector, it was all headline and no follow-through. We saw the big, splashy headline 'JobMaker and JobTrainer saves the day', and photos of the Prime Minister in hard hat and hi-vis vest, but then the detail slowly drips out and it turns out the policy has far more bark than bite. Don't get me wrong, after spending seven years creating a tradie crisis in Australia, we would welcome the Liberals cleaning up some of their mess. Since COVID-19 hit, the need for help has been more urgent than ever. Many apprentices lost work because of the Prime Minister's slow response to COVID-19, and the number of people starting apprenticeships and traineeships this year is down by 22 per cent. The Liberals promised an extra 300,000 apprentices and trainees, yet the reality is that more than 140,000 apprentices and trainees have been lost on their watch. Let's see if Scott Morrison actually delivers anything.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wallace): Order! The member will use the—

Ms KEARNEY: Sorry! It's in my notes! I apologise, Deputy Speaker—the Prime Minister. Their budget commitments don't go close to making up for seven years of Liberal Party failure that has seen more than $3 billion cut from TAFE and training, more than 140,000 apprentices and trainees gone and widespread tradie shortages, including carpenters, plumbers and metalworkers.

As part of their budget, the government announced wage subsidies for 100,000 new apprentices, but have since said that employers will be able to collect the wage subsidies for existing employees. My question to those who sit opposite is: how many new jobs will actually be created? The gap between the wage subsidy schemes means businesses that hired apprentices or trainees between June and October are excluded from the support. Why don't those businesses that took a risk and created jobs for new apprentices and trainees in the middle of a pandemic get a helping hand? The program is meant to support 180,000 apprentices and trainees, but, almost halfway through, only 90,000 or so are receiving support. Is this government expecting there to be another 90,000 recipients? Underdelivering is where the Prime Minister has form. We know from previous budgets that the Liberals have failed to spend over $1 billion of their own TAFE and training budget over the past five years. The Liberal government's $1 billion underspend included incentives for businesses to take on
apprentices, support to help people finish their apprenticeships and a fund designed to train Australians in areas of need. It's no wonder the skills sector is crying out for funding and reform.

Onto a second point I'd like some answers on: the Liberal Party's much promoted industry training hubs. In the 2019-20 budget, the government announced funding for 10 industry training hubs supporting school based vocational education in regions where there is high youth unemployment. Unsurprisingly, they've only managed to get cracking on two hubs. My colleague the member for Burt would love to have an update as to where his hub is, I'm sure. So I have some questions. What is the current status of the establishment of each of the 10 industry training hubs announced ahead of the last federal election? The 2019 federal budget announced $50.9 million for 10 training hubs. How much of this has been spent to date? Why have there been such significant delays in getting the hubs up and running? Now is the time for the federal government to invest in training and jobs in suburbs and areas which need extra investment to assist our kids to get jobs, but there's nothing in this year's budget for these hubs. Their only track record on the skills sector is less money, fewer apprenticeships and traineeships, and less money for TAFE. They love a good headline, but they don't seem to ever actually deliver on their promises.

There was not a cent in the budget for TAFE. They have spent seven years neglecting our TAFE and training system, ignoring the vital role TAFE plays in the growth of our young people and the vital role it plays in the growth of our economy. They have spent seven years cutting funding while also underspending the meagre amount of promise to the sector. Rebuilding our skills and training sector will be crucial to getting the economy going again. At a time when we as a nation are screaming out for skilled workers, it is a travesty that this government has neglected the VET sector and neglected our youth. If all that is delivered is a headline and we see billions in unspent funds, we will be here to hold this government to account.

Ms BELL (Moncrieff) (18:16): I would also like to thank Minister Andrews for the opportunity to speak about small business and skills today in the Federation Chamber and congratulate her on the great work that she has done on the Modern Manufacturing Strategy for our country. It is to be commended. She knows as well as I do, being a local Gold Coast member, that Gold Coast business leaders need employees with the right skills. The good people of Moncrieff tell me they want the right skills to land the jobs they need. As the Treasurer has made clear, the government knows, through our experience of previous recessions, that it can take a very long time to reduce unemployment. That's why the government has delivered a budget to build the momentum required to get people back into work quickly.

We've already seen a significant boost in confidence due to the budget and the Morrison government's JobMaker Plan to put skills at the centre of our economic recovery. The government is investing close to $7 billion in skills and training to ensure businesses can hire the employees they need and Australians can get back to work with the job that they need. This investment will maintain the current high standards of the Australian vocational education and training sector, whilst making it more responsive to employers' needs and more flexible and attractive to potential students from all walks of life. This is about building a pipeline of qualified people to support our economic recovery. It's about key measures like
the $2.8 billion investment to retain apprentices in training through the pandemic and the $1.2 billion for 100,000 new apprenticeships or traineeships. That's a lot of jobs—100,000 new positions. The $1 billion JobTrainer fund will skill Australians for our economic recovery. Migrants will learn English thanks to $259 million allocated to assist Australians to learn foundational skills through the Adult Migrant English Program. Areas of skills shortage are being addressed by the $264 million committed to additional employer incentives for apprenticeships in areas of skills shortage.

Moncrieff families are concerned about youth unemployment, and rightly so, and welcome the $50 million investment in VET pathways in areas of high youth unemployment. TAFEs will be better off due to a $50 million investment. A new national careers support service will provide school leavers with help to navigate post-school pathways as the government puts $71 million into improving career advice and promoting VET options. This builds on the work of the National Careers Institute. A new apprenticeships data management system will be created through a $91 million investment so that quality data is harnessed to support employers and their apprentices. A new joint $80 million Infection Control Training Fund will be established with the states and territories, with $40 million from the Morrison government to accelerate the uptake of new national skillsets for infection control. Regulator providers will benefit from $22 million in waivers or refunds from the Australian Skills Quality Authority, known as AQSA. This cashflow relief will help providers to retain their employees, reshape education offerings and support domestic and international students. The VET sector will be further supported with a one-year delay of AQSA's move to full-cost recovery, a $12.6 million saving to the VET sector. There's quite a lot on this list. Around 21,000 VET students also benefit from an exemption from loan fees until 30 June 2021 to encourage full-fee-paying students to continue their studies despite the pressure of the pandemic. The government is extending $11.9 million to the VET FEE-HELP Student Redress Measures to allow students to continue to have inappropriate debts, incurred through the failed VFH scheme, reaccredited.

Specific measures are being delivered for mature age workers, which is a great relief to many who will benefit from the $17.4 million skills checkpoint investment. The skills checkpoint fills a gap in the services currently available to older Australians. It supports older Australians, and we all have them in our family, to remain in the workforce longer by re-energising existing career paths and identifying opportunities for individuals to upskill or to reskill for other occupational outcomes.

Employers, employees and jobseekers can all have confidence in the delivery of the JobMaker Plan because the government has already delivered significant results. Over the last seven months our government has already supported 96,400 apprentices across 55,100 employers with $637 million in payments. These are staggering numbers. This is staggering support from the Morrison government. The National Skills Commission has been launched and will consolidate—(Time expired)

Mr KEOGH (Burt) (18:21): Just last week the Reserve Bank was forced to enact some of the most radical programs in its history in response to the Morrison government's premature cuts to vital economic supports like JobKeeper during the worst recession in many, many, many decades. Those cuts by this government really position it as the Christmas Grinch, because—after cutting the rate of JobKeeper only a few weeks ago—when we get to the end
of this year it will be cutting the rate of JobKeeper yet again, and that's on top of the cuts that will be coming to JobSeeker at the end of the year as well. For those 160,000 Australians that the government anticipates will join the jobless queues between now and Christmas that rate of JobSeeker will go back to the original rate of $40 a day. That's how Grinch-like this government is. Australians that are relying on these supports from government in their desperate time of need, during this recession, need that support, not just the Australians receiving those welfare payments but the businesses that rely on them spending those dollars. This is the story that I have heard time and time again around my community and around Australia in my discussions with small-business owners, that their concern is not just about the withdrawal of support in terms of reductions of JobKeeper for their own businesses but also the way in which people will not be in a position to spend money in their business because of the cuts that this government is applying both to JobKeeper and to JobSeeker.

The government has missed a huge opportunity in its budget to deliver certainty for Australians, as well as the small businesses and the workers in those businesses, that are reliant on JobKeeper. For the government to go around and say that it's okay to cut the rate of JobKeeper, because businesses are now facing better economic climate—firstly, tell that to the businesses of Victoria who have only just come out of lockdown. But, more to the point, the condition for qualifying for JobKeeper is that you've had a 30 per cent reduction in turnover. If you've still got the reduction in your revenue then surely you still need the same rate of JobKeeper that was previously announced, and that's not even getting to those huge swathes of employees—casuals, local government, so many areas—that missed out on JobKeeper altogether under this government.

The government has failed to give any certainty to those who rely on JobSeeker—and they don't rely on it because they want it; they rely on it because they've been unfortunate enough to lose a job during this recession. Those people are relying on such a small amount of money that even the BCA, Ai Group, COSBOA, ACOSS and ACTU all agree that the rate that was Newstart, which is now JobSeeker, needs to be permanently increased, because they understand the economic effect of the current substandard low rate of JobSeeker that the government is proposing will be returned to for Australians who are still unemployed. We have more than 10 people looking for a job for every job that is available in this country, but the government feels it is okay to revert to the below-poverty standard for the JobSeeker rate. It makes no sense for the government to be withdrawing these levels of support not just for individuals but for our economy across the board. Economic support needs to be tailored to economic conditions. That may sound familiar to the government, but we don't know what things will look like in March next year. We certainly didn't know in March this year how the economy would be going. Yet the government has said it will give no commitment around maintaining that rate of JobSeeker going forward.

The Prime Minister said in the parliament only a few weeks ago that, if you're good at your job, you'll get a job—which implies that those who are out of work are not good at their job. Not only is that an insult to working Australians across this nation and those that are now out of work, but how can it possibly be true when the Prime Minister is still in his job?

**Mrs Andrews** (McPherson—Minister for Industry, Science and Technology) (18:25): I would like to comment on the contributions of both the member for Bonner and the member for Moncrieff in this debate. Both of those members have strongly demonstrated, particularly
over this year, when their electorates have been affected, as has all of Australia and in fact the world, by the COVID pandemic, how committed they are to making sure that the people of their electorates have employment wherever possible and that, if they don't, they are supported. They are both very much committed to making sure that we as a government work with them to support businesses in their electorates to employ more apprentices and to retain the apprentices that they need now. Specifically, the member for Moncrieff has done a fantastic job on the Gold Coast, I would have to say. Our electorates actually neighbour each other. She has done, quite frankly, an outstanding job working with the small businesses in her electorate on the central part of the Gold Coast, understanding that the Gold Coast, as a tourism destination, has been savaged by what has happened with COVID-19. So congratulations to the member for Moncrieff for her work, and also to the member for Bonner.

I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to further discuss the Morrison Government's plan to create jobs by investing in skills training, supporting small and family businesses and helping jobseekers so that they have the best chance of finding work. That's exactly what the 2020-21 budget is all about. It is all about jobs. The member for Bonner asked about specific support programs to help small businesses. Since the onset of COVID-19 the government has committed an unprecedented $507 billion in overall economic support. This includes the JobKeeper payment, the boosting cash flow measure, the SME guarantee scheme, the instant asset write-off, help for hiring apprentices and trainees, extended and accelerated income support, early release of superannuation, and tax support.

Throughout this debate our speakers shared stories of hope and recovery. In contrast, the Labor speakers tried to score cheap political points. They tried to make mileage of the fact that our JobKeeper payments were always designed to be an interim lifeline to help businesses through the worst impacts of this pandemic. Businesses aren't interested in becoming permanently dependent on government. They are all about enterprise and having a go. We're backing that in so many ways with this budget, especially the more than $7 billion that we are investing to support skills training. I know that one of the speakers opposite spoke about training. But it was very selective commentary by the member, because she spoke specifically about TAFE. Firstly, funding TAFE is actually a state and territory government's responsibility; it's not the federal government's responsibility at all. But one of the biggest impacts on TAFE was a direct result of the national partnership agreement of 2012-17, which in fact was negotiated by the previous Labor government. That national partnership agreement made sure that contestability was introduced into the market. Because of that, TAFE's market share declined under the terms of that agreement.

Interestingly, that national partnership agreement was worth $1.75 billion over a five-year period. Of that, $1.15 billion or thereabouts went towards supporting the states so that they could harmonise a lot of the training that takes place—which has clearly not happened—but only $600 million or thereabouts went to direct training outcomes. Contrast that with what this government has done. We have directly supported apprentices. We have supported those that were engaged prior to COVID-19 so that they had support to continue, and we provided additional support so that more apprentices could be engaged.
This government has made sure that we are providing support as and when it is needed. We are providing an opportunity for small businesses to remain afloat during the COVID-19 crisis and, importantly, to develop and prosper.

Proposed expenditure agreed to.

Consideration in Detail

Industry, Science, Energy and Resources Portfolio

Proposed expenditure, $1,703,836,000

Mrs ANDREWS (McPherson—Minister for Industry, Science and Technology) (18:31): I'm pleased to open the debate tonight on the budget measures for the Industry, Science, Energy and Resources portfolio. This year, the world has been shaken and changed by COVID-19. Our government has been proactive from the start, and we put investments in industry, science, and technology at the centre of our JobMaker agenda. Jobs are at the heart of this budget. Everything we do is geared towards getting the conditions right to retain and create jobs, build business confidence and turbo charge recovery from the COVID-19 recession.

My fellow portfolio ministers, Minister Pitt and Minister Taylor, will be outlining their crucial elements for job creation through our energy and resources policies. But I'm particularly excited that the 2020-21 budget demonstrates our government's commitment to backing Australian manufacturing as well as the science and research that underpins it. The centrepiece of my portfolio's budget measure is the $1.5 billion modern manufacturing strategy, which will harness our manufacturing capability to boost competitiveness, achieve scale, and build resilience.

The $1.3 billion modern manufacturing initiative will help accelerate market led investment; encourage collaboration between businesses, researchers and investors; and provide opportunities for innovation, growth and investment in new technologies. It will support projects within six national manufacturing priorities—resources, technologies and critical minerals processing; food and beverage; medical products; recycling and clean energy; defence; and space. By setting clear priority areas and focusing investment based on our strengths, businesses in these sectors will be better able to compete, move up the value chain and create jobs.

We are also contributing to the $50.4 million investment in the budget to help Australia become a world-leading digital economy by 2030. This will help Australian businesses better use digital tools to readjust their operations and processes in a post-COVID economy. Importantly, we're backing science, with an extra $459.2 million to CSIRO to address the impacts of COVID-19.

In the limited time we have for debate, and in the interests of my colleagues having the opportunity to speak, I will reserve further discussion for my closing remarks.

Dr HAINES (Indi) (18:34): In the lead-up to the October budget, I met with the Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction to put forward my Local Power Plan. The Local Power Plan is a detailed blueprint to help regional Australians benefit from renewable energy.

Over the next 30 years Australia's entire coal fleet is set to retire and be replaced by renewable energy. In the same period $1 trillion will be spent on our electricity system. The vast bulk of our new renewable energy system will be built in regional Australia in a sun belt
stretching from Esperance to Gippsland and Cape York. But, without proper planning, everyday communities will miss out on the benefits of this boom. The Local Power Plan responds to this opportunity by inserting everyday Australians into the heart of this renewable energy transition.

The Integrated Systems Plan from AEMO projects that, over the next 30 years, Australia will install 47 gigawatts of new grid-scale renewables like solar and wind farms, the equivalent of around 16,000 wind turbines; 21 gigawatts of dispatchable energy like batteries, pumped hydro and virtual power plants, the equivalent of five new Snowy Hydro schemes; and a fivefold increase in distributed solar generation like rooftop panels, which would see around 10 million households benefit from rooftop solar.

Just today the New South Wales government announced a groundbreaking plan to attract $32 billion worth of private investment in renewables infrastructure over a decade, generating 6,300 construction jobs and 2,800 ongoing jobs and lower prices substantially. The question is: who benefits from this; and are the regional communities where this will take place brought along in the process?

Communities want to be involved, Minister. Over the last nine months, I've been speaking to regional communities across the country like the Walwa Bush Nursing Centre; the Bonnie Doon Recreation Reserve; the Yackandandah Community, with their battery; and many more that want to access these benefits.

The Upper Murray wants to build local renewables as part of the bushfire recovery. A local school got in touch just last week, saying they have excess land and would love to do something like this. Councils in Melbourne are contacting me, saying they'd love to go 100 per cent renewable by purchasing renewables from our regional communities. The local power plant is a way to unlock these benefits for the whole country, not just my electorate.

So, first, the local power scheme will establish 50 local power hubs across regional Australia to support communities to develop their own renewable energy projects. Each hub can provide technical and project support to community energy groups and work with them to access a new $310 million local power fund to provide strategic development capital. Secondly, in the plan, the Underwriting New Community Investment, or UNCI scheme, will provide financial certainty to new midscale energy generation and storage projects that are at least 51 per cent community owned. The UNCI scheme could unlock billions of dollars of private investment to support communities to build their local energy independence and resilience. Thirdly, the Community Renewable Investment Scheme, or the CRIS, will implement a new requirement for any new large-scale renewable developments in Australia to enable local communities to purchase 20 per cent of the project value.

There are so many benefits to this, and I have three questions for the minister. Minister, why didn't you provide funding for the local power plan in the budget? Why didn't you provide any funding for local community energy in general? And what are the government's plans to support everyday Australians in regional Australia to benefit from the renewables boom that's already starting to unfold?

Mr ALEXANDER (Bennelong) (18:38): Thanks to the minister for science for her words and her commitment to science and innovation in this country. Science has always been the bedrock of progress. We are where we are today largely because of the innovations and
developments of various scientists around the world who have studied to understand our world or developed technologies to make the world better. But, as we look around us at the pandemic which is ravaging our lives, our desire for a scientific breakthrough is as great as ever before. We know that we cannot get back to life as it was without a vaccine and we know that when this vaccine comes it will be delivered by members of the global scientific community who have been working together to bring this to us in record time.

Bennelong is famously Australia's capital of innovation, and so it is fitting to see that the first vaccine produced in this country, the Oxford vaccine, has been designed by a company based in Bennelong, AstraZeneca. I was delighted to be joined by the Prime Minister a few months ago at the announcement that we are investing in this drug and, like all Australians, I can't wait to see it being administered across this country.

Australia hasn't put all our eggs in one basket, though. We've also signed agreements with Novavax and Pfizer to get their vaccines to Australians, should they prove successful. The Pfizer vaccine is particularly exciting. It is a mRNA vaccine, which is a radically new approach to the way that vaccines are developed. Rather than the old approach, which inserts an inert virus into the body to strengthen the immune system, the mRNA vaccine gives instructions to the body to make proteins specific to the virus, which the immune system then recognises and produces a response to, to teach immune cells directly. As a recent emigrant from Bennelong, we're still happy to claim Pfizer's innovations as our own! While these companies, along with the University of Queensland—and I can't find a link there with Bennelong, no matter how hard I try!—have reached agreement with the Australian government, they are not alone in the search for a vaccine. There are many pharmaceutical companies in Bennelong, and they all have skin in the game in the search for a vaccine. We don't know who will get there first, but we know that it will come soon and that it will be a scientific response to this horrific virus that nature has thrown at us.

We clearly have the genius and the drive to develop these vaccines here. One thing we're lacking, though, is the manufacturing capabilities to make them here as well. While CSL has once again been a life saver and agreed to manufacture many of these vaccines, it is sad that we have to rely on this one company. Wouldn't it be great if each of these companies could go to the next step and employ Australians while they make the vaccines here too? That's why it's great to see that the government has committed $1.5 billion in the Modern Manufacturing Strategy. This strategy will create a manufacturing sector for a modern Australian economy by helping our businesses grow, become more resilient and boost their competitiveness on the global stage. This strategy recognises that we must play to our strengths. We must target sectors that allow us to generate full growth by focusing where we have a comparative advantage, where we have the capacity to harness emerging opportunities or where we have a strategic interest. That's why we are focusing our efforts on the six new national manufacturing priorities, one of which includes medical products.

We know that the main reason we don't have more manufacturing here is the costs of doing business, which are some of the highest in the world. We must find other ways to bring costs down if we want to be competitive. One of the better ways of doing this is by examining our energy costs, which brings me to my question to Minister Taylor. More than 850,000 Australians are employed in manufacturing in the manufacturing sector, and we know how crucial affordable, reliable energy is for our manufacturing industries. Businesses across my
electorate rely on affordable, reliable energy. I ask the Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction to update us on how the budget delivers on the government's plan to ensure businesses and families in my electorate have access to the affordable, reliable and secure energy they need while at the same time reducing emissions. How does our plan deliver these outcomes while also protecting our economy, jobs and investment?

Mr KEOGH (Burt) (18:43): As the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology outlined in the House recently, there should be no surprises. In the government's six national manufacturing priorities list, because it was developed on a solid foundation of evidence, that is entirely correct. But let me make this very important point as clear as possible: the reason the evidence is solid and why there were no surprises is that the evidence was developed years ago under the last Labor government with the announcement of its 2013 plan for Australian jobs. Let's be clear: these were Labor's ideas; these were Labor's priority areas. We're happy for this government to be copying what we did, because imitation is the sincerest form of flattery; however, what is particularly galling—and it seems to be a common practice with this government—is that after they formed government they abolished Labor's plan. Then, after seven years of doing nothing, waiting for a pandemic, they've now rediscovered the importance of manufacturing. Actually, they didn't quite do nothing. They did worse than nothing, because they also chased the car industry out of Australia during those seven years as well.

The minister claims that this is about setting priorities and aligning efforts so that everyone is pulling in one direction. What a shame they spent seven years swimming in the opposite direction to the plan that was already in place in 2013. What if they had stuck to Labor's plan, instead of abolishing it as part of their 2014 budget? Manufacturing in this country would then be full of thriving businesses, employing thousands more workers, and we would have been better placed to face this global health and economic challenge. The government's track record when it comes to manufacturing is, quite simply, appalling. Nothing could be more emblematic, as I mentioned before, than having ripped out $500 million of support and goading the Australian car industry into leaving our shores, which, remarkably, they did.

This government has failed to deliver on an energy policy, after more than 20 attempts, providing no business and investment certainty. Even the member for Bennelong just mentioned it, pointing out that it's the cost of energy to our manufacturing sector that is costing the development and support of our manufacturing sector. Seven years of this government, and things have only gotten worse. It has presided over a depletion of critical skills. It has seen the destruction of the viability of smaller manufacturers further down the supply chain. It has seen the withdrawal of private capital from research and development—it effectively tried to remove billions of dollars from the R&D tax offset. And when it comes to the fig leaf that is defence industry under this government, it, remarkably, doesn't work properly because it has no proper national industry policy to support the vitally important defence industry that our country needs.

Those opposite have spent seven years attacking and undermining Australian manufacturing, but now they want Australians to believe that they support manufacturing. What a waste of seven years! When we could have had more economic growth, we've instead seen the waste of taxpayers' money. So your manufacturing plan, your business tax carry-forward plan, your instant asset write-off: they all sound familiar, because they were all
Labor's policies abolished by this government in 2014. When are you going to admit that your best ideas are simply a rehash of Labor policies?

Mr TAYLOR (Hume—Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction) (18:46): I thank all those who have contributed to this consideration in detail, particularly the question that came from the member for Bennelong and the question from the member for Indi. Of course, the member for Bennelong focused on the importance of affordable, reliable energy for manufacturing. It is absolutely essential and it is a central pillar, focusing on affordable, reliable energy, for our JobMaker plan. We know that manufacturing uses energy in significant quantities, and Australia has relied on that affordable energy for a long, long time—not just decades; beyond that—to provide those jobs for manufacturers right across Australia, in the member for Bennelong's electorate, and right across regional Australia. The member for Indi pointed out the importance of energy across regional Australia.

In contrast to what we've just heard from the member for Burt, we are seeing electricity price reductions; indeed, we've seen seven straight quarters of CPI reductions in electricity. We have never seen that before in this country. And that's in parallel with—

Mr Conroy interjecting—

Mr TAYLOR: The member for Shortland doesn't like this, because it's the truth. The member for Shortland should be standing up for his coalminers in his electorate.

This follows on from wholesale electricity price reductions that we're seeing across the board. Indeed, before COVID struck we'd seen reductions in wholesale electricity prices of over 40 per cent across the National Electricity Market. That is good news for manufacturers. That is good news for households. That is good news for small businesses. Our budget initiatives are all focused on locking in those gains and making sure they're passed on. We passed legislation, which was opposed by those opposite 13 times, through the parliament to make sure wholesale price reductions are passed through to consumers.

Included in the budget are important initiatives like the $53 million microgrid initiative. This is about making sure regional communities get access to those opportunities as new technologies emerge. Farmers across Australia understand microgrids. The Southern Cross windmill was a microgrid. They've been using microgrids for a long, long time. The technology is changing and local communities across regional Australia can make use of it. That's why it's in the budget. But we also stepped in in the budget to make sure that Liddell is going to be replaced with capacity that can drive down prices. Liddell is in the member for Shortland's electorate.

Mr Conroy: No, it's not!

Mr TAYLOR: Well, right next door! The member for Shortland should be backing this in. He should be backing this in, and he sits there silently because he doesn't like the technology.

Importantly, we're taking real and practical action to drive down emissions. We have strong targets, we have a clear plan and we have an enviable track record. On June 30, we came to the end of the Kyoto era of emissions reductions, and we beat our targets by 430 million tonnes. When those opposite left government back in 2013, they forecast that emissions this year would be over 630 million tonnes. This year they are 530 million tonnes and likely to be lower—we'll see in the next few months. That's 100 million tonnes lower than those opposite
forecast with a carbon tax. And how have we done that? With technology, not taxes. We deploy the very best technologies across Australia to make sure Australians can deliver those emissions reductions in a way that's consistent with job creation and investment. We've seen record job creation across Australia during that time frame. The 850,000 jobs in manufacturing that the member for Bennelong talked about are absolutely crucial to this country.

I thank the member for Indi for her important question about regional communities and microgrids. Can I strongly encourage her to get her constituents involved with soil carbon projects, hydrogen—an enormous opportunity for Australia—clean steel and aluminium, of course, which will rely heavily on hydrogen. It's a great opportunity for Australia. The gas industry will play a role for many years to come, alongside coal. Balance in our system is absolutely crucial, but these technologies are essential to the future of energy in this country.

Mr CONROY (Shortland) (18:52): It's always interesting to witness the so-called Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction talking about energy policies, because the great thing with this minister is that, if you don't like his current policy, another one will soon come along. They are on 22 energy policies since they've come into power—22! In fact, they had four energy policies in 14 days in one period, which is spectacular. The truth is that this is another thought bubble from a government that is out of ideas. The so-called technology roadmap is lacking completely in commitments. At estimates two weeks ago, evidence from the department said not to confuse commitments with projections. It is yet another thought bubble from this government.

I'm glad the minister talked about 2020 and how they're going to hit the emissions reduction target. I've got the government's own documents here that show how they're going to hit 2020. They're going to hit 2020 by killing manufacturing, reducing fuel consumption in the manufacturing sector—that is, chasing away the auto sector—and reducing petrol consumption in the transport sector, because economic growth is so slow that we don't carry as many goods as we used to and because of the drought. Let me repeat: how will they hit 2020? By killing manufacturing, by killing economic growth and with the ongoing drought. That is how they hit 2020. What a joke.

How will they hit their so-called 2030 target? First, lower electricity demand—again, because they've killed manufacturing. Second, growth in renewable energy due to state government commitments. It's their own document saying this. It's not them doing anything on renewable energy; it is state government commitments driving increased renewable energy. That still leaves them only 16 per cent below 2005 levels. They need to do another 10 per cent to even hit their own inadequate target. And that brings in the illegal Kyoto carryover units—illegal because no other country recognises them. They don't exist in the Paris treaty at all. They only hit 16 per cent through killing manufacturing. They then use another 10 per cent by illegal Kyoto carryover units that no other government will accept.

This neglects the other great truth, that they don't have a 2050 net zero emissions objective, which is what the Paris accord signs up to. With the election of the Joe Biden government in America, we now have 70 per cent of our trading partnerships with countries that have committed to net zero emissions by 2050 or shortly thereafter. Over 60 per cent of the world's emissions are covered by those countries. We are left as a pariah state under this government because this government will not commit to the 2050 net zero emissions target, which is what
they signed up to with the Paris accord. What are the implications for Australia because of their criminal negligence in climate policy? We are facing—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wallace): Order! The member for Shortland will resume his seat. The member for Shortland cannot impute criminal assertions on members opposite. The member for Shortland will withdraw that statement.

Mr CONROY: I withdraw. But I said 'criminal negligence'. That is not criminality.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Shortland will withdraw the statement.

Mr CONROY: I withdraw. This government is recklessly indifferent to the future of this country. They are negligent and they need protection from people to cover up the fact they are not committed to taking action on climate change. We will face carbon border adjustments and we'll face border tariffs that will kill our export industries, because this government does nothing. The EU has foreshadowed it. The Biden party has already foreshadowed it. The member for Dawson may not accept that Biden will soon be the US president, but everyone else does. They have been very open in saying that they will not allow countries a free ride, which is what will happen under this government because of their lack of a net zero emissions target. Not only does it make good science sense to sign up to net zero emissions; it makes good economic sense because we will face border tariff adjustments and we'll miss out on the opportunities of becoming a renewable energy superpower, all under a government that have had 22 energy policies and lie to workers about what is going on. They lie to workers about the change that is coming down the line and they lie to workers by saying they don't need to do anything. In the end, they betray the future of those workers, they betray the workers in regions like mine, they continue to lie about climate policy and they betray the future of this country, and they should be ashamed.

Mr CHRISTENSEN (Dawson) (18:57): In this consideration in detail, I have a lot of questions on issues that I'll ask the minister for resources. He's doing a fantastic job. We support resources, particularly the coal industry on this side of the Chamber, unlike those on that side, and particularly the last member who spoke. The member for Shortland should be out there supporting the coal industry and should be out there supporting the coal workers, but he's not, and that's why he got such a massive swing against him at the last election, and that's why they'll be coming for him at the next election. The lack of support that he gives the industry that employs his workers is absolutely disgraceful. It's absolutely disgraceful that he could turn his back on people who would have backed his party through thick and thin. What we need is more people in this Chamber backing the workers in the coal sector.

I am fully backing the workers in the coal sector. I know the minister for resources and northern Australia does. We were out there before the last election, pushing for the opening of the Galilee Basin—a very important project that is already creating jobs in my electorate, in Townsville, and right through North and Central Queensland. I have to say: opening the Galilee Basin was a great achievement. There will be coal exported out of the Galilee, and we hope that more players will come and open it even further. The minister might want to touch on the coal sector and some of the things the government is seeing. In the face of this global pandemic, what we've seen is the resources sector punching on for the national economy, generating record exports, royalties and taxes so that we can deliver more in terms of infrastructure and more in terms of services. The latest GDP figures apparently confirm the resilience of Australia's resources sector as the pandemic grips the rest of the world. I
understand that the national accounts show that the mining sector actually grew by 0.2 per cent in the June quarter, compared to an economy-wide fall of seven per cent. It just shows that our economy is still plugging away because of the resources sector. That's important.

More recently, we've announced gas exploration. I think this is a great opportunity for regions like mine. I know that the northern Bowen Basin is part of the area that we'll be looking at in terms of gas exploration. It would be interesting to know why the government is investing in these strategic basin plans. I know it's all about jobs, but perhaps the minister might want to give a bit more additional information on that. How will additional areas be decided other than the northern Bowen Basin, and how will energy consumers benefit from those plans? I know personally many businesses in my region and elsewhere that are going to benefit from more gas being put onto the market. This is very important stuff. I'm very appreciative that the minister has announced this and that the government is going in this direction.

I turn to the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility. It is an outfit that I, as someone in the government, have legitimately criticised in the past—that there should have been changes made that actually streamlined things and made it easier for people to access the finance out of the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility. I understand that changes have been made recently that have enabled easier access to that finance. I've recently spoken with the CEO and people within the NAIF. I have also spoken with a number of different potential applicants that are looking forward to these changes coming into effect. So I'm wondering if the minister could detail to us what have been the outcomes of the NAIF's investment in Northern Australia thus far? He might refer to things such as Signature Beef, a processing facility in my region which is going to generate hundreds of jobs during construction and about 70 ongoing jobs. That is a fantastic project. You may able to talk about others. What is the government hoping to achieve through the further reforms to the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility? We want to see more money pumping out to the north for the development of tourism projects, manufacturing projects, for the development of any sort of project that is going to provide an economic return, create jobs and get the north moving again as we move out of this pandemic.

Mr BANDT (Melbourne—Leader of the Australian Greens) (19:02): My question to the minister is why, with this budget and these reckless targets, is he putting the lives and futures of millions of Australians at risk? Why is the government failing in its first duty to keep Australians safe? We had evidence from the Bureau of Meteorology, which I presume the government accepts despite efforts from its backbench to undermine it, at the Senate estimates in which said that we are on track in Australia for warming of 4.4 degrees by the end of this century—during the lifetime of Australia's primary school students.

The minister for science, if she believes in science, might have some interest in what the Bureau of Meteorology is saying. They are saying our targets are so low that we are on track to create a hellscape in this country by the end of the century, during the lifetime of Australia's primary school students. 4.4 degrees in Australia is what your own bureau is telling you.

What does the government do? The government comes along in the budget and decides to make it worse. Australia signed up to the Paris Agreement. One of the goals in the Paris Agreement is to limit global warming to well below two degrees. Why? Because that is the
point of no return. Cross two degrees and climate change becomes a chain reaction. You cannot rein it in. Australia has warmed by 1.4 degrees. That was what was behind the devastating bushfires that we saw, and that is what made the drought that we have been living through worse.

In this country we are exposed to the ravages of climate change and the threat it imposes as much as, if not more, than any other country. Our own Bureau of Meteorology is telling us that, unless we massively increase our climate targets by 2030, we are on track for over four degrees of warming in this country. That means, during my daughter's lifetime, a 92 to 95 per cent decline in productivity of our agriculture in the Murray-Darling Basin. It means removing our ability to feed ourselves. It means the kind of bushfires we have just seen happening not just happening every few years but becoming a regular occurrence. It means droughts that we experience becoming more severe. It means that when cyclones hit they will pack an even bigger punch than they are packing at the moment. It is why President-elect Biden has said that climate change is an existential threat. It is a crisis and it is an emergency.

My question to this government is: what is your temperature target that underpins this budget? Let's assume you are going to meet your reckless targets of 26 to 28 per cent emission cuts by 2030—which you won't without dodgy credits, but let's assume you are. What is that consistent with Australia warming by? Do you accept the Bureau of Meteorology's evidence to Senate estimates that Australia is on track to warm by 4.4 degrees during the lifetime of Australia's primary school students, and, if so, what does that mean for Australian farmers? What does it mean for Australian infrastructure? What does it mean for everyone who lives in a bushfire-prone region? One can only be left with the conclusion, after looking at this budget and seeing the money that it has for coal and gas, that the government wants Australia to warm by 4.4 degrees during the lifetime of my kids, during the lifetime of every primary school student in this country. If they want that they should have the courage to explain to everyone who cares about climate change that they are torching Australia.

My next question for the minister is: is he prepared to do what Joe Biden and others have called for, and that is accept countries in our region putting carbon tariffs on our export thermal coal, because clearly this government doesn't seem to accept the science? This government is not prepared to limit global warming to less than two degrees, so are you prepared to let others do the work for us and let South Korea, India and China put tariffs on our thermal coal, which is putting Australia at risk? Seventy-five per cent of our export thermal coal market has just signed up to net zero emissions. You don't seem to have a plan for it, so at the least, Minister, will you let others put tariffs on and make the plan for you so that we can protect coal workers and protect coal communities from the negligence and recklessness of this Liberal government?

Mr PITTI (Hinkler—Minister for Resources, Water and Northern Australia) (19:07): I thank all contributors to the debate so far on consideration in detail. I will obviously be speaking about my component in the ministerial portfolio on resources and northern Australia.

Firstly, I acknowledge the contribution of my good friend and colleague the member for Dawson. The member for Dawson made some good points, particularly around the resources sector and what it has managed to do during the pandemic this year. Once again, at every opportunity, whether I'm speaking publicly or privately or here in this place, I want to put on
the record my thanks to those hardworking men and women in the resources sector who have gone above and beyond in the last few months to ensure not only that they stayed employed but that they continue to drive that industry forward. They continue to maintain Australia's reputation as a reliable supplier, as a supplier of resources and energy right around the world in all circumstances, to our trading partners—many of whom we've had for decades. Our reputation has been enhanced by their actions, by their commitments and by the things they've had to do, including being away from their families for a very long period of time. Some of them are still away, given border closures and other requirements for COVID pandemic management. In terms of the portfolio, we will continue to drive the resources sector. We will continue to support it. We will continue to support the coal sector.

I note the contribution of the member for Melbourne. What I would say to the member for Melbourne is that I've met with any number of proponents who are invested heavily in Australia, from Japan and other countries, and what they've said very clearly is their commitment is not a commitment to no coal. Their commitment is a commitment to technology. Their commitment is a commitment to ensuring they can continue to use that reliable source of energy, which is Australia.

We have significant amounts of money in the budget, including $28.3 million in the investment in the five strategic basin plans to develop gas. The first of those will be the Beetaloo Basin. Mr Deputy Speaker, I would call to your attention to some recent media from one of the junior explorers up in the Beetaloo doing that exploration work right now: 'This is the hottest play on the planet.' This is a significant find in the Beetaloo. It will continue to drive our economy and manufacturing in this country for many, many years to come. It is our intention to ensure that we can provide gas at an affordable rate to ensure that manufacturers in this country are internationally competitive and have every single opportunity we can manage to provide to employ more Australians to drive our economy, to continue to provide growth. In the post-COVID environment, what matters is: we must ensure there are jobs for our people, that there are opportunities for our youth and they can be employed, educated and trained. That is what we have committed to as a government.

Our plan for an economic recovery post COVID is about driving the gas sector, the manufacturing sector and the agricultural sector. I see the minister for industry is here. There's an incredibly important plan around the manufacturing sector which I'm sure she'll inform the Federation Chamber about later.

It's not just about gas. We continue to invest in providing the facts in this debate: $13.7 million for CSIRO's Gas Industry Social and Environmental Research Alliance—better known as GISERA—to be out on the ground, countering those activists who are out arguing about gas but not based on fact. GISERA is a recognised scientific body. They do extensive work—more than 40 of these programs in recent years. We've continued to commit funding to drive facts into communities so people can make their own decisions. Some $36.9 million over four years and a further $29.2 million over the two years to 2025-26 will be provided to extend the nation's investment window by five years, another important driver of our economy.

Some $2.4 billion of the $5 billion allocated have been investment decisions made by the NAIF. That is incredibly important for the north—that source of finance, that source of confidence, that source of determination that will continue to drive our northern agenda which
is being lifted by the people of the north. If it's good for the north, it's good for Australia. We continue to support the north into the future—$124.5 million to expand Geoscience Australia's Exploring for the Future program. Exploring for the Future 2, following Exploring for the Future 1, is a $100 million investment and another $125 million to identify the resources we will need moving into the future.

What we know about this program is that it's estimated more than a trillion dollars in the last round of resources across this country. We know how important that will be to drive jobs into the future and decision-making by exploration companies and others. If we want jobs in this nation, we must continue to support sectors like the resources sector and northern Australia because they will help us with what we need to do.

Mr KEOGH (Burt) (19:12): I join with the minister for resources and northern Australia in thanking our resources workers for the great work they have done in very trying and difficult conditions to provide the economic engine room to support our nation to ensure that it is not in an even worse economic position than it currently finds itself in.

On behalf of those workers, there are some issues I need to raise in respect of the resources industry because Labor has said for a long time now that the Morrison government has lacked a cohesive overall policy position on Australia's relationship with China, instead outsourcing its commentary effectively to its backbench. This approach is now leaving Australia vulnerable.

In recent weeks we've been hearing increasing and concerning reports about our trade relationship with China. Our relationship with China is increasingly complex and must be managed in the national interest. Australia must stand up for itself and our national integrity. The economic security of our nation is fundamental to the security of our nation as well. So it is of great disappointment to me that the minister for resources has indeed now left the Chamber while I'm raising this very important issue.

It is clear that the Morrison government has no plan to address the escalating concerns of Australian exporters which are leaving Australia, and especially Western Australia, economically vulnerable. This is a $149 billion trade relationship that is now at risk. While much of that trade is in agricultural produce, resources such as coal have been affected and there are persistent rumours of impacts on iron ore out of Western Australia. There are potentially hundreds of thousands of Western Australian jobs that are at risk and even more across the country.

China is Western Australia's largest merchandise export market. Western Australia exported some $96.1 billion worth of goods to China last year with the top exports being iron ore, petroleum products and gold—all resources. I ask the minister—or I would have if he'd stayed in the Chamber—what is it that he and this Morrison government are doing to support our resources industry and its trade and the businesses that rely on it and the employees that rely on them? We don't want diplomacy via press conferences or backbench outbursts. What we want to know is: are there measured, diplomatic and productive conversations being held with Chinese counterparts to solidify our vital trade relationship?

In today's The Australian we read that businesses involved in this $149 billion export trade to China are urging the government to find a circuit-breaker to mend this relationship. Can the minister guarantee Australian traders and exporters to China—and promise all Australians
whose jobs rely on these exports—that these goods won't be blocked on arrival? Given the ongoing tensions with our largest trading partner, why has the government only just realised that diversification is important? Why has the government failed to support Australian exporters to diversify their markets? Why has the government walked away from its commitment to boost market access across India? What we as a nation want to know is: how is this unrest affecting the budget bottom line? Is the government having diplomatic, adult conversations with its Chinese counterparts, and what is this government doing to support industry, our economy, our economic security and our national interest?

Dr ALLEN (Higgins) (19:16): Like the first 20 years of the 20th century, innovation has exploded in the first 20 years of the 21st century. While 100 years ago innovation like the moving picture, the telephone and even the car saw changes the likes that had not been seen, I would argue that we are seeing an equally incredible flourish of innovation in the first 20 years of this century—innovation in energy and electric vehicles, innovation in medical technology and, most importantly of all, innovation in the digital world.

With the paint not yet dry on the digital revolution, the speed of this innovation and its impact on society continues to provide incredible opportunities. Just like 100 years ago, the opportunities of a flourishing world of innovation, of ideas and of science are impacting profoundly on the way that we work, play and even live. Just like 100 years ago when innovations in science led to women joining the workforce like never before, so too have they done so 100 years later. Just like 100 years ago when the world faced the Spanish flu pandemic that killed 20 to 50 million people, so too are we facing a subsequent economic crisis globally.

But things are different this time because science and innovation and the digital connectivity of the world can deliver solutions at speed. Let's just look at the Spanish flu, for instance. A hundred years ago we couldn't even diagnose if someone had the flu because we had no pathology tests. A hundred years ago we couldn't do what we have done this time in Australia with COVID tracking and tracing, and we certainly couldn't do rapid public health messaging. So too with regard to our economic response. A hundred years ago we couldn't do what the Morrison government have done, which is to prepare, through modelling, for the future of our economic response. I would say that science and innovation have made sure that our response to the dual economic and health crisis of COVID has never been answered in a more rapid and fulsome way.

It is important, however, that we do not rest on our laurels. We need to remain vigilant towards COVID, through our quarantining and contact tracing being of the highest quality and standards, so we that can avoid the worst outcome, which is of course lockdown. This has unfortunately been necessary in my home state of Victoria. But so too from an economic perspective we can't rest on our laurels as the lucky country. For too long we've relied on the natural resources of this country, whether it was on the back of the sheep, on the gold rushes of previous eras or on the export resource boom of today. We need to prepare ourselves to take the opportunities that a post-COVID world will present.

That is why I welcome the recent announcement that the Morrison government has made in manufacturing: a new future for our nation through the $1.5 billion Modern Manufacturing Strategy. This strategy will create a manufacturing sector for a modern Australian economy by making our businesses scale, become more resilient and boost their competitiveness on the
global stage. This strategy will help drive our economic recovery and our future. This is not the old manufacturing where men bent metal. This is the new manufacturing—smart technology driving the way that we do things through automation, through augmented intelligence and through smart thinking. As the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology, who I'd like to acknowledge here today, has so eloquently put: it's a declaration to the world and to private investors that Australia is not only 'open for business, but we mean business'.

I sit on the Joint Standing Committee for Trade and Investment Growth as well as the Standing Committee on Industry, Innovation, Science and Resources. I'm proud that both of these committees are undertaking very important inquiries that speak to the issue of modern manufacturing and its future in Australia. The first is an inquiry into diversification of trading partners, having handed down the Trade transformation report earlier this year, where the committee clearly identified that we not only needed to diversify our trade exports, but that we also needed to diversify our trading partners. The second is the inquiry by the Standing Committee on Industry, Innovation, Science and Resources looking at waste and recycling so that we can build a modern manufacturing industry that helps us meet our climate change commitments for global emission reductions.

This is why I welcome the Morrison government's wide-ranging commitment to building modern manufacturing in Australia. Lastly I would like to mention some important local businesses: Microbio, which is looking at mRNA technology, and Edge Electrons, which is about voltage reduction to reduce emissions. My question to the minister is: how will the government's modern manufacturing initiative help these local businesses?

Mr KEOGH (Burt) (19:21): It is with great sorrow that I rise now to speak about the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility and find that the Minister for Northern Australia has abandoned us this evening. But I'm very pleased to see that the portfolio minister has remained with us for over an hour now.

The Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility—or, as it's more often referred to by those in the sector, the 'no actual infrastructure fund'—has been a farce from the beginning. It's a $5 billion fund created by this coalition government to finance the construction of job-generating infrastructure in Northern Australia—which sounds good when you read it like that—and it is required to consult with Infrastructure Australia before providing loans to any project valued more than $100 million. Well, it sounded good, but it took them more than 1,000 days after its creation in 2016 to refer a single major project to Infrastructure Australia for formal assessment. The people of Northern Australia need and deserve to have well-paid and secure jobs and the right infrastructure projects that will stimulate the investment needed to secure and sustain those jobs.

The Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility was due to expire next year, but still had $3 billion left unused, which has now seen the government have to extend the length of this facility out to 2026 because of the ineffectiveness of the facility to date. They are literally rewarding a lack of action. It was revealed in estimates that after five years of operation the $5 billion Northern Australia Infrastructure Fund has only released $218.4 million. That's less than 5c out of every dollar allocated to the facility. This 'no actual infrastructure fund' of the government is the greatest example of all of how this government is focused solely on the headlines and not on delivery. The NAIF could be the perfect opportunity now to kick-start
the COVID-19 recovery across northern Australia. There are so many resources projects that could already be underway across Western Australia if the NAIF got its act together. But we all know that this government much prefers to have talk than actual action.

After having concluded its fourth review in four years, more recommendations were made to fix it. In my consultations with industry, the key line from them was this: 'If you could qualify for funding through NAIF, you could already have got the money from a bank. This has been providing absolutely no benefit whatsoever.' There was a review in 2017 under Tony Shepherd going into the investment mandate governance relationship with the states and territories. In July 2018, the Senate Economics References Committee tabled their report on the governance and operations of the NAIF. In 2019, the Auditor-General released a report on the governance and integrity arrangements of the NAIF.

In the staff remuneration 2018-19 report, the NAIF claimed that they were running an independent review of NAIF's staff remuneration policy and associated practices. Finally, before the select committee on 7 August 2020, the CEO admitted that staff bonuses were not based in any way on funding actually being released. Both the fund and its staff are actually being rewarded for no actual infrastructure. There is nothing connecting their outputs to what they're doing. The NAIF has been such a failure that they've had to extend its lifetime by another five years just to try to get the original funding out the door—and all of that at a cost of $62.1 million just to run it. How can the minister justify spending six times more on the administrative costs of extending the lifetime of this fund than the total amount that has been spent in Queensland through the fund over the last five years?

Mrs ANDREWS (McPherson—Minister for Industry, Science and Technology) (19:25):
Right at the moment I feel as if I'm standing at a fork in a road. The low road would take me down the path of doing the tit-for-tat, going backwards and forwards, having the cheap political shots. I'm actually not going to do that tonight. I'm going to take what I believe is the high road. I'm going to correct the record where it needs to be corrected, but I'm going to concentrate my remarks around the contribution that has been made by members such as the member for Higgins, the member for Bennelong and the member for Dawson, who have spoken very positively and proactively about the future that Australia faces and the opportunities that are available for all Australians, given where we are at this point in time.

Just to respond to a couple of comments that were made by those opposite—I say this really for completeness only—firstly, in relation to car manufacturing, Mitsubishi announced on 5 February 2008 and Ford announced on 23 May 2013 that they would be closing their manufacturing operations here in Australia. I'm not going to go down the path of pointing out which party was in government at that point in time. I will just leave that there. I say that purely for completeness.

In relation to the manufacturing priorities that this government announced and included in the budget, what I can say about that is that we did consult very widely. We looked at where Australia's comparative and competitive advantages were and where we needed to make sure that we had capacity and capability for our strategic needs into the future. I have had the opportunity to look at the 2013 plan for Australian jobs. It does mention defence at one point. I can't find mention of recycling. It does mention clean energy as a related policy which is already in one of the appendices to that document. Space is mentioned very briefly under an infrastructure heading—I can find that on page 45 of that document. I guess the important
point for me, though, in terms of today's debate, is that at this point in time, if those opposite are saying that they have already announced these initiatives, I would encourage them to just get on board. This is too important an issue for the constant backwards and forwards, the cheap political point-scoring.

We are at a point in Australia where we have an opportunity to recreate manufacturing here, to modernise it, and to look at how we can develop the jobs of the future and how we can build on the very strong base that we have, whether that is with trade, with industrial relations, with our deregulation agenda, with the $7 billion that we are pouring in to skill Australian for the future or whether it's looking at how we use science and technology as an enabler. The $1.5 billion manufacturing strategy that has been announced has the opportunity to deliver not just over the next four years but over the next decade. I think it is incumbent on all senators and members in this place to look at what the opportunities are and to see how we can make sure that we are creating the opportunities that Australians are looking for and need.

The feedback that I have received from industry—it's a broad range of industry stakeholders—is that they see the manufacturing strategy as at least a once-in-a-generation or once-in-a-lifetime lifetime opportunity for them to build their businesses and to be part of the future in those clear national manufacturing priorities that we have announced. So stakeholders are engaged. They are looking forward to how we roll over this strategy. But let me be clear: we are not going to be rushed into announcing how this money is going to be spent without doing the due diligence and without making sure we are consulting and getting the right advice to make sure that the money is targeted and is going to deliver exactly what is needed now and into the future. This is a very positive time for us. I commend the bill to the Chamber.

Proposed expenditure agreed to.
Debate adjourned.

Federation Chamber adjourned at 19:30