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SITTING DAYS—2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>12, 13, 14, 18, 19, 20, 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>2, 3, 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>2, 3, 4, 22, 23, 24, 25, 29, 30, 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>9, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 18, 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>14, 15, 16, 17, 21, 22, 23, 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>25, 26, 27, 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>2, 3, 4, 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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FORTY-SIXTH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION—FIRST 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
Deputy Speaker—Mr Kevin John Hogan MP
Second Deputy Speaker—Mr Robert George Mitchell MP

Members of the Speaker’s Panel— Hon. Kevin James Andrews MP, Mr Ian Reginald Goodenough MP, Mr Ross Xavier Vasta MP, Hon. Dr John Joseph McVeigh MP, Mrs Lucy Elizabeth Wicks MP, Hon. Sharon Leah Bird MP, Ms Sharon Catherine Claydon MP, Ms Maria Vamvakou MP, Mr Steven Georganas MP, Hon. Dr David Arthur Gillespie 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—Senator Hon. Bridget McKenzie
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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Members</th>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albanese, Hon. Anthony Norman</td>
<td>Grayndler, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexander, Mr John Gilbert, OAM</td>
<td>Bennelong, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Allen, Dr Katrina Jane</td>
<td>Higgins, VIC</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aly, Dr Anne</td>
<td>Cowan, WA</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrews, Hon. Karen Lesley</td>
<td>McPherson, QLD</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Andrews, Hon. Kevin James</td>
<td>Menzies, VIC</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Archer, Ms Bridget Kathleen</td>
<td>Bass, TAS</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bandt, Mr Adam Paul</td>
<td>Melbourne, VIC</td>
<td>AG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bell, Ms Angie Marion</td>
<td>Moncrieff, QLD</td>
<td>LNP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bird, Hon. Sharon Leah</td>
<td>Cunningham, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bowen, Hon. Christopher Eyles</td>
<td>McMahon, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Broadbent, Mr Russell Evan</td>
<td>Monash, VIC</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buchholz, Hon. Scott Andrew</td>
<td>Wright, QLD</td>
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<td>Watson, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Burney, Ms Linda Jean</td>
<td>Barton, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burns, Mr Joshua Solomon</td>
<td>Macnamara, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Butler, Hon. Mark Christopher</td>
<td>Hindmarsh, SA</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Butler, Ms Terri Megan</td>
<td>Griffith, QLD</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Byrne, Hon. Anthony Michael</td>
<td>Holt, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Chalmers, Dr James Edward</td>
<td>Rankin, QLD</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Champion, Mr Nicholas David</td>
<td>Spence, SA</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Chester, Hon. Darren Jeffrey</td>
<td>Gippsland, VIC</td>
<td>NATS</td>
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<td>Chesters, Ms Lisa Marie</td>
<td>Bendigo, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Dawson, QLD</td>
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<td>Blaxland, NSW</td>
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<td>Claydon, Ms Sharon Catherine</td>
<td>Newcastle, NSW</td>
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<td>Coker, Ms Elizabeth Ann</td>
<td>Corangamite, VIC</td>
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<td>Banks, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>Collins, Hon. Julie Maree</td>
<td>Franklin, TAS</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Conaghan, Mr Patrick John</td>
<td>Cowper, NSW</td>
<td>NATS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connelly, Mr Vincent Gerard</td>
<td>Stirling, WA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conroy, Mr Patrick Martin</td>
<td>Shortland, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Coulton, Hon. Mark Maclean</td>
<td>Parkes, NSW</td>
<td>NATS</td>
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<td>Dick, Mr Dugalid Milton</td>
<td>Oxley, QLD</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Dreyfus, Hon. Mark Alfred, QC</td>
<td>Isacacs, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Nicholls, VIC</td>
<td>NATS</td>
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<td>Dutton, Hon. Peter Craig</td>
<td>Dickson, QLD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elliot, Hon. Maria Justine</td>
<td>Richmond, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Entsch, Hon. Warren George</td>
<td>Leichhardt, QLD</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>Evans, Mr Trevor Mark</td>
<td>Brisbane, QLD</td>
<td>LNP</td>
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<td>Falinski, Mr Jason George</td>
<td>Mackellar, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>Fitzgibbon, Hon. Joel Andrew</td>
<td>Hunter, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fletcher, Hon. Paul William</td>
<td>Bradfield, NSW</td>
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<td>Flint, Ms Nicolle Jane</td>
<td>Boothby, SA</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>Freelander, Dr Michael Randolph</td>
<td>Macarturh, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Frydenberg, Hon. Joshua Anthony</td>
<td>Kooyong, VIC</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>Gee, Mr Andrew Robert</td>
<td>Calare, NSW</td>
<td>NATS</td>
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<td>Georganas, Mr Steven</td>
<td>Adelaide, SA</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Giles, Mr Andrew James</td>
<td>Scullin, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gillespie, Hon. Dr David Arthur</td>
<td>Lyne, NSW</td>
<td>NATS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members</td>
<td>Division</td>
<td>Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Goodenough, Mr Ian Reginald</td>
<td>Moore, WA</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>Perth, WA</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gosling, Mr Luke John</td>
<td>Solomon, NT</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Haines, Dr Helen Mary</td>
<td>Indi, VIC</td>
<td>IND</td>
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<td>Hammond, Ms Celia Monica</td>
<td>Curtin, WA</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>Hastie, Mr Andrew William</td>
<td>Canning, WA</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>Hawke, Hon. Alexander George</td>
<td>Mitchell, NSW</td>
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<td>Hayes, Mr Christopher Patrick</td>
<td>Fowler, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Hill, Mr Julian Christopher</td>
<td>Bruce, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Hogan, Mr Kevin John</td>
<td>Page, NSW</td>
<td>NATS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howarth, Mr Luke Ronald</td>
<td>Petrie, QLD</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hunt, Hon. Gregory Andrew</td>
<td>Flinders, VIC</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husic, Hon. Edham Nurredin</td>
<td>Chifley, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irons, Hon. Stephen James</td>
<td>Swan, WA</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jones, Mr Stephen Patrick</td>
<td>Whitley, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joyce, Hon. Barnaby Thomas Gerard</td>
<td>New England, NSW</td>
<td>NATS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katter, Hon. Robert Carl</td>
<td>Kennedy, QLD</td>
<td>KAP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kearney, Ms Gerardine Mary</td>
<td>Cooper, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kelly, Mr Craig</td>
<td>Hughes, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
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<td>Eden-Monaro, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keogh, Mr Matthew James</td>
<td>Burt, WA</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khalil, Mr Peter</td>
<td>Wills, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<tr>
<td>King, Hon. Catherine Fiona</td>
<td>Ballarat, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>King, Ms Madeleine Mary Harvie</td>
<td>Brand, WA</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laming, Mr Andrew Charles</td>
<td>Bowman, QLD</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Landry, Hon. Michelle Leanne</td>
<td>Capricornia, QLD</td>
<td>NATS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leeser, Mr Julian Martin</td>
<td>Berowra, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leigh, Hon. Dr Andrew Keith</td>
<td>Fenner, ACT</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Ley, Hon. Sussan Penelope</td>
<td>Farrer, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Littleproud, Hon. David Kelly</td>
<td>Maranoa, QLD</td>
<td>LNP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liu, Ms Gladys</td>
<td>Chisholm, VIC</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marino, Ms Nola Bethwyn</td>
<td>Forrest, WA</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marles, Hon. Richard Donald</td>
<td>Corio, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Martin, Mrs Fiona Barbouttis</td>
<td>Reid, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>McBride, Ms Emma Margaret</td>
<td>Dobell, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<tr>
<td>McCormack, Hon. Michael Francis</td>
<td>Riverina, NSW</td>
<td>NATS</td>
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<td>McIntosh, Ms Melissa Iris</td>
<td>Lindsay, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>McVeigh, Hon. Dr John Joseph</td>
<td>Groom, QLD</td>
<td>LNP</td>
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<td>Lyons, TAS</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mitchell, Mr Robert George</td>
<td>McEwen, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Morrison, Hon. Scott John</td>
<td>Cook, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>Morton, Mr Ben</td>
<td>Tangney, WA</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>Mulino, Dr Daniel</td>
<td>Fraser, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Murphy, Ms Peta Jan</td>
<td>Dunkley, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Neumann, Hon. Shayne Kenneth</td>
<td>Blair, QLD</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>O'Brien, Mr Llewellyn Stephen</td>
<td>Wide Bay, QLD</td>
<td>LNP</td>
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<td>O'Brien, Mr Ted Lynam</td>
<td>Fairfax, QLD</td>
<td>LNP</td>
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<tr>
<td>O'Connor, Hon. Brendan Patrick John</td>
<td>Gorton, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<tr>
<td>O'Dowd, Mr Kenneth Desmond</td>
<td>Flynn, QLD</td>
<td>NATS</td>
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<tr>
<td>O'Neil, Ms Clare Ellen</td>
<td>Hotham, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members</td>
<td>Division</td>
<td>Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
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<td>Owens, Ms Julie Ann</td>
<td>Parramatta, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pasin, Mr Antony</td>
<td>Barker, SA</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payne, Ms Alicia Emma</td>
<td>Canberra, ACT</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pearce, Mr Gavin Bruce</td>
<td>Braddon, TAS</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perrett, Mr Graham Douglas</td>
<td>Moreton, QLD</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Phillips, Ms Fiona Evon</td>
<td>Gilmore, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pitt, Hon. Keith John</td>
<td>Hinkler, QLD</td>
<td>NATS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plibersek, Hon. Tanya Joan</td>
<td>Sydney, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Porter, Hon. Charles Christian</td>
<td>Pearce, WA</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price, Hon. Melissa Lee</td>
<td>Durack, WA</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramsey, Mr Rowan Eric</td>
<td>Grey, SA</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rishworth, Hon. Amanda Louise</td>
<td>Kingston, SA</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robert, Hon. Stuart Rowland</td>
<td>Fadden, QLD</td>
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<td>Rowland, Ms Michelle Anne</td>
<td>Greenway, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ryan, Ms Joanne Catherine</td>
<td>Lalor, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Sharkie, Ms Rebekha Carina Che</td>
<td>Mayo, SA</td>
<td>CA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sharma, Ms Devanand Noel</td>
<td>Wentworth, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shorten, Hon. William Richard</td>
<td>Maribyrnong, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Simmons, Mr Julian Graham John</td>
<td>Ryan, QLD</td>
<td>LNP</td>
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<td>Smith, Hon. Anthony David Hawthorn</td>
<td>Casey, VIC</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>Smith, Mr David Philip Benedict</td>
<td>Bean, ACT</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Lingiari, NT</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Werriwa, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Warringah, NSW</td>
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<td>Sturt, SA</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>Sukkar, Mr Michael Sven</td>
<td>Deakin, VIC</td>
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<td>Wannon, VIC</td>
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<td>Macquarie, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Thistlethwaite, Hon. Matthew James</td>
<td>Kingsford Smith, NSW</td>
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<td>Herbert, QLD</td>
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<td>Jagajaga, VIC</td>
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<td>Aston, VIC</td>
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<td>Fisher, QLD</td>
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<td>Wells, Ms Anika Shay</td>
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<td>Wilson, Mr Timothy Robert</td>
<td>Goldstein, VIC</td>
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<td>Wood, Mr Jason Peter</td>
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<td>Young, Mr Terry James</td>
<td>Longman, QLD</td>
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<td>Makin, SA</td>
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## Members of the House of Representatives

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Members</th>
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<tr>
<td>Zimmerman, Mr Trent Moir</td>
<td>North Sydney, NSW</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;

### Heads of Parliamentary Departments

- Clerk of the Senate—R Pye
- Clerk of the House of Representatives—D Elder
- Secretary, Department of Parliamentary Services—R Stefanic
- Parliamentary Budget Officer—J Wilkinson
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Minister</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prime Minister</td>
<td>The Hon. Scott Morrison MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for the Public Service</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 Service and Cabinet</td>
<td>The Hon. Greg Hunt MP</td>
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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, Transport and Regional Development</td>
<td>The Hon. Michael McCormack MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Water Resources, Drought, Rural Finance, Natural Disaster and Emergency Management</td>
<td>The Hon. David Littleproud MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Population, Cities and Urban Infrastructure</td>
<td>The Hon. Alan Tudge MP</td>
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<td>The Hon. Nola Marino MP</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Senator the Hon. Jane Hume</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>(Vice-President of the Executive Council)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Leader of the Government in the Senate)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Finance, Charities and Electoral Matters</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Agriculture</td>
<td>Senator the Hon. Bridget McKenzie</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Forestry and Fisheries</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Foreign Affairs</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Assistant Minister for Regional Tourism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attorney-General (Leader of the House)</td>
<td>The Hon. Christian Porter MP</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Aged Care and Senior Australians</td>
<td>Senator the Hon. Richard Colbeck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Youth and Sport</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Home Affairs</td>
<td>The Hon. Peter Dutton MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs</td>
<td>The Hon. David Coleman MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Customs, Community Safety and Multicultural Affairs</td>
<td>The Hon. Jason Wood MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts</td>
<td>The Hon. Paul Fletcher MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<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</td>
<td>Senator the Hon. Michaelia Cash</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Vocational Education, Training and Apprenticeships</td>
<td>The Hon. Steve Irons MP</td>
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<td>Minister for Industry, Science and Technology</td>
<td>The Hon. Karen Andrews MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Resources and Northern Australia</td>
<td>Senator the Hon. Matthew Canavan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction</td>
<td>The Hon. Angus Taylor MP</td>
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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>Minister for Defence</td>
<td>Senator the Hon. Linda Reynolds CSC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Defence Minister</td>
<td>The Hon. Alex Hawke MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Veterans and Defence Personnel (Deputy Leader of the House)</td>
<td>The Hon. Darren Chester MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Defence Industry</td>
<td>The Hon. Melissa Price MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Families and Social Services (Manager of Government Business in the Senate)</td>
<td>Senator the Hon. Anne Ruston</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme</td>
<td>The Hon. Stuart Robert MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Government Services</td>
<td>The Hon. Michelle Landry MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Children and Families</td>
<td>The Hon. Luke Howarth MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Community Housing, Homelessness and Community Services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each box represents a portfolio. **Cabinet Ministers are shown in bold type.** As a general rule, there is one department in each portfolio. 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.*
## SHADOW MINISTRY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Shadow Minister</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leader of the Opposition</td>
<td>The Hon. Anthony Albanese MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Cabinet Secretary</td>
<td>Senator Jenny McAllister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Leader of the Opposition</td>
<td>The Hon. Richard Marles MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Defence</td>
<td>The Hon. Shayne Neumann MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Defence Personnel</td>
<td>Pat Conroy MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister Assisting for Defence</td>
<td>Matt Keogh MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Defence Industry</td>
<td>The Hon. Dr Mike Kelly AM MP</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Leader of the Opposition in the Senate</td>
<td>Senator the Hon. Penny Wong</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs</td>
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<td>Senator Jenny McAllister</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Education and Training</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Attorney-General</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Shadow Minister for Families and Social Services</td>
<td>The Hon. Linda Burney MP</td>
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<td>Shadow Minister for Indigenous Australians</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Reconciliation</td>
<td>Senator Patrick Dodson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Constitutional Recognition of Indigenous Australians</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
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<td>Shadow Minister for Trade</td>
<td>Madeleine King MP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each box represents a portfolio. **Shadow Cabinet Ministers are shown in bold type.**
MONDAY, 29 JULY 2019

Chamber
COMMITTEES—
   Petitions Committee—
      Report ........................................................................................................... 1

PETITIONS—
   International Development Assistance .......................................................... 1
   Telecommunications ......................................................................................... 1
   Foreign Investment ......................................................................................... 1
   Medicare ........................................................................................................ 1
   Great Barrier Reef ........................................................................................... 1
   Child Care ....................................................................................................... 2
   Icke, Mr David ............................................................................................... 2
   Goods and Services Tax .............................................................................. 2
   Endangered Species ..................................................................................... 2
   Live Animal Exports .................................................................................... 2
   Lupus ............................................................................................................. 3
   Parliamentary Privileges Act 1987 ................................................................. 3
   Renewable Energy ....................................................................................... 3
   Social Media .................................................................................................. 3
   Energy ............................................................................................................ 4
   Pensions and Benefits .................................................................................. 4
   Parliamentary Contributory Superannuation Act 1948 ............................... 4
   Fair Work Act 2009 ..................................................................................... 4
   Environment .................................................................................................. 4
   Infrastructure: Bradfield Scheme ................................................................. 5
   Elections ........................................................................................................ 5
   Cost of Living ............................................................................................... 5

PETITIONS—
   Statements ........................................................................................................ 5

BILLS—
   Constitution Alteration (Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Press) 2019 [No. 2]—
      First Reading .............................................................................................. 6
      Second Reading ........................................................................................ 6
   Constitution Alteration (Water Resources) 2019 [No. 2]—
      First Reading .............................................................................................. 8
      Second Reading ........................................................................................ 8

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS—
   Australian Space Industry ........................................................................... 9
   Women in Sport ............................................................................................ 16

BILLS—
   Counter-Terrorism (Temporary Exclusion Orders) (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2019—
   Counter-Terrorism (Temporary Exclusion Orders) Bill 2019—
      Returned from Senate ................................................................................ 24

GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S SPEECH—
   Address-in-Reply .......................................................................................... 24

RESOLUTIONS OF THE SENATE—
   Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability—
      Consideration of Senate Message .................................................................. 32

STATEMENTS ON INDULGENCE—
   Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction ............................................... 32

RESOLUTIONS OF THE SENATE—
   Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability—
      Consideration of Senate Message .................................................................. 34

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS—
   Mental Health .............................................................................................. 38
   Whitford, Rachel APM .................................................................................. 38
Solomon Electorate: Dolly's Dream ................................................................. 38
Wentworth Electorate: Darling Point Society ............................................. 38
Hunter Electorate: Infrastructure ................................................................. 39
Herbert Electorate: Employment ................................................................. 39
Jagajaga Electorate: Homelessness .............................................................. 39
Motor Neurone Disease .............................................................................. 40
Mayo Electorate: Environment ................................................................. 40
Curious Minds Winter Camp ...................................................................... 40
Afghanistan .................................................................................................. 40
Robertson Electorate: Schools ................................................................. 41
Macnamara Electorate: Albert Park Kinder ................................................ 41
Fisher Electorate ......................................................................................... 41
Adelaide Electorate: Aged Care ................................................................. 42
Goldstein Electorate: Royal Brighton Yacht Club ........................................ 42
Newstart Allowance .................................................................................. 42
Building Better Regions Fund: Great Southern Centre for Outdoor Recreation Excellence ............................................................... 43
Taxation ....................................................................................................... 43

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE—
Newstart Allowance .................................................................................. 43
Internet Content ........................................................................................ 44
Workplace Relations .................................................................................. 45
Road Safety ................................................................................................ 45
Workplace Relations .................................................................................. 46
Law Enforcement ......................................................................................... 46
Internet Content ........................................................................................ 47
Royal Commission into Misconduct in the Banking, Superannuation and Financial Services Industry .......................................................... 47
Revenue ....................................................................................................... 48
Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction ............................................. 48
Energy .......................................................................................................... 49
Internet Content ........................................................................................ 49
Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction ............................................. 50
Internet Content ........................................................................................ 50
Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction ............................................. 51
Internet Content ........................................................................................ 51
Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction ............................................. 52
Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme .............................................................. 52
Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction ............................................. 53
Construction Forestry Maritime Mining Energy Union ................................ 53
Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction ............................................. 54
Environment ............................................................................................... 54
Workplace Relations .................................................................................. 54
Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction ............................................. 55
Drought ......................................................................................................... 55

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS .................................................................... 56

DOCUMENTS ................................................................................................ 56

BILLS—
Farm Household Support Amendment Bill 2019—
Second Reading .......................................................................................... 56
Third Reading ............................................................................................... 68

COMMITTEES—
Membership ............................................................................................. 68

BILLS—
Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Amendment (Ensuring Integrity) Bill 2019—
Second Reading .......................................................................................... 69

GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S SPEECH—
Address-in-Reply ........................................................................................ 73

BILLS—
Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Amendment (Ensuring Integrity) Bill 2019—
Second Reading .......................................................................................... 77
ADJOURNMENT—
Domestic and Family Violence ................................................................. 94
Wentworth Electorate .............................................................................. 95
Economy ................................................................................................... 96
Energy ...................................................................................................... 97
Aged Care ................................................................................................. 97
National Disability Insurance Scheme ......................................................... 98
Braddon Electorate: Mental Health ............................................................... 98

NOTICES .................................................................................................... 99

**Federation Chamber**

**CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS**—
Canberra Electorate: Waterways ................................................................. 101
Road Safety ............................................................................................... 101
National Disability Insurance Scheme ......................................................... 102
Lindsay Electorate: Cr annebrook Breakfast Club ........................................ 102
Pensions and Benefits ............................................................................. 103
Groom Electorate: O’Callaghan Cup ............................................................. 103
Gorton Electorate: Infrastructure ................................................................. 104
Ridgley Saints Football Club ..................................................................... 104
Motor Neurone Disease ........................................................................... 104
Barty, Ms Ashleigh (Ash) .......................................................................... 105
Somerset Art Society .................................................................................. 105
Sunshine Coast: Small Business ................................................................. 105

**PRIVATE MEMBERS’ BUSINESS**—
Australian Defence Force Cadets ............................................................... 106
Solomon Electorate: Cadets ....................................................................... 107
Aged Care ................................................................................................. 113
Infrastructure ........................................................................................... 117
Tasmania: Housing Affordability ................................................................. 122

**STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**—
Infrastructure: Indigenous Culture ............................................................ 129
Cowper Electorate: Youth Employment ....................................................... 130
Macquarie Electorate: Environment ............................................................ 130
Sydney Youth Musical Theatre .................................................................. 130
Centrelink .................................................................................................. 131
Nuclear Energy ......................................................................................... 131
Macarthur Electorate ............................................................................... 131
Ryan Electorate: Girl Guides ..................................................................... 135
Oxley Electorate: Infrastructure ................................................................. 135
Matthews, Mr Jarrod ................................................................................. 135
St Brendan’s Church: 100th Anniversary ................................................... 136
Jepp, Mr William (Bill) ............................................................................. 136
Roe Highway ............................................................................................. 136
Mental Health ............................................................................................ 137
Australian Defence Force Parliamentary Program .................................... 137
Superannuation .......................................................................................... 137
Human Rights ........................................................................................... 137
Forestry ....................................................................................................... 138
Krueger, Mr Alan Bennett .......................................................................... 138
Kleiman, Mr Mark Albert Robert ................................................................. 138
Forde Electorate: Community Organisations ............................................ 138
Vietnam Veterans Day ............................................................................... 138
Braddon Electorate: Latrobe ....................................................................... 139
Franklin Electorate: Infrastructure ............................................................. 139
Chisholm Electorate: National Tree Day .................................................... 139
Newstart Allowance ................................................................................. 139
Burwood RSL ............................................................................................ 140
Sterling First .............................................................................................. 140
Parliamentary Friends of Diabetes .............................................................. 140
Ryan Electorate: WANTZ Committee .......................................................... 140
Brand Electorate ......................................................................................... 141
MOTIONS—
  National Disability Insurance Scheme: Early Childhood Early Intervention Approach .............................................. 141
PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS—
  Vision Australia Radio Funding ................................................................ 146
  IDCARE ........................................................................................................ 151
  National Integrity Commission .................................................................... 155
  Education ..................................................................................................... 159
  Infrastructure ............................................................................................... 161
The SPEAKER (Hon. Tony Smith) took the chair at 10:00, made an acknowledgement of country and read prayers.

COMMITTEES
Petitions Committee
Report

Mr LLEW O'BRIEN (Wide Bay) (10:01): I rise to speak as the new chairman of the Standing Committee on Petitions for the 46th Parliament. Today I present the first report of the Petitions Committee for the 46th Parliament.

PETITIONS

Mr LLEW O'BRIEN (Wide Bay) (10:01): I present the following 22 e-petitions from the 45th Parliament:

International Development Assistance
Australia is currently affected by major flood, fire and drought and also major homelessness and poverty. We therefore ask the House to divert all foreign aid to assist those affected by fire, flood and drought and help the homeless and poverty stricken areas in Australia from 210 citizens (Petition No. EN0874)

Telecommunications
The Mobile Security law. The theft of mobile devices is an ongoing problem in Australia and this can be stopped by all Police computer systems being in constant communication with all Telecommunications computer systems and this can only be achieved by Federal Law. Currently in NSW the police buy an "I ask" from the Telco's which can take up to two weeks. All mobile devices have an IMEI number (International Mobile Equipment Number) The operator of all devices have a SIM card (Subscriber Identification module) in their name. By transmitting the IMEI numbers to all Telco's in real time, and the owner information from the SIM cards returning to the Police systems will prevent a stolen mobile device being used as a trigger for a bomb. Once implemented this will save on police resources being used, freeing up the police to prosecute other offences. All SIM cards without ID and or names like Micky Mouse, obviously fraudulent, should be deleted from the Telco's systems by Federal Law. Those who top up their accounts with the Telco's, where insufficient or fraudulent ID's are apparent, should be required to provide the 100 point ID, including a valid photo ID. "It will make it more difficult for villains to go out and get SIM cards in false names and therefore they are going to have to use their own identification," B J Gilmer, a victim. We therefore ask the House to implement the Mobile Security law to protect all Australians. from 2 citizens (Petition No. EN0876)

Foreign Investment
To stop the sale of Australian land, either residential, commercial or agricultural to foreign people that are not Australian or New Zealand citizens.
We therefore ask the House to enforce that if they wish to gain the use of land in Australia, then it's only on a lease based system like we can do in foreign countries. This is to protect Australia for future generations before international companies and personal are able to buy all the precious resources, be it farming or agriculture to forcing the property market out of reach for future generations from 8 citizens (Petition No. EN0877)

Medicare
Some people do not want, for moral, religious or other reasons, to accept money from government. As it stands, however, when claiming a medical benefit through private-health-insurance, it is not legally possible for citizens to opt out from receiving a portion of the benefit through Medicare. Not only is it improper for government to pay money to people who do not want to receive it, but not paying them would also help improving the budget.
We therefore ask the House to allow people to opt out from receiving Medicare payments on their private-health-insurance claims and instead pay the Medicare portion out of their own pocket (or as otherwise agreed between themselves and their private-health fund). Alternately (or in addition), allow citizens access to private-health-insurance policies that are currently only available to temporary residents, whereby Medicare plays no part in refunding medical expenses.
from 3 citizens (Petition No. EN0878)

Great Barrier Reef
Great Barrier Reef cannot sustain coal sludge with even trace heavy metals, you guys are looking at serious consequences, halt at once the 1,000,000 ton sludge dump on the barrier reef.
We therefore ask the House to draft a resolution on the sludge, bring it MUCH further offshore, use renewable energy. STOP AT ONCE from 8 citizens (Petition No. EN0880)

Child Care

Lack of Commonwealth support for Informal Kinship Care. Lack of consideration in child placement and lack of financial support. Lack of access to 'Grandparents support line' like service for Informal Kinship care with more specific information about their unique circumstances. Lack of advocacy and generic forms for Informal Care online. Lack of Transparency and consistency across States and Territory. Informal Care is violation of Article 2 of the UN Convention on the Right of Children to have what other Children in Out Of Home Care (OOHC) have.

We therefore ask the House to Abolish Informal Care Nationally . Have One National Law across State and Territory through Action Plan of the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children To redevelop generic forms to respond to Informal Carers' unique circumstances and easy access to Allowances for Informal Care Nationally. Development across Jurisdiction of Programs to support Children in Informal Kinship Care. One stop advocacy shop within States and Territory. Future exploration of Commonwealth support for Children in Informal Kinship care. A Royal Commission Into Informal Kinship Care Nationwide.

from 333 citizens (Petition No. EN0884)

Icke, Mr David

Immigration Minister David Coleman has revoked the visa of David Icke 4 hours before he boards a flight to our country which he has visited 10 times before. The decision was made on grounds that Mr Icke is a "holocaust denier" and "anti semitic" with no shred of proof of this ever being said or written in his books or speaking events.

We therefore ask the House to provide evidence supporting these allegations or overturn the original decision and allow the freedom of speech that is our human right.

from 1 citizen (Petition No. EN0885)

Goods and Services Tax

The Australian Government are double dipping with the GST and fuel excise tax. In 2001, the GST was introduced and the excise tax was lowered to compensate and it stopped being indexed with inflation. However that was reintroduced in 2014. As of February 2019, the excise tax alone is 41.6c per litre and rises with inflation twice yearly in February and August. Approximately one third of fuel cost is the GST and excise tax. Now we have both and Australians are suffering because of rising fuel costs. We have seen 20c to 30c per litre differences in service stations just meters away from each other.

We therefore ask the House to We request that either; 1) the excise tax be lowered and stop it being indexed with inflation. Or 2) the GST be taken off fuel and request an increase only once every 2 years. We would also like to see the retailers who price gouge and hike be able to be reported and action taken against them to a proper authority.

from 575 citizens (Petition No. EN0888)

Endangered Species

In the history of man, we have lost almost 200 species of bird. We cannot let yet another one join the echelons of man's disgrace. The Regent Honeyeater, found nowhere else on Earth besides parts of New South Wales and Victoria. However, it might forever disappear from Australia if immediate action is not taken. Right now, there is a proposal to construct a coal power plant in New South Wales, directly on top of the only breeding ground known for the Regent Honeyeater. China Energy Engineering Corporation, Kaisun Holdings, and Cavcorp together offer the promise of bringing jobs and energy to Australia. However, the simple truth is that these methods of energy are simply unsustainable, as well as destructive to the Regent Honeyeater and several other endangered species of Australia. There are far more prudent methods of action in renewable energy, without disrupting the environment to the same degree and providing the economic stimulation of coal. If this plant is built, not only New South Wales, not only Australia, but the entire world will have yet another species of animal deprived of them. The time for action is now, and you can make sure that we do not lose another critical aspect of our biodiversity.

We therefore ask the House to nullify the proposal and deem it against the interest of the Australian people, and make sure that the Regent Honeyeater does not face extinction again.

from 9 citizens (Petition No. EN0889)

Live Animal Exports

The increasingly aggressive tactics being used by animal "activists" in an attempt to damage the reputation of those involved in livestock export and create fear among parliamentarians with the goal of making livestock export illegal in Australia. Further, that the often extreme campaigns against our farming communities are orchestrated and supported by organisations and individuals with foreign interests and provoke emotion using dangerously misleading or incomplete information and imagery. This growing trend not only causes great distress and uncertainty to those investing in an industry that is critical to the sustainability of many regional towns, but also damages Australia's ability to influence and improve global animal welfare practices. As demand for livestock is increasing in the Middle East, damaging Australian farmers ability
to trade is likely to end in the valuable income being lost to countries that do not have the capacity or willingness to ensure the welfare of animals as Australia currently does and most importantly, more animal suffering.

We therefore ask the House to 1. Immediately and unanimously support a formal motion in support of the continuation of Australia's live animal export sector, 2. Investigate any policy and/or legislative changes necessary to ensure opposition to farming is communicated in a civil and respectful way, and 3. Immediately establish a Committee to formally inquire into the Charity status and value for money of any government grants provided to organisations and associated individuals that have undertaken or been involved in any illegal or anti-social activity in protest to any Australian farm or farming practice.

from 3 citizens (Petition No. EN0890)

Lupus

We request that the House allocate funding for the chronic illness Lupus. This illness affects 1 in 600 Australians, potentially more as many sufferers go undiagnosed due to the lack of awareness and absence of a clear testing method to diagnose. Often sufferers go through a multi-year diagnosis journey which at the end reveals a potentially fatal illness with no singular effective treatment, no cure and no government support.

We therefore ask the House to allocate funding into support for sufferers and research into this illness. Support should include disability support, automatic health care card allocation (despite household income), rebates for cooling (as heat is detrimental to sufferers) as well as greater community awareness and information/help groups for sufferers and families of sufferers. Research funding should be allocated to allow easier diagnosis, better, more effective treatment options and ideally a cure.

from 4 citizens (Petition No. EN0892)

Parliamentary Privileges Act 1987

I, and I believe most decent Australians was horrified at the recent comments of Senator Anning and believe that parliamentarians must uphold the values of the community at large. We call upon the parliament to amend the legislation to once again permit the expulsion of unsavoury persons from the houses of parliament. I would suggest that such methods should include an e-petition, such as this one, conducted under the auspices of the Standing Committee on Petitions and the threshold for action being a minimum of ten times the first preference votes registered for the HoR member or twice the threshold vote for a Senator at his or her election.

We therefore ask the House to amend the Parliamentary Privileges Act 1987, Section 8 to read "A House does not have power to expel a member from membership of a House excepting where the house is acting in accordance with the freely expressed will of the people as determined by such method as deemed acceptable to the parliament."

from 8 citizens (Petition No. EN0893)

Renewable Energy

IPCC states human activities are estimated to have caused 1.0°C of global warming above pre-industrial levels. Global warming is likely to reach 1.5°C after 2030 Impacts of 1.5°C global warming: □ Melting of the polar caps → rising sea levels □ Floods □ Mass extinction of flora and fauna □ Extreme weather conditions (harsher floods, droughts, extreme temperatures) □ An overabundance of carbon dioxide and other pollutants in air affecting the carbon cycle and causing aforementioned points On a global scale, Australia does not account for a large percentage of total greenhouse gas emissions, but the nation is still a per cent. Australia can be a pioneer in renewable energy and set a great example to other countries. Australia needs to use our resources, wealth, and influence to pave the way for a cleaner, greener future. Renewable energy is feasible: □ Fossil fuel resources are depleting, and while it seems cheap now, it will rise in price as demand increases but supply does not. Long term the economic and environmental impacts will cost more to solve with continued use. □ Renewable energy is just as affordable as energy produced by fossil fuels and some solar panels can generate power at approximately half the cost of coal

We therefore ask the House to commit to 100% renewable energy by 2030, to minimise the harm of global warming.

from 92 citizens (Petition No. EN0895)

Social Media

I'm aware that there are discussions around laws regarding online hate speech and harmful digital communications. However, it seems that the laws regarding this are very vague if they exist at all. In my experience, people of colour, LGBTQI+ community, Muslim community, and women are targeted the most via social media and digital communications like Email and SMS. I've faced racism both on street and on social media. Social media gives far-right the power of anonymity to say the most vile things they wouldn't say in real life. And they do so in full confidence knowing that there are literally no consequences. It does take a toll on the mental health and overall well being of the people on receiving side of the hate speech. Hate speech has already done a lot of harm and It's about time that there is a clear boundary between hate speech and free speech. It's important that social media like Facebook update their community standards in accordance to any upcoming new laws and that all the reports are streamlined with the police authorities of relevant states.

We therefore ask the House to introduce a bill regarding online hate speech and offensive conduct/ harmful digital communications.

from 6 citizens (Petition No. EN0896)
Energy
The people of the Pilbara are suffering financially due to the increasing costs for electricity. We cannot afford to live here and are forced to pay thousands of dollars each month for an essential service. We are questioning if our bills are true and accurate given it would seem the usage of units are higher than normal. We have asked for our bills to be checked before and told they are correct, yet every year they are getting larger. How can a family of four possibly survive paying over a $1,000 per month for their power bill.

We therefore ask the House to investigate the power usage for the residents of the Pilbara. We only have one service provider, Horizon Power, and we would like the members of the House to allow an audit of peoples bills to verify if their usage is correct. We would ask for the Smart meters to be tested in Pilbara conditions. We would like people using Solar power investigated due to high bills they also are receiving. We would ask for financial assistance for those if the bills are correct as we no longer are in a 'boom' and most don't get any remote allowance due to Karratha now being named a city.

from 230 citizens (Petition No. EN0897)

Pensions and Benefits
Social Security Agreement between Australia and the Republic of Bulgaria. By becoming partner countries Australia and the Republic of Bulgaria will make concessions against their social security qualification rules so that people covered by the agreement may access payments for which they might otherwise fail to qualify. Australia already has a number of similar social security agreements with 32 countries. Under these agreements, Australia equates social insurance periods/residence in those countries with periods of Australian residence in order to meet the minimum qualifying periods for Australian pensions. The other countries generally count periods of Australian working life residence as periods of social insurance in order to meet their minimum qualifying periods for payment. Usually, each country will pay a part pension to a person who has lived in both countries. Part 53 of the Framework Agreement between the European Union and Australia refers to enhancing cooperation in the field of social security systems. The Republic of Bulgaria is a member of the European Union. A Social Security Agreement between Australia and The Republic of Bulgaria would coordinate the two countries' social security schemes to provide better retirement income coverage for people who have moved between the two countries.

We therefore ask the House to consider commencement of negotiations for a reciprocal Social Security Agreement between Australia and the Republic of Bulgaria to share the responsibility for social security coverage and related costs for the Age Pension, Child support payments and Disability Support Pension for the severely disabled.

from 670 citizens (Petition No. EN0899)

Parliamentary Contributory Superannuation Act 1948
The remuneration being received by retired politicians is inequitable compared to the superannuation and retirement benefits received by everyday Australians. Currently when a politician leaves office they receive benefits for relocating, a yearly salary, free travel for themselves and their spouse and funding to maintain an office (just to name a few) at the taxpayer’s expense. When a politician leaves office, the taxpayer should not be required to support them financially and their superannuation should be subject to the same legislation as all other taxpayers. Retired politicians should not receive taxpayer funded money unless they are undertaking a role on behalf of the Australian people.

We therefore ask the House to Abolish the pay and entitlements paid to retired politicians under the Parliamentary Contributory Superannuation Act 1948 and have any remuneration received subject to same retirement and superannuation conditions as everyday Australians.

from 111 citizens (Petition No. EN0901)

Fair Work Act 2009
Changes to the Fair work act 2009 to include 'high income' employees. Every Australian deserves work place protection. Many Australians who earn a 'high income' are not protected, under the Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth), a high income employee is classified as someone whose pro-rata employment salary is equal to or above the high income threshold. This provides an opportunity for companies to treat employees poorly without ramifications. This is impacting many women taking maternity leave. Please refer to the work done by the Human Rights Commission regards discrimination.

We therefore ask the House to make changes to the Fair Work Act 2009 to ensure that all Australians have work place protection.

from 5 citizens (Petition No. EN0902)

Environment
This petition of certain citizens of Australia draws to the attention of the House: The Australian Government’s specific role in wetland management and protection as established by our obligations under international conventions, specifically the Ramsar convention with regard to Western Port, including to ensure that activities will not lead to negative impacts on the ecological character of the wetland, lead to the loss of biodiversity or diminish the many ecological, hydrological, cultural or social values of wetlands.

We therefore ask the House to Note that the proposed AGL floating gas import terminal at Crib Point is subject to Federal government assessment and approval processes under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999
Monday, 29 July 2019

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

5

from 589 citizens (Petition No. EN0903)

Infrastructure: Bradfield Scheme

Requesting that the House make a request for research to build modern water channel(s), better known as the "Bradfield Scheme", with the aim to divert North Australian (Queensland) water resources, that normally flow to the sea, to eastern Australian states, for long-term water security, sustainability and broad economical benefit.

We therefore ask the House to consider a modern North to South water channel system, for the possibility of diverting a well known natural resource that can be used for the benefit of the Australian peoples majority, within the next decade and into the future. A case to consider is the Toowoomba Region of 160,000 plus people, which even after the 2011/12 floods that filled the three regional dams, are now back at 2008-2009 dam levels, with increasing restrictions today. Toowoomba council received close to $187 million dollars in Queensland state government funding to complete a 45km pipeline from the Wivenhohoe dam to help secure its water future. This pipeline is inadequate to maintain/mitigate the loss of water supply from its own water resources. The initial cost of a modern canal system of around $9-15 billion (AUD) from the North of Australia was considered to be far too expensive 90 years ago. In a 2010 engineering proposal for a modern "Bradford scheme", a cost recovery is quoted to be 4-6 years at an approximate cost of $600 per megalitre. "With a modern Bradfield scheme in play we could be one of the greatest agricultural exporters in the world".

from 13 citizens (Petition No. EN0904)

Elections

Australian electrol commision

We therefore ask the House to examine the rights of australians to nominate to run in elections without paying to nominate as its every australians right to represent the people in all levels. Represent the people should be free for all levels to nominate to represent.

from 4 citizens (Petition No. EN0906)

Cost of Living

We request that the house act on our stagnant wages that we as Australians so desperately need to keep up with the cost of inflation. As the CPI continues to rise majority of Australians are barely keeping their head above water. Wage growth in Australia has been relatively stagnant for a number of years and it’s undeniable that the cost of living continues to soar. A browse through your local supermarket all but confirms that. Majority of Australians are receiving a 2010 Award wage which is appalling. We are in 2019 there has not been a decent pay rise for Australians for a number of years.

We therefore ask the House to give the Citizens of Australia a much needed wage increase as their current wage is not sustainable with CPI continuing to increase. Australians understand that due to climate change the costs to living may increase, but if we as Australians cannot afford those increases, such as fuel, food, bills and rent as well as making purchases from other businesses for household items etc. Then the whole economy suffers and businesses will not be able to survive, they will begin to shut down putting workers out of work and back on the unemployment line. That means to cover the cost of living the ordinary Australian's wage should be increasing by min 2 percent every year. We request action not simple words for an election that hold no merit after an election.

from 38 citizens (Petition No. EN0908)

PETITIONS

Statements

Mr LLEW O'BRIEN (Wide Bay) (10:01): One of the first items on the Petitions Committee's agenda will be to consider the large number of petitions received over the election period. It is encouraging to witness the high level of public engagement with petitioning and, in particular, with e-petitioning. I look forward to reporting on the first petitions approved by the committee in my next statement to the House.

The committee notes the recent changes to standing orders relating to petitioning the House, which includes the banning of web links in petitions and a new requirement that petitioners and signatories be residents or citizens of Australia. These rules capture some of the recommendations of the previous committee, from its report into the future of petitioning in the House. We await the government response to the committee's remaining recommendations over the coming weeks. In the meantime, the committee will work to educate members and the general public about the new rules and monitor the impact of these changes over the parliament.

We anticipate continuing the previous committee's work of improving public engagement in petitioning the House and assisting people to make, create and share petitions to make their voices heard. I look forward to updating the House further on the work of the Petitions Committee.
BILLs

Constitution Alteration (Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Press) 2019 [No. 2]

First Reading

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Ms Sharkie.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Ms SHARKIE (Mayo) (10:04): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Centre Alliance is firmly of the opinion that the time has come for our nation to bring in a constitutional backstop to protect our free press and the right of all Australians to speak freely.

When the news broke last month that the Australian Federal Police had raided the home of a News Corp journalist and then ABC, it's fair to say it was like a blast of arctic air for Australia's fourth estate.

It was also a wake-up call for every Australian. In an era when public trust in politicians is at an all-time low, this very public act of enforcement was a direct assault on public interest journalism.

It sent a clear message to the media and their sources that they are at serious risk if they publish information the government doesn't want them to publish, even if that information is in the public interest.

At the time of the raids our home affairs minister said:

Nobody is above the law and the police have a job to do under the law.

But in the light of the government's complete lack of interest in having the AFP track down the source of the leaked ASIO briefing on the medevac laws earlier this year, it would appear some who choose to leak classified information are above the law, and that is deeply concerning.

This is why, more than ever, we need to revisit the legal protections Australia has for freedom of expression, including freedom of the press.

Our Federation forefathers didn't enshrine freedom of speech and a free press in our Constitution, because they believed common sense would prevail.

Our highest court has found that an implied freedom of communication exists under the Constitution in relation to political and government matters but the extent of that freedom is limited and our laws protecting sources are much weaker than they are in other comparable democracies.

Our world has changed and, as our government continues to bring in metadata and anti-terrorism laws in the name of national security, we need to ensure that we rely on more than a government's common sense to protect the civil liberties that make us a modern democracy.

On behalf of Centre Alliance I introduce the Constitution Alteration (Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Press) 2019 into this House today.

My Centre Alliance colleagues have already introduced mirror legislation in the other place.

This bill will enshrine the right of freedom of expression, including freedom of the press and other media, within the Constitution.

The proposed amendment will insert a new chapter and section in the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act 1900.

The new section will provide that the Commonwealth, state or territory must not limit freedom of expression, including freedom of the press and other media. However, a law of the Commonwealth, state or territory may limit the freedom if that limitation is reasonable and justifiable in an open, free and democratic society.

The proposed alteration would put a constitutional brake on efforts to supress freedom of expression to the detriment of our democratic and open society and it will set, we believe, a clear benchmark against which current laws of the Commonwealth, states and territories can be judged.

Under international law, freedom of expression is a fundamental human right.

Freedom of the press is included in freedom of expression and therefore it is important that the protection will also extend to the media, delivered in any form, so that the media may continue to contribute to a free and democratic society.

Last week our Parliamentary Library hosted a lecture by Australian journalist and academic Dr Julie Posetti who described herself as the canary in the coalmine when it came to sounding the warning bell about the erosion of press freedom.
Dr Posetti is the author of the 2017 UNESCO study *Protecting journalism sources in the digital age* which examined confidential communication by journalists with sources and whistleblowers in 121 countries, including Australia.

Dr Posetti provided an oversight of the study, which came up with an 11-point assessment tool for measuring the effectiveness of legal source protection frameworks internationally.

In her expert opinion of Australia's current laws, we failed on 10 of the 11 principles.

When asked for a solution, Dr Posetti said the right to freedom of expression, which includes freedom of the press, should be embedded in Australia's Constitution.

Failing that, Dr Posetti said Australia should be incredibly vigilant when passing any legislation regarding the unforeseen erosions of civil liberties including freedom of expression, freedom of the press and personal privacy.

In an era when the call to heed national security above all else trumps any dissenting voice in the parliament about laws affecting metadata and surveillance in public sphere, Centre Alliance calls for freedom of expression and freedom of the press to be embedded in Australia's Constitution.

I would like to provide my remaining time to the member for Clark.

**The SPEAKER:** Is the motion seconded?

**Mr WILKIE** (Clark) (10:09): I second the motion. I am very grateful to the member for Mayo for allowing me to speak for her remaining time and to emphasise that a free press is obviously an essential building block of a healthy democracy. We must do everything that we can to ensure that the media can do their job to report to the community what is going on in this country and, very importantly, to inform the community when there is wrongdoing or allegations of wrongdoing. Remember: the press is important, but their sources are equally important, and we must do what we can to allow their sources to have their say and to speak up and shine a light, particularly when there is misconduct.

This country is a better country for its whistleblowers. This country is a better country because of people like Toni Hoffman, who it was revealed in 2005 had for two years been reporting misconduct by Dr Patel at Bundaberg Hospital. As a direct result of Toni Hoffman, that doctor was banned from practising in Australia. This country is a better country because in 2005 a report written by Customs officer Allan Kessing in 2003 about shortfalls in security at Sydney Airport was revealed in the media. As a direct result of Allan Kessing's heroic whistleblowing, Sydney Airport was upgraded by $220 million and we are all safer for it. This country is a better country because in 2013 it was reported in the media that Witness K had been party to the illegal bugging of the East Timorese parliament. This country is a better country because of WikiLeaks and Julian Assange publicising, in particular, that in 2007 US Apache helicopter aircrew had committed a war crime by murdering journalists in Baghdad. This country is a better country because of a 2017 media report on the 'Afghan files'—in particular the allegations by David McBride—about misconduct by Australian special forces in Afghanistan. This country is a better country because of Richard Boyle blowing the whistle last year on misconduct at the ATO. This country is a better country because of the work by Annika Smethurst last year in warning us that there was active consideration at the Australian Signals Directorate of being allowed to spy domestically. This country is a better country because, this year, 2GB journalist Ben Fordham reported on his program that there were a number of boats holding asylum seekers en route from Sri Lanka to Australia.

All of these cases have relied on brave whistleblowers telling the media what they know and brave journalists doing their job, and we must do everything we can to allow that because, if we don't allow brave whistleblowers to go to the media and if we don't allow journalists to do their jobs, who knows what will go unreported? Who knows what governments might have that they don't want revealed? Remember that every one of those whistleblowers has taken grave risks. Behind every one of those stories, there are heroic whistleblowers who took grave risks—people who lost their jobs, who risked jail, who lost their marriages and friends, whose personal safety was put at risk and who were burdened by financial enormous costs. It is unsurprising that in this country the suicide rate for whistleblowers is markedly higher than the baseline rate in the community.

Why am I talk so much about whistleblowers? It is because they are central to this story. At the end of the day, the media must have freedom to report what their sources tell them. So we must do what we can to ensure the freedom of the media, but we must also do everything we can to strengthen the safeguards for their sources. It is very unfortunate that our current public interest disclosure legislation for both the public and private sectors remains inadequate. So good on the member for Mayo for progressing this. It certainly has my full support. I am very proud to second the motion by the member for Mayo.

**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.
Constitution Alteration (Water Resources) 2019 [No. 2]

First Reading
Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Ms Sharkie.
Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Ms SHARKIE (Mayo) (10:15): I move:
That this bill be now read a second time.
This bill mirrors the bill introduced by my colleague Senator Rex Patrick in the other place on 4 July 2019.
The water resources of the Murray-Darling Basin and of the Great Artesian Basin stretch across multiple state and territory jurisdictions and are both of national importance.
This bill recognises that in order to manage these water resources in an environmentally sustainable way, they must be federally managed to the benefit of the long-term national interest rather than the short-term, parochial or, indeed, state interest.
If enacted, this legislation would require a referendum asking the Australian people whether the Australian Constitution should be amended to give the Commonwealth parliament the power to make laws for the use and management of water resources that extend beyond the limits of a state, while preventing the making of laws that would have an overall detrimental effect on the environment.
The Murray-Darling is the largest and most complex river system in Australia. It spans Queensland, New South Wales, the ACT, Victoria and South Australia, and finishes its journey in my electorate of Mayo—the sum total of approximately 77,000 kilometres of river.
Three million people access drinking water from the Murray-Darling Basin. The river system supports unique and diverse ecosystems, including—but not limited to—120 water bird species and 46 native fish species. Agricultural production from the basin is worth an estimated $24 billion per year.
The Great Artesian Basin is a lesser known but similarly vital national water resource. It sits beneath an area of 1.7 million square kilometres, just over a fifth of the entire continent of Australia. It is the only source of reliable water for swathes of arid and semi-arid inland regions of Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia and the Northern Territory.
The findings of the South Australian Murray-Darling Basin Royal Commission and the Australian Academy of Science's investigation into the cause of mass fish kills in the Menindee region of New South Wales leave little doubt that the current management of the water resources of the Murray-Darling Basin is dysfunctional and leading to significant adverse social, environmental and economic impacts.
Sadly, the Murray-Darling is also facing increasing strain as the impacts of climate change accelerate.
The Great Artesian Basin is also under stress through inefficient and excessive water management practices, and significantly overlaps the Murray-Darling Basin. This bill envisages that the management of these great national and natural water resources would and should be fully integrated.
And yet, despite the passage of the Water Act 2007 and the implementation of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan, there are still different water rules in every state, and different transparency, accountability, compliance and enforcement measures in every state.
We are now in a state of multijurisdictional gridlock. Next to no progress can be made while vested interests are exerting an effective veto through their respective state governments over the proposed reform of basin-wide water management.
Every time changes to the Murray-Darling Basin Plan are proposed, state water ministers counterproductively threaten to pull their state out of the Basin Plan.
The Murray-Darling is a vital resource that cannot be managed on the basis of lowest common denominator agreements. We need a fully national framework that operates in the national interest.
For example, the failure of federal and state governments to make substantive responses to the recommendations of South Australia's Murray-Darling Basin Royal Commission has made clear that the current management of Australia's most important river system is, quite frankly, bankrupt.
This bill therefore calls for a constitutional referendum to add to the list of matters on which the Commonwealth parliament can make laws the use and management of water resources that extend beyond the limits of a state.
Such an alteration would put the Commonwealth's ability to legislate to manage the water resources of the Murray-Darling Basin river system and the Great Artesian Basin beyond doubt, and would allow the possibility of overriding inconsistent state water management practices and legislation.

The proposed alteration would, further, ensure that any law of the Commonwealth that relates to water resources must not affect them in such a way that has a detrimental effect upon our environment overall. This requirement would apply to all laws relating to water resources made by the Commonwealth parliament under section 51 of the Constitution.

This legislation does not propose any amendment or change to section 100 of the Constitution, which provides that the Commonwealth shall not, by any law or regulation of trade or commerce, abridge the right of a state or its residents to the reasonable use of waters or rivers for conservation and irrigation. This legislation also does not propose any change to section 99 of the Constitution, which provides that the Commonwealth shall not, by any law or regulation of trade, commerce or revenue, give preference to one state or any part thereof over another state or any part thereof.

The vital importance of protecting and preserving Australia's major national water resources should be clearly recognised and entrenched in our Constitution. Our water resources, rivers and environment must come first. This is not the first time that South Australian advocates have proposed that the Commonwealth parliament be given full power to control and regulate the River Murray and other interstate inland waterways. Indeed, in 1897 and 1898 the attempts by South Australia at the federal constitutional conventions were blocked by the parochialism of interstate interests. That has always been a flaw, I believe, in our Constitution, and 120 years later it is now time that the Australian people should be given the opportunity to fix this oversight. The future health of our two multijurisdictional water resources—the Murray-Darling Basin and the Great Artesian Basin—is relying on us.

The SPEAKER: Is the motion seconded?

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

The SPEAKER: The question is that this bill now be read a second time. 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
Australian Space Industry

Mr RAMSEY (Grey—Government Whip) (10:22): I move:

(1) notes that this week 50 years ago the human imagination was captivated by the first man to walk on the moon;

(2) recognises the commitment by the Government to space by the establishment of the Australian Space Agency, which will have the goal of tripling the space industry and creating 20,000 jobs;

(3) acknowledges the vital role the Woomera range and facilities have played, and will continue to play in Australia's space industry; and

(4) congratulates the Government for investing $19 million in a Space Infrastructure Fund that will support projects to accelerate growth of Australia's space industry.

These are exciting times. Australia is pushing to grab a share of the $350 billion a year space market. The announcement by the government of the establishment of the Australian Space Agency, to be headquartered at the Lot 14 redevelopment in the heart of Adelaide, is creating excitement right around the nation. Australia has been in the space industry since its infancy. This was highlighted last week with the focus on the moon landing. And there was also the establishment of the Woomera Range in 1947, surveyed by the legendary Len Beadell. At one stage its footprint was 270,000 square kilometres, an area larger than Victoria. It has been trimmed somewhat but still covers almost half of that area in the north of South Australia in my electorate of Grey.
At one stage, in the sixties, 7,000 people lived in Woomera. During the seventies and eighties the US and Australia operated the nearby Nurrungar Joint Defence Communications Facility and it was a vibrant centre. I have met hundreds of people across the nation who have at some time lived in Woomera. It has a much lesser population today but is nonetheless busy. As the mode of operations has changed, it is more similar to a fly-in fly-out operation. The base is now operated by the RAAF. Through its time, it has hosted a raft of space and high-altitude weapons development programs, including Sea Wolf, Rapier, Bloodhound, Sea Dart and Black Knight. It remains the world's biggest launch site. It is well utilised. It is undergoing a significant upgrade program to both its instrumentation and infrastructure, and will play an increasing role in our space future.

As I said, the annual world investment in space-related industries is about $350 billion per annum, with $260 billion of that in the commercial satellite industry. We're aiming to triple our share of that market to $12 billion a year, but that's only a little over three per cent. That is eminently doable, but it is a big jump and will send a surge of energy through our high-tech industries. Basing the agency in South Australia also makes sense, with the strong investment links to the weapons development programs at defence, science and technology facilities in Salisbury in Adelaide's northern suburbs. There will also be a technological surge accompanied with the building of Australia's new submarine fleet. There are a vast range of opportunities where Australia is ideally placed to make a huge difference in this industry: satellite radio, navigation, satellite launching, the construction and development of very small satellites and the links with defence activities I mentioned earlier. Dare I say, the sky is the limit.

While we have been participating in the space industry, a $4 billion a year industry thus far, considering its recent expansion in years past it would be a fair criticism to say that we have not put a high enough priority on growing our share of the market. This is about to change because we have a whole lot of things going for us in this space—once again, an almost unintended pun; I'm sorry, Mr Speaker. We have high levels of education. We are close to a number of countries in our neighbourhood that will be keen to partner with us. We have a business-friendly environment in this country. We have stable governments. We have a Southern Hemisphere footprint, whereas most of the biggest investors in our neighbourhood in this area are in the Northern Hemisphere. We have world-class ground systems, software and applications. We are an ideal investment partner. We will grow our international links and we will increase our share of the market. As I said, these are exciting times. I congratulate the government for seizing the opportunity.

The SPEAKER: Is the motion seconded?

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

Mr KHALIL (Wills) (10:27): In support of the member for Grey's motion I would like to echo his sentiment and note that it was through human imagination and human triumph that we saw the first human step onto the moon 50 years ago, and because of it the stars look very different today. We write songs about it, we build cinematic universes around it and we write stories of the stars, all because space holds a deep, abiding mystery for humanity. We look up into space, children and adults alike, for inspiration. We look up to the stars, to clear, bright night skies, and we ask, 'What's out there.' 'Are we alone?' All questions that lead us a little closer to the meaning of life and perhaps our purpose in it.

Australia has been an integral part of every deep space mission NASA has ever flown, going back to 1957 with the establishment of the Woomera facility in South Australia. In 1962, the Parkes telescope supported NASA’s Mariner 2 mission. Parkes and Honeysuckle Creek played a vital and famous role in humanity's adventures to the moon. Our location gifted Australia a relatively radio quiet environment for receiving signals, putting us on the international stage during Apollo 11's mission to the moon. The words from Neil Armstrong were heard first here; the footage seen first by Australian eyes. Fifty years ago, men landed on the moon; today we have found water on the moon. We have taken images of black holes and we delve deep into the mysteries of universe. I ask, Mr Speaker, what's next?

President Kennedy famously referenced in his 'We choose the moon' speech the great British explorer George Mallory. When asked why he wanted to climb Mount Everest, Mallory said, 'Because it's there.' Space is there and it's not going anywhere. We need to ask ourselves, this generation of Australians, what role do we want to play? Do we, Australia, want to be leaders in the exploration of space and in the space industry? Do we want our scientists to be at the front line of research, making the next groundbreaking discovery about our universe? As JFK said over 50 years ago:

The exploration of space will go ahead, whether we join in it or not, and it is one of the great adventures of all time …

Australia can be a leader in the exploration of space. The great 21st century adventure to come. We can engage in a national endeavour of a magnitude that fires the imagination, leaping out again to the moon and on to Mars. This is not just an investment for our science and technology industries; it's an investment in Australia and our future.
JFK in 1961, when putting a man on the moon was just an idea, made that leap of faith, exhorting his citizens to own the mission to put a man on the moon. In channelling former President Kennedy, if I were to say to my fellow citizens that we, Australia, shall send to the moon a rocket named, say, 'Kanga 1', carrying a robotic rover for research and water mining—let's call it 'Wombat 1'—and then return it safely to earth, and do all of this the right way and in the next decade, then we must be bold; Australia must be bold. We can and should be part of the next manned mission to the moon and the first manned mission to Mars, so that our scientific capabilities flourish, expand and enhance our lives with the technological breakthroughs surely to come from such a national endeavour—and the men and women from the land Down Under will be part of humanity's next great leap out to the stars.

Ms FLINT (Boothby—Government Whip) (10:30): Space is blasting off in South Australia, and there is no-one more excited than me about what the Morrison government is doing to power ahead in this area. Last year I worked very hard to make the case for space in my home state of South Australia. I worked closely with Premier Steven Marshall and the South Australian Liberal team. I met regularly with the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology to fight to have the national space agency based and headquartered in South Australia, and I also ensured that the Minister for Population, Cities and Urban Infrastructure knew that Lot Fourteen, a brand new arts and innovation hub, was a great place to base space. Thanks to the Premier, ministers, my federal colleagues, the member for Grey—and I thank the member for Grey for moving this motion today—the member for Barker, the former member for Sturt and, of course, the Morrison-Liberal government, space in South Australia is taking off.

There were many reasons that I thought Adelaide was the perfect home for space. One of those is our significant defence presence that will, among many other things, see us build the first two offshore patrol vessels, the nine future frigates worth $35 billion and 12 submarines worth $50 billion, all of which will create more than 8,000 jobs in a very similar technology space to the space industry.

South Australia is the home of innovation with world-class teachers and researchers at the University of Adelaide, Flinders University and the University of South Australia. Former NASA astronaut, the world-famous Dr Andy Thomas AO, and space expert Andrea Boyd both studied at Adelaide University. I'm lucky to personally know Andrea, who is a mechatronic engineer who works for the European Space Agency where she is a flight controller. I know Andrea through her brother Leighton Boyd, who is the director of a wonderful local community organisation in my electorate, MarionLIFE. It's people like Andrea to whom we will be able to offer work and who we will hopefully be able to keep in Adelaide, and in Australia, once the National Space Agency is fully up and running.

It made sense to base the space agency in Adelaide, because we already had the training and manufacturing expertise to launch this capability. So, when the Morrison and Marshall Liberal governments announced last year that the headquarters of the National Space Agency would be located at Lot Fourteen, I was both delighted and very excited. The investment in Adelaide includes the Space Infrastructure Fund and the mission control facilities, worth $6 million. This will commence in 2019-20 and will provide a platform for SMEs or researchers to control small satellite missions and to provide access to space-enabled data. On 18 March 2019, the Morrison government also announced that Adelaide would be home to the $6 million Australian Space Discovery Centre as part of the Adelaide City Deal. The Space Discovery Centre is funded separately and is not part of the Space Infrastructure Fund.

Geoscience Australia have invested $14 million in South Australia over the forward estimates for their ground-station infrastructure, and the new SmartSat Cooperative Research Centre is being headquartered in SA as well. This will create leapfrogging technologies in advance communications and smart satellite systems to build Australia's space infrastructure for advanced communications and connectivity, remote sensing and monitoring for its land, sea and oceans. This is a very significant investment in space for our nation. Our goal is to triple the size of the space industry and to create 20,000 new jobs. The Morrison government is backing the Australian Space Agency with $73.2 million to be provided to the agency all up. We have committed millions elsewhere to support the SmartSat CRC and the Space Infrastructure Fund. Ultimately, this is all about jobs and securing a future for young residents of Australia and particularly of South Australia. It's about giving them a raft of new job opportunities and reasons to stay in SA and in Australia.

I've seen firsthand how inspirational space is to school students, literally across the road from my electorate office in Marion, at Hamilton Secondary College. Some years ago they established the Hamilton Space School, and it is the only designated facility and specialist curriculum to lead space education. It really has to be seen to be believed; it is out of this world. I was delighted to visit with the Premier recently, to see how this facility inspires our next generation of spacemen and women and future leaders.

Mr GORMAN (Perth) (10:35): 'Twelve, 11, 10, nine—ignition sequence starts—six, five, four, three, two, one, zero. All engines running; lift-off, we have a lift-off!' These were the words of NASA's Jack King as they
launched the Apollo 11 mission to the moon. Space has always fascinated me, from having the constellations glow in the dark on my bedroom wall, to building model rockets, to being a proud member of CSIRO's Double Helix Club and to the first time I saw the Apollo 11 re-entry module at the Smithsonian. The exploration of space and humans landing on the moon is a constant reminder that anything is possible.  

Neil Armstrong summarised his world view about what space exploration truly means with this quote:  

After all, the earth itself is a spacecraft. It's an odd kind of spacecraft, since it carries the crew on the outside instead of the inside. He went on with that analogy, noting that the earth itself and space exploration are both acts of very careful balance; balancing the needs of oxygen and fuel, maintaining the spacecraft or the earth so that you can survive. He said:  

If you're going to run a spaceship, you've got to be pretty cautious about how you use your resources, how you use your crew and how you treat your spacecraft.  

The enlightenment of space travel is to enrich our life here on earth.  

While we talk about the exploration of space as a science, it's also an art. The member for Wills highlighted the inspiration that art draws from the exploration of space. I think it's appropriate to note that Apollo was the Greek god who dragged the sun across the sky but was also the Greek god of music, dance and poetry. Funding space exploration is not just about science, it is about art and bringing art and science together.  

Western Australia played a proud role in that first moon landing we've spoken about, some 50 years ago. The NASA Carnarvon Tracking Station in the great north of Western Australia was essential. It sent the instruction for what they called the translunar injection; that is, the directive to go out of Earth's orbit, towards the moon and into the moon's orbit. It also tracked the re-entry of the Apollo 11 module.  

That's why more space investment should be made in Western Australia. The location of the space agency in Adelaide was a disappointment for many Western Australians. We have so many space assets, and some of the quietest access to the great unknown anywhere on earth. The CSIRO manages the European Space Agency's deep space tracking station in New Norcia, some 130 kilometres from my electorate of Perth. The European Space Agency is keen to partner with the federal government to double the size of that facility, requiring just a $15 million investment—something that the government should consider and, in my view, agree to.  

Australia more generally, as everyone else speaking in this debate has noted, should be very proud of our historical role and we should be proud of what we can achieve in the next 50 years. The Australian Civil Space Strategy rightly notes, 'Australia is a world leader in remote asset management in industries including mining, oil, gas, transport, agriculture and fisheries.'  

Many of those remote activities and technologies have been developed in my electorate of Perth, including by some of the biggest names in the mining industry: Rio, Fortescue and BHP. But I was disappointed, in reading the civil space strategy, to see that it was a bit Canberra-centric: it mentioned Questacon; it didn't mention any of the great science education facilities across our country. Scitech in my electorate should have deserved a mention if Questacon was worthy of a mention.  

Equally, the space strategy notes that we need 'moonshot' projects to inspire that next generation of young people who might be inspired to study in science, technology, engineering or mathematics and also to find those new discoveries. But, again, the space strategy shies away from actually having any of those ideas. It doesn't actually highlight what one of those 'moonshots' that Australia might take the lead on could be. Could it be landing on Mars, or a permanent base on the moon, the building of a new international space station for the next 20 years, or, as the member for Wills has said, the launching of Kanga 1 and the exploration of the moon via Wombat 1—a uniquely Australian space exploration? There is much to do in the exploration of space, and Australia rightly has an important role to play.  

Mr PASIN (Barker) (10:41): Moving on, perhaps, from Kanga 1 and Wombat 1, I marvelled, as did, I think, millions of Australians, last week at the retelling of the stories from 50 years ago. I took particular interest in reading the reproduction of newsprint from 50 years ago—in particular, the vibrant pictures that were painted by correspondents, effectively on the other side of the world, for Australians, and, at the same time, the juxtaposed efforts by Russians and the very real sense of a race that was painted through that reporting.  

I also took the opportunity to remind myself that this extension—the move into space and space industries—is, in a sense, a goal in itself, but also much more than that. As someone who represents a rural and regional electorate, I reminded myself that space technologies are used every day by farmers today, in monitoring their crops. Emergency workers use space technology to track the progress of bushfires and obviously to assist in keeping rural Australians safe, not to mention the fact—and these are but a few examples—that scientists study the effects and impacts of drought on the back of this technology. That caused me to reflect on our government's
investment in the goal of tripling the space industry and creating 20,000 jobs, and, of course, as a South
Australian, on the celebration of placing mission control at Lot Fourteen in Adelaide. Space was, 50 years ago, the
next frontier. For me, working in this space, as we have committed to, is about those extension opportunities. It's
about how space technologies can deliver a stronger, better economic outcome for everyday Australians working
in industries which might be as remote as you could expect from what someone would consider a space industry.

I want to acknowledge the member for Grey for bringing forward this motion and, in particular, for reminding
the House of the vital role that the Woomera range and facilities have played in terms of space industries,
traditionally, and the very important role they'll have going forward.

I must say that, when space exploration and space industries became the topic du jour some years ago in this
place, it caused me to consider why it was that they were so important. I stand in this place now to tell you that
you don't always get it right. There were private deliberations by me, at the time, suggesting to myself that I'd be
much more concerned about the future of life on earth than elsewhere. But it is an acknowledgement which has
been reinforced by the very real focus we've had on the events of 50 years ago and the technologies that sprung
from it that caused me, even before the anniversary, to realise that this is more than a means in itself—that is, it's
more than the 20,000 jobs that will work in this industry in Australia; it's about how we take that innovative work,
research and development and how we find extended uses for it, all the way through to agriculture. I remind the
House that, if we are to make the most of our opportunities to take agriculture from a gross output of $60 billion
today to $100 billion, we not only have to take advantage of these extensive opportunities but we also have to
double our effort in investing in the hard infrastructure on Earth to ensure farmers in my electorate can drive that
productivity dividend that comes with using space technology, so I remind the House not only of the importance
of that research but also of the need to invest in that infrastructure.

Mr GOSLING (Solomon) (10:46): I commend the member for Grey for the motion and congratulate the
member for Wills and the member for Perth for their fantastic contributions. I'm sure the member for Corio will
also be good. Thanks to the others for their contributions. It is indeed timely, as everyone has pointed out, with the
50th anniversary of the moon landing. I met with US ambassador Arthur B Culvahouse last week and we
discussed Australia's role in those events but also the great potential for Australia and, more specifically, the
Northern Territory to be part of our space industry into the future—but more on that later.

There is now serious activity in our nation about Australia's space program. The Australian Space Agency was
established in July 2018 and is responsible for regulating and authorising Australian space activities, building
international partnerships and collaboration on space and transforming our space industry. The aim of this
initiative is to help Australian businesses win a greater share of the multibillion dollar global space market and
develop space technologies to underpin the long-term competitiveness of many other industries including coms,
agriculture—as we've just heard from the member opposite—mining, oil and gas, and it is to be commended.

In the last parliament I was the deputy chair of the industry, innovation, science and resources committee with
the member for New England as the chair. We intended to go further into space. In fact we had a round table on
space but unfortunately it wasn't followed up with an inquiry. I think the member for New England has gone
nuclear, so I think that's where he's headed, but the Northern Territory government has seized the opportunity with
the establishment of the Australian Space Agency, and its Territory space industry 2020 policy aims to position
the NT to take advantage of this opportunity by growing the Territory's space industry capabilities, connecting
Territory industry and businesses with the Australian space economy, supporting the Territory economy to be
become space enabled and benefit from advances in the space sector that will lead growth, jobs and innovation.

We all have seen, through the use of space technology for GPS and satellite TV, the important role it plays, and
in the Northern Territory, like lots of other places in our nation, important roles in bushfire protection, weather
monitoring and providing essential services to the public. In the Northern Territory we have a Canberra based
company, Equatorial Launch Australia, ELA, who are working through the required regulatory processes to
establish Australia's first commercial launch facility, in East Arnhem Land. I recently received a briefing from
ELA on their progress in establishing launch pads near Nhulunbuy in East Arnhem Land. For those who've been
up to the Garma festival in Arnhem Land, 20 or so kilometres outside of Nhulunbuy—or Gove, as it is sometimes
known—there will be launching pads established there because it is a great place for launching rockets,
particularly satellites, because it is quite near the equator, 12 degrees south of the equator. There is also much of
the necessary infrastructure in place, such as the port there, and good air access from Darwin and Cairns.

Being close to the equator is important because it makes it easier to get into space from near the equator. In
fact, if you're heading up to the moon, you can go direct from Arnhem Land to the moon; whereas, if you're
launching from further south, as I understand it—I'm not an expert—you have to do a bit of a lap of the earth
before you can head out towards the moon. It is exciting that Equatorial Launch Australia are looking to have their
first launches within the coming 12 months. In fact, I know there will be a launch in the coming months.
I was also very pleased recently to meet a group called One Giant Leap Australia which is working with young Australians to develop the skills that we'll need for the innovative space industries of the future. I commend them for their space camps. They have been taking Australians over to the United States for space camps for many years. A bit of an exclusive here today: Space Camp Australia will be constructed in the Northern Territory in the future. I commend the motion to the House.

Mr WALLACE (Fisher) (10:51): I rise in support of this motion this morning as someone who was born not long before man first stepped foot on the moon. I remember growing up as a young lad when the space race was still very much active and I remember my parents telling me about the fear that Australians experienced when the Soviet Union put Yuri Gagarin as the first man into orbit. I remember my mum and dad telling me as a young fellow about how much fear there was even amongst Australians, as cocooned as we were back in those days, about Russians being in space. Then time moved on and NASA put John Glenn into orbit in Friendship 7 on 20 February 1962. The United States then joined what is now known as the space race.

A little later in that year, on 12 September 1962, President John F Kennedy gave a tremendous speech at Rice University in Houston, when he announced to the world that, by the end of that decade, NASA—and, in fact, the United States—sought to put man on the moon. There's a terrific quote from that speech he gave at Rice University. He said:

'We choose to go to the moon. We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard, because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, and one which we intend to win, and the others, too.'

That one paragraph from President Kennedy's speech really embodies the US's intentions to put man on the moon and, indeed, their whole space campaign. But it does more than that; it embodies the human condition. It's a bit like: 'Why did you climb the mountain?' 'Well, because it was there.' For millennia, human beings have looked at challenges and said, 'Let's do this; let's climb that mountain.' 'Let's go to the moon,' 'Let's do things that will make us stretch beyond our comfort zones.' That is what makes us different as human beings. Whilst, admittedly, we're a little bit late to the party, Australians can take tremendous pride in the work that we will now be doing in space over the coming years.

I want to really congratulate the government and, indeed, Minister Andrews for her work and the leadership that she has demonstrated in really grasping the nettle—not because it's easy, but because it is hard. When I look at all of the space exploration that has been undertaken by various nations—whether it be John Glenn in one of the Mercury rockets, the Apollo programs, the space shuttles or, more recently, the unmanned travel that has been going on—what really amazes me today, in 2019, is that when the Americans first put man on the moon the computer that they used onboard the Apollo 11 spaceship had nowhere near the computing power of a mobile phone or even, I'm told, an Apple Watch. What amazes me is the sheer brilliance of the men and the women—

(Time expired)

Mr MARLES (Corio—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (10:56): Like it was for the member for Fisher, this was a deeply inspiring event for me. On 12 September 1962 President Kennedy said:

'We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard …

The member for Fisher described the events of Apollo as being essential to the human condition and, in that, he is right. It is because it goes precisely to the centre of what we are as beings. When we look at those who have shared our time on the planet and who might be remembered 500 or 1,000 years from now, the person who will be remembered the most is Neil Armstrong. Apollo 11 landed on the moon on 20 July 1969, and Neil Armstrong took those first remarkable steps on 21 July 1969. He stepped into a new world and, as the first human to do it, he will be remembered more than any other person who we have shared our time with on earth right now.

There is a deep Australian connection to this incredible feat. As Neil Armstrong took those first steps, they were beamed to 650 million viewers around the world as a result of the Honeysuckle Creek radio telescope and the Parkes telescope, as has been immortalised in the movie The Dish. The Apollo program was cancelled after Apollo 17 as a result of budget cuts. That was a pity because, had that not been the case, there may well have been an Australian who stepped on the moon. Dr Philip Chapman was an Australian who was participating in the NASA program and had every possibility of being slated for one of those originally planned future Apollo missions to the moon. But his participation in NASA was the forerunner for Dr Paul Scully-Power and Andy Thomas, two Australians who did go to space through the NASA program. To this day, the deep space network at Tidbinbilla, just south of where we are now, is a facility co-hosted by CSIRO and NASA, and NASA retains a pretty significant presence in this city of Canberra today.
This was an event which, for me, being born in 1967, loomed over my childhood and my early teens and absolutely shaped my choices of what I studied. In 1982 I was in year 10. That's the year in which people make their decision as to whether or not to pursue science. It was a no-brainer for me given that the Apollo missions defined science as being the single most exciting endeavour that any of us could engage in. And so, without blinking, I pursued science for the rest of my school career and right through university to complete my Bachelor of Science.

That is not the case today. In 2017, the Office of the Chief Scientist published this statement:

Participation in most Year 12 mathematics and science subjects is declining, and for science is the lowest in 20 years.

I think the celebration of big science as we engaged in with Apollo, the kind of celebration which saw this on the front pages of all our newspapers, was so important to inspiring the likes of me to pursue science in the early 1980s, but in fact 1982 is where the graph peaks when it comes to kids choosing to pursue science in school. We need to change this.

Big science is being undertaken in Australia, but we do not give it the prominence we gave to Apollo 11, and we should. The Square Kilometre Array telescope is an example. It is the single largest science project in the world today, jointly based in Karoo, South Africa, and Murchison, Western Australia. We are deeply connected to this. The Square Kilometre Array dishes, when they are completed in 2025, will produce digital information equivalent to 10 times the global internet traffic of today. They will be able to identify planets in distant solar systems which have bio markers and will be able to confirm, in most of our lifetimes, the existence of life elsewhere in the universe, and that will be a profound moment in the human story.

Yet, we know nothing of this. This is not something which makes it on to the front pages of our newspapers, but it needs to. This needs to be the scientific endeavour equivalent to Apollo 50 years ago, inspiring students in decades to come to pursue science, because, as a country, we must change our cultural relationship with science. If we do not, we will be overtaken by countries within our region and around the world and we will not be the prosperous country in the future that we have been until this time.

Mr FALINSKI (Mackellar) (11:01): I would like to thank the members for Wills, Perth, Solomon and Corio for their contributions to this debate, as well as the members for Grey, Boothby, Parker and Fisher. The truth of the matter is that 50 years ago, on 21 July, human beings for the first time stood on another planet. Famously, Neil Armstrong said, 'This is a small step for'—he said—'a man, but a giant leap for mankind'. Not so long ago—about two years ago—I took a cruise with Buzz Aldrin, who has a rule that you are not allowed to take selfies with him because he is so famous. Buzz, being Buzz, insisted everyone got a photo with him and that no-one leave the boat without him being very well photographed indeed. He said, on that afternoon, that he thought it was part of the human condition for us to travel beyond the moon to Mars, to invest a whole bunch of resources and human capital to ensure that that was not the last stage of the story that we told, in terms of space exploration.

He pointed out that we do not explore space because it's easy; we do it because it's hard. It is not the actual exploration that matters. What actually matters is that it brings us all together. As the member for Corio pointed out, it is important because it sends a signal to all of those people who seek to understand and gain more knowledge, and this can lead to something so audacious. Space exploration brought all of us together. It united all of us in what is now the single biggest event of modern history, and that is why it is so important. As John F Kennedy said—and he has been quoted at length in this chamber today: ‘Where men go, free men must also go.’ That is why we do this. While we knew a lot about the moon, there was one thing that we didn’t know and that was whether we could get there and get back again. That is what made the Apollo space missions so important.

It has always been thus. Humanity has always wanted to know what was on the other side of the mountain, what was on the other side of the river, what was to be found in the plains ahead, what we would find when we crossed the seas and the oceans. We, as a species, demand to know more. We wish to explore and find out more. It is when we are at our best. That is why space exploration, to boldly go where no-one has gone before, is so critical to how we organise ourselves, our communities and our nations.

This quest for knowledge has been critical in changing how we exist on this planet. Prior to modernity, we believed that the world was a zero-sum game. But space travel has shown us that it can be more—that, when we put things together, all of us can gain. Space exploration has ended wars and it has created peace. It has ensured that what I have does not mean that others must have less. That is why space exploration is critical. And that is why it is so that we as a nation are involved in this endeavour. It is why this government has committed millions of dollars to ensuring that we are part of the space exploration race and part of this great endeavour.

When we look at nations around the world, what we also know is that exploration is critical if you want to encourage innovation—whether it is exploring the depth of our seas or the far reaches of our solar system. Those nations that commit resources, people, energy and devotion to this exploration will typically live in communities
and nations that are far better ones—nations that want to see all people better off, not just the few, nations that encourage all of us to reach for the stars. It is in the effort that we make to do these things, to know these things and to be part of such exploration that all of us can become a better group, a better nation and a better people.

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.

Women in Sport

Ms RYAN (Lalor—Opposition Whip) (11:07): I move:

That this House:

(1) acknowledges the incredible performances of Australia's top athletes in recent times including:
   (a) the Matildas reaching the final 16 in the FIFA World Cup;
   (b) Ash Barty winning the French Open and acing her way to the top of the world tennis rankings;
   (c) Sally Fitzgibbons making waves by winning the 2019 Oi Rio Pro - World Surf League event and surfing her way to the top of the world rankings;
   (d) Hannah Green winning the Women's PGA Championship and in doing so taking home Australia's first major win in a women's golf tournament in over a decade; and
   (e) the Hockeyroos reaching the final of the inaugural Women's International Hockey Federation Pro League;

(2) acknowledges the teams that support our athletes including their coaches, managers, physiotherapists, dieticians and their families; and

(3) encourages Australian athletes in upcoming competitions including:
   (a) the Australian Diamonds who will be competing in the Netball World Cup in Liverpool, England between 12 and 21 July 2019; and
   (b) the Australian Women's Cricket Team who will be competing in the ICC Women's T20 Cricket World Cup in 2020.

It is my pleasure to move this motion to celebrate some of the extraordinary achievements of our Australian athletes across the last few months. Obviously, as an absolute netball tragic, I have been glued to the television across the World Cup. But netball is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to Australian talent being showcased on the international stage. Being passionate about sport and being passionate about women in sport means that I am equally passionate about ensuring that the sporting achievements of our Australian women are acknowledged and celebrated. Hence this motion today. This is not only because our sporting stars deserve kudos for their hard work; it is also that the next generation will follow in their idols' footsteps and begin to play at community level and beyond. So to all those young girls sitting at home today, if they haven't been watching our fabulous Australian female athlete that is not acknowledged for their determination and effort; it is also that the next generation will follow in their idols' footsteps and begin to play at community level and beyond. So to all those young girls sitting at home today, if they haven't been watching our fabulous international sports stars, I would encourage them to go to their televisions and at least see the replays of the T20 cricket international that is being played at the moment.

In recent times it has been a genuine joy to watch out athletes make their mark in their respective sports—playing with passion, winning and losing with dignity, and, above all, being positive role models for aspiring athletes watching on in admiration. There have been many highlights, including a few that this chamber should acknowledge: the incredible performance of the Matildas, who captivated the nation with their recent World Cup performance; Ash Barty, who aced her way to winning the French Open and the world No. 1 ranking, a pretty good effort from our young Queenslander; Sally Fitzgibbons, who made waves by winning the World Surf League's Rio Pro and surfing her way to the top of the World Cup rankings; Hannah Green, who won the PGA Championship and, in doing so, took home Australia's first major win in a women's golf tournament in over a decade; the Hockeyroos, who played in the final of the inaugural Women's International Hockey Federation Pro League; and our Australian women's cricket team, who have done us proud against our rivals by taking the Ashes series. And a special note to ensure this is recorded in Hansard: congratulations to Elise Perry. She has set a new standard, reaching something that no man or woman has done before in international cricket: 1,000 runs in the T20 international and 100 wickets in the T20 international. Congratulations, Ellyse. It makes me so proud that our Australian sporting heroes are playing out their own dreams on the international stage and that their achievements are being broadcast for the next generation of athletes to idolise and, of course, to be acknowledged.

But, Deputy Speaker Mitchell, you would have noticed that, traditionally, men's sport in this country has enjoyed being acknowledged in this place. Today, this motion is about turning that on its head and ensuring that there is never again an Australian female athlete that is not acknowledged for their determination, their effort and the pride they bring to their country. For too long female athletes have not been on an equal footing with their male counterparts in many regards, including pay equity, broadcast time or national acknowledgement. As we have seen through celebrating the successes of the Australian women athletes mentioned earlier, the time for change has come and we are well and truly ready to embrace women's sport in this country. On that note, I
acknowledge one more time in this chamber the fabulous performance from our Australian Diamonds in bringing home silver in the Netball World Cup. And on a personal note, I acknowledge Morgan Mitchell, a young girl from my electorate who's an Australian 400-metre champion and has qualified for the world championships with a personal best in the last seven days.

I'm reminded all the time that you can't be what you can't see. I want to thank all of those athletes, the teams behind those athletes, the coaches, the physios, the managers and the families that get kids up every day to get to their sport for ensuring that we continue in this way to create a healthy Australia and for the things that sport brings to us—teamwork comes to mind as the most important thing, but also a respect for our nutrition and a respect for our health, and, in doing so, ensures that Australia maintains its fabulous record on the world stage, with world champions, silver medallists, bronze medallists and those just getting out there and competing.

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

Ms Stanley: I second the motion and reserve my right to speck.

Mr VAN MANEN (Forde—Chief Government Whip) (11:12): It's a pleasure to speak to this motion today. I thank the member for bringing this motion forward. As has been well articulated, Australia has always enjoyed strong and enduring representation in sport, and most recently it's our sportswomen that have led the way and are a testament to our great sporting heritage. Women such as Ash Barty, a proud Queenslander and the first Australian woman to win the French Open in over 46 years; Hannah Green, the first Australian woman in over a decade to take home the Women's PGA Championship trophy; and let's not forget, as was articulated in the motion, the outstanding Matildas on reaching the final 16 in the FIFA World Cup or the Hockeyroos reaching the final of the inaugural women's International Hockey Federation Pro League. In the spirit of cycling—as the cycling season in Europe is in full swing, with the men's Tour de France just finishing—we recently had the women's Tour De France, and once again the Mitchelton-Scott women's team, with a number of Australians in it, has excelled.

Wherever you go, Australian women are making headway in sport and, in doing so, inspiring the next generation of young sporting superstars. Young Australians like Des'ree Barnes from my electorate of Forde. Des'ree is ranked in the top 16 in BMX, and over the weekend competed in the junior elite women's category at the UCI BMX World Championships in Belgium. She's been training at the local Beenleigh BMX Club for the past 10 years and is benefiting from a local club that is working hard to encourage women into sport. Beenleigh BMX plans to have programs for women run by women and to bring on more female coaches to foster the development of women's participation in BMX.

Sport, then, is perhaps the greatest unifier of our time, which is why I always feel a great sense of pride in my local sporting clubs, because, when I look out onto the field, the cricket pitch, the netball court or the racetrack, I see people from all walks of life coming together for a shared purpose and a shared goal. They come together often as a team to share a special moment when nothing in the world matters except for what is in front of them, because at that moment they are united by a shared desire to win. That is the power of sports. But what happens off the field is just as important as what happens on the field, because not only does sport help build stronger athletes but it also builds stronger communities.

At Beenleigh Buffaloes, sport is a community of friends where people can go and help each other where necessary and a community that unites behind great causes. In June, Beenleigh Buffaloes and the Coolangatta Football Club held the inaugural ACFC Manning Up Cup Day. The match was an opportunity to break down the stigma of men's mental health issues and raise funds for a chance for change. Just last week, the under-16 team opted out of training to give back to their community by volunteering with the Movement Gold Coast Homeless Outreach. They helped serve food, tea and coffee and assisted with giving out clothing and blankets. But, most importantly, they did this as a team, as a united community with a shared desire to help others. I am sure it was a rewarding experience for the players which will only help them to grow stronger.

It just shows that clubs like Beenleigh Buffaloes are also great champions in women's sport. Over the past six years, they've always had a women's team. In fact, one of their players, Tori, has been drafted by the Brisbane Lions and has previously represented the All-Australian team two years in a row. Also, Georgie has been involved with the Gold Coast Suns summer academy. It is exciting to see players across my electorate advance and develop within their sports, and it is a great reminder for young people, particularly young women, to have sporting aspirations and goals. It is why it's important for our local clubs to encourage more women to play sport. That is why I am so excited by the programs that this coalition government has brought forward to improve the quality of facilities for women's sports across clubs in my electorate.

Ms CLAYDON (Newcastle) (11:17): They say that you can't be what you can't see, and I couldn't be happier for young girls around Australia, who are today blessed with a multitude of female athletes at the very top of their
sports. The Matildas had us up all night watching them at the World Cup in France, led by an electric Sam Kerr, who was recently named best international woman footballer for the second consecutive year. Meanwhile, Sally Fitzgibbons has been dominating a sport that's hugely popular in my electorate of Newcastle, fighting at the top of surfing's world rankings in a tight duel with Carissa Moore. Last month, Ash Barty became No. 1 in the world in women's tennis, the first Australian woman to do so since fellow Indigenous Australian Evonne Goolagong Cawley topped the WTA rankings in 1976. Forty-three years is a long time to wait, but the honour of being ranked No. 1 in the world couldn't have gone to a more deserving athlete. Congratulations, Ash. Then there's Hannah Green, who broke Australia's 13-year drought to become the third Australian woman to win a golf major, and our women's eight crew that won gold at the World Rowing Cup. I was thrilled to watch the Wallaroos open their test season with a 34-5 victory over Japan at Newcastle's No. 2 Sportsground earlier this month. Hundreds of young female rugby players from their local clubs watched from the sidelines in awe, as did many of the men's rugby clubs and fans from across the region.

I would also like to take this opportunity to say how proud we are of our Australian Netball Diamonds, who suffered a heartbreaking one-point loss to the Silver Ferns last week in the World Cup final. But they can, of course, hold their heads high. They remain absolute champions. As a member of the parliamentary netball team along with my colleague the member for Lalor here, I can say we're used to losses to our Kiwi sisters—although, truth be told, it's not usually within a point.

While these superstars deserve all the credit they get, it's important that we also acknowledge the teams that support all the athletes: the coaches, managers, nutritionists, families, friends and fans. What these elite athletes have proven is that there is a growing audience hungry for women's sport. Increased formal support will lead to increased success at all levels. In a world where equal pay between genders in sport is always argued in terms of commercial investment and market size, these Australian women are overdelivering and outgrowing expectations. As Karina Keisler of Cricket Australia recently argued in *The Sydney Morning Herald*:

"If saying players shouldn't be paid because they don't bring in the money is punishing them for historical under-investment. More and more Australians are turning to women's sport, captivated by both talent and spirit. Indeed, a Nielsen survey last year found that Aussies were tuning in to women's sport because they found it more inspiring than the men's equivalent. State-of-the-art facilities are becoming available, and I am pleased that there is bipartisan support around the construction of a multimillion dollar investment for a new permanent home for our Matildas."

But I look forward to the day when the Matildas don't have to deliver pizza or drive an Uber to make ends meet while playing professional football. Australian women are flying high in their chosen sports; they should be getting paid properly, too. Investing in women's sport can only deliver a greater return, giving women athletes more goals to kick, more boundaries to clear, more stadiums to pack and more prime TV slots to fill. If we back in our women athletes with a better commitment to gender equality in everything we do in sport then we will succeed time and time again. Then we can keep watching as young girls today sitting in the stands, watching at home or picking up a ball, board or racquet do exactly the same.

There will be many opportunities for further glory in the coming weeks and months, but now I want to give a big shout-out to the Australian 4x200 metres and 4x100 metres women's relay teams for winning gold at the swimming world championships. Indeed, one of those teams set a new world record. Next year, the Australian women's cricket team will compete at home in the T20 World Cup—and the world will be watching. Cricket has taken great strides towards greater pay equity recently, and I have no doubt that further sporting success will follow. With six out of every 10 Aussie kids taking up cricket today being female, the investment has already paid off. Success breeds success. I couldn't be prouder of all the female athletes currently smashing records and expectations worldwide.

That is why the Morrison Liberal government should be investing in local grassroots sporting projects, like the redevelopment of the No. 1 sports ground in Newcastle, so we can host women's cricket matches in regional cities like Newcastle, and the construction of competition-standard indoor netball courts for the Newcastle Netball Association. That is where it all starts. It is time we take gender parity in Australian sport seriously. *(Time expired)*

*Mr RAMSEY* (Grey—Government Whip) (11:22): They were good remarks from the other side. I thank the member for them. This speech probably should have been given last week because, unfortunately, last week in the netball our Australian Diamonds were defeated by one goal by the Silver Ferns—one miserable goal. Maxwell Smart would say, 'I missed it by that much.' That is a tough way to lose a final. Let me tell them how proud we are of them. I'll come back to the Diamonds in just a moment. Perhaps there was a little justice in that given New Zealand's men's cricket team had lost the men's Cricket World Cup on a countback. I don't think any of us who watch cricket actually realised what a countback was! But that's what happened.
Australia has a small population, but there is no doubt that we punch above our weight when it comes to sport. Like all, I celebrate our male athletes and competitors, but at this point in time I reckon it would be fair to say they are being eclipsed by their female counterparts. How proud we all are of Ash Barty, the world's No. 1 female tennis player and French Open champion—and what a gracious champion she is. She is, indeed, someone of whom we can all be justifiably proud. I wish her—as I am sure everyone in this place and everyone in Australia does—more success. But let me say this: Ash, you have already achieved so much and brought such joy to the hearts of Australians.

We marvel at the achievements of some of our other prominent sportswomen. Hannah Green just won the 2019 Women's PGA Championship. Sally Fitzgibbons is the world No. 1 surfer. There's Ellyse Perry at the Women's Cricket World Cup. And, boy, what about Meg Lanning's 133 not out off 63 balls, breaking her previous world record for T20 cricket? To paraphrase our Prime Minister: how good are they? It's a wonderful time and we should be proud of them.

But I want to come back to the Diamonds. They probably weren't celebrating as hard as perhaps they should have last week, having lost that World Cup by just a single point. We send our commiserations. But they should celebrate because they were in the World Cup final. They were all but the World Cup victors; it will make them go harder next time, I know. But we are all incredibly proud of them.

There is one particular person in that Diamond's line up that I want to focus on today, a young defender called Sarah Klau. Sarah Klau plays for the Sydney Swifts, but she comes from Yorketown on Yorke Peninsula, in my electorate of Grey. She is the only South Australian product in the Diamond's line up at this time. I might add that Jenny Kennett, a former captain of that team, came from Cummins on the Eyre Peninsula, not so far away from where I live. But Sarah is our girl at the moment. That in itself is a cause for celebration for Yorketown to celebrate. We always celebrate when we have our own people rise to international success.

But we have an even greater reason to celebrate Sarah's success, because she was diagnosed as having type 1 diabetes within the last 12 months. It's tough enough to get into the Diamonds when you're fit and healthy, but when you've actually got type 1 diabetes and having to deal with that on a constant basis—you can imagine that if you're an athlete you have to monitor your body at probably a far higher frequency than the rest of us would.

It's no secret that the member for Moreton and I are the co-chairs of the Australian Parliamentary Friends of Diabetes, the oldest 'friends of' group in this parliament. It was founded by Judi Moylan, I think back in 2002. The member for Moreton and I have renamed it: we are the parliamentary enemies of diabetes. We don't particularly want to be friends of diabetes! But I am immensely proud of what the government has done in this place, with clinical trials, constant glucose monitors and a raft of other things that have made life for diabetics that much better. Certainly, there is the money we are investing in research.

One of our jobs is to invigorate people to pump up their tyres so that they're up to the challenge of meeting diabetes type 1 or type 2 head-on, to take it on and to say, 'I'm going to manage my life so that I can manage my ailment.' We'll do our best to inspire people, but we'll be a pale shadow of what someone like Sarah Klau can do. What she sends as a message to everybody suffering from diabetes is that you can succeed; you can manage your ailment. You can manage this disease and you can excel at whatever you choose to do. I know that for some people it becomes a burden, but I thank her and congratulate her for her efforts.

Ms Collins (Franklin) (11:27): I am really pleased to speak on this motion. I want to thank the member for Lalor for moving this motion in the House today.

It is important that we celebrate women's sport, and it's important, particularly, that we celebrate the achievements which women undertake in sport, given some of the barriers they face. We all know the barriers that women face when it comes to pay equity in sport. But we have an even greater reason to celebrate Sarah's success, because she was diagnosed as having type 1 diabetes within the last 12 months. It's tough enough to get into the Diamonds when you're fit and healthy, but when you've actually got type 1 diabetes and having to deal with that on a constant basis—you can imagine that if you're an athlete you have to monitor your body at probably a far higher frequency than the rest of us would.

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But we do have a lot to celebrate. As we heard from the previous member, the Diamonds are doing very well on the world stage. We have, though, so many other achievements that have occurred just in the last few weeks. I want to give an example of one week in June where we had, of course, Ash Barty winning her third tournament of the year and becoming No. 1. I understand that she is only the second Australian woman to ever achieve world No. 1, after Evonne Goolagong-Cawley.

We had the Oi Rio Pro surf event, with Sally Fitzgibbons securing the No. 1 ranking. We had golfer Hannah Green winning the women's PGA championship in Minnesota. And at the World Rowing Cup, the Australian
women's eight crew won gold. That was all just in one week of Australian women overseas participating in sport at the very highest level.

But, of course, what it does, as we've heard, is to inspire other women and girls to participate in sport, and we're seeing increasing participation in sport at the grassroots level. We talk in this country about being active and preventive health a lot, but nothing is better for preventive health than getting people involved in local sport, particularly some of the team sports.

I was disappointed as to the federal election. During the campaign, I made a commitment on behalf of this side of the House to invest in local women's sport—this time, in round-ball football, soccer, or however people want to call it, at one of the largest football clubs in Tasmania. They have had an increasing number of female participants, and they need new clubrooms for women and for girls to continue their participation in the sport. It's becoming a problem right across the board. What we need to see from the government is strategic investments in local sporting organisations at the grassroots level, to allow these women and girls to actually participate in their chosen sport. So we need to do a lot, both at the grassroots level and at the elite level.

There is so much more to do to encourage women and girls to participate in sport, but it really seems to be working. As we heard from the member from Newcastle, we're starting to get a bit more television airtime. The media are starting to take notice. The public are voting with their feet. They're turning up at stadiums to watch AFL champions. They're turning up at tennis to watch our champions. They're turning up all over the country to watch women participate in sport. They are turning up in droves. But we need to make sure that we encourage women at all levels of sport to participate, and there is so much more that needs to be done.

I want to mention a few other wonderful Australians. The Diamonds have been mentioned, but I also want to mention, as a cricket fan and as co-chair of the Parliamentary Friends of Cricket, the Australian women's Ashes team and to congratulate them on retaining the Ashes. I hope the men do just as well and get the Ashes for us in the men's Ashes. But the women have been particularly good, and they've set the standard over in England. We of course have had Samantha Kerr, Captain of the Matildas, and her hat-trick at the FIFA World Cup. And it would be remiss of me not to mention a young Tasmanian, Ariarne Titmus, who out-swam the world champion, Katie Ledecky, in the 400 metres in the World Swimming Championships, and she comes home with a couple of gold medals but also, importantly, a world record.

The last few weeks have been an incredible time in women's sport. It shows that women can achieve at every level, right across this country. But they need our support. They need it at the grassroots community level. They need it at the elite level. They need encouragement to participate. And they need to know that, when they get there, we'll support them in access to training, in access to physiotherapists—in access to all of the things that their male counterparts get, including equal pay.

Mr ALEXANDER (Bennelong) (11:33): Thank you to the member for Lalor for bringing forward this timely motion. Our female athletes are on top of the world right now and are taking out title after title at events around the world. It seems there isn't a court, a field, a fairway, a pool or a wave that is safe from our women athletes and teams. There's been a lot of commentary in the media that we are entering a new age in women's sports, and this is hard to deny.

Ash Barty has been incredible with her win at the French Open and her grace as she claimed the world's No. 1—a grace she shared with Evonne Goolagong, also an Indigenous woman. The Matildas didn't go as far in the World Cup as we might have liked them to, but they beat the world's top teams, and their class shone through. Our women's cricket team is continuing to dominate the world, smashing England—how sweet that is!—overnight in the Ashes in a way which will hopefully provide inspiration to the men's team ahead of their tournament next week. Where controversy has followed our men's team, our great competitors in the women's team have not only risen above but have shown how united teams playing together are hard, if not impossible, to beat. And who can forget that wonderful morning recently when Australians woke up to the news not only of the victories of Ash Barty and our Matildas but also of Hannah Green's victory in the PGA Championship and Sally Fitzgibbon's great result at the World Surf League?

These are great stories, and we are right to celebrate them loudly and proudly. But I take issue with one small part of recent reporting—that is, that this great string of results is somehow unprecedented.

When I was starting out in my tennis career I had the great fortune to train with Margaret Court a year before she took out the Grand Slam in 1970—she must have got confidence from beating me regularly—and I was able to enjoy her extraordinary talents firsthand. She is the champion we remember, but it's important to note that she was a contemporary of many other great women tennis players, including Judy Tegart, who holds nine Grand Slam doubles championships and was a finalist in the first Wimbledon open, and Lesley Turner Bowrey, who did something that Margaret Court or Billie Jean King couldn't do: she beat Margaret Court and Billie Jean King to
win the French Open in 1965. Ash Barty's rise to No. 1 has brought up memories of the last time an Australian woman was there: the great Evonne Goolagong Cawley in 1976.

On a smaller court, the name Heather McKay isn't one known by many people, but she has a justifiable claim to being Australia's greatest-ever sportsperson. Between 1962 and 1977, she won the British squash open, the pinnacle of the sport, 16 consecutive times, dropping only two sets—not two matches; just two sets—in that time. She was undefeated in competitive squash for over 20 years. This sort of domination in sport is unprecedented.

Back in Bennelong, we were the home of the great 'Ermitton Flash', Australia's second highest medallist winner behind Ian Thorpe: the great Betty Cuthbert, who to this day is the only person in history to win Olympic gold in the 100, 200 and 400 metre sprints, a record she has held since the 1960s and a record beyond Usain Bolt and countless other sprinters around the world. I could go on; we have a huge list of great sportswomen that I could talk about for much longer than the time allotted. Greats like Dawn Fraser, Libby Trickett and Shirley Strickland demonstrate the great depth we have in women's sports.

Recent months have seen incredible performances from the likes of Ash Barty, our women's cricket teams and countless others, but they are not unprecedented. Australia has a proud history in sporting success across genders, and we should be rightly proud of this. What is wonderful today is that these victories are visible, that they are being celebrated and that their influence to grassroots is being nourished. The real victory here is in the growing number of girls playing sport. This is great for our health, our society and our community. How good are our Australian sportswomen!

Ms STANLEY (Werriwa—Opposition Whip) (11:37): Australia is a proud sporting nation. That sporting story would not be possible without women. In recent weeks as a nation we've celebrated their achievements across a range of sports from tennis, netball and cricket to hockey, swimming and sailing and many others. Just over a month ago, as Ash Barty became tennis world No. 1 following her success in the French Open and the Birmingham Classic, Hannah Green, ranked 144th in the world, won the Women's PGA Championship in Minnesota in the USA—the third Australian woman ever to win a golfing major. But we need to recognise lots and lots of other women. There were two more fantastic achievements: the Australian Diamonds winning the silver medal at the Netball World Cup, and the Australian women's cricket team retaining the Ashes. Over the weekend, the Australian women's captain, Meg Lanning, broke her own record for the highest score in a T20 international match. Last night, Ellyse Perry became the first cricketer of either gender to score a thousand runs and take a hundred wickets in international T20 matches—quite an achievement. I'm sure the women's team's form will inspire the men to win the Ashes as well—well, it better!

If you can see it, you can do it. These achievements provide, aspirations, dreams and role models to tomorrow's sporting champions. Every Saturday and Sunday morning, throughout the year, the parks and courts across Werriwa are bustling with young Australians learning the value of competition and fair play. Those values carry on through all aspects of their lives and are important to who we are as Australians. Those courts, fields, tracks, waterways and roads are where the talent you see at events like the Olympic Games, the Winter Olympic Games, international matches and grand finals is fostered. These kids are often living out their dreams of their heroes on television.

We must give young women and girls across this country visibility of just how successful this country is in women's sport. Without that visibility, the moments in the backyard and on grand final day are lost. Those moments give birth to our sporting heroes. Unfortunately for women, this is extremely difficult. Despite the amazing successes across many sports for many years, women's sport rarely receives the mainstream coverage that men's sport does. When I see boys and girls together on the playing fields throughout my electorate, they're playing with equality. But when I see the sponsorships and mainstream media coverage of women's sport, it is really disheartening. It's not just the women competitors who are their own and our own sporting heroes; it's the mums, guardians, administrators, referees and other officials who are the lifeblood of our local sporting clubs and the unsung heroes of our national sporting culture.

One such example is the South West Tigers Junior Australian Football Club, based in the suburb of West Hoxton within my electorate. Last month I had the privilege of being invited to the Tigers to acknowledge and honour female participation in AFL for their special Women in Footy round. This was about recognising not just the women who play but those who coach, manage or umpire, who participate in committees and who give their free time to volunteer around the club on game day, and, needless to say, the thousands upon thousands of mums everywhere in this country driving kids to games and training, and making sure their uniforms are washed and ready. I thank the South West Tigers for inviting me to speak at the event. I especially enjoyed speaking to the women umpires. I found that their motivations, and, I'm sure, those of most other officials, were similar to the reason I started refereeing—a willingness to put back into the sport they loved. I also acknowledge the Matavai
Pacific Cultural Arts performers, who provided a splendid dance presentation. I saw both of the South West Tigers Youth Girls teams play, and I wish them all the best for the season.

At all levels of sport, from local to national and international, women are vital to this country's sporting success. They are the people who create the opportunities for all young Australians and deliver the help that our professional sportspeople deserve. Australian women in sport need equal pay, conditions, access to training, sports medicine, media time and mentoring opportunities. Many of Australia's national women sporting leagues are amongst the best paid in the world, but we can, and must, do better. I congratulate our male cricketers, who, when negotiating the last players contract, fought to ensure that all cricketers, both male and female, received better conditions, and held out until this was achieved. We must salute and celebrate all women involved in sport, competitors or not, and their achievements and contributions to the achievements of all Australian sportspeople.

Ms FLINT (Boothby—Government Whip) (11:42): I am delighted to speak on this motion today, and I thank the member for Lalor for proposing it to the House. Like the member for Lalor, I am passionate about women's sport, especially netball. The member for Lalor and I had a good chat about the Netball World Cup series early in the morning, after we had just lost to New Zealand by the most narrow of margins; I will say more a little later about the incredible performances that we saw from our netballers.

First, I would like to acknowledge the incredible performances of our Australian female athletes in recent months in the global sporting arena. I congratulate tennis champion Ash Barty on her spectacular efforts this year: reaching the quarterfinals at the Australian Open, winning the French Open 6-1, 6-3 and progressing to the fourth round at Wimbledon. Ash has retained her No. 1 ranking, which is absolutely wonderful for our nation. She is an inspiration to all Australians, but particularly to tennis-playing women around the nation. We have also seen strong performances this year from the Matildas at the FIFA Women's World Cup and from the Hockeyroos at the Women's International Hockey Federation Pro League. I would also like to congratulate surfing champion Sally Fitzgibbons for her success at the 2019 Oi Rio Pro and golfer Hannah Green, who recently took home Australia's first major win in a women's golf tournament in over a decade at the Women's PGA Championship. Our international women's cricket team has been hitting sixes to win the multiformat Women's Ashes.

These are all fantastic results, but, of course, my personal passion is netball. I want to congratulate the Samsung Australian Diamonds netball team on an outstanding Netball World Cup, even though they lost the grand final by one goal to our great netball foes and rivals, the New Zealand Silver Ferns. I watched almost every single Diamonds match this World Cup except for the grand final, which, unfortunately, was broadcast at 1 am because it was being played in the UK, and it was therefore a little early in the morning for me to be awake at the start of a parliamentary sitting week. What I can say is that every single game I saw was testament to the skill, strength and character of our netballers, and the matches were some of the best that I have ever seen. The very close scores in the finals demonstrated how talented netballers from around the globe are, particularly those netballers in England, South Africa, New Zealand and Australia. The close results in all of the finals demonstrated that we are, in fact, at a peak moment in competitive netball internationally.

These women are inspiring other women and girls to have a go in each and every sport you can play in our nation. I know that in my local community, in my electorate of Boothby, so many women of every age are having a go at so very many different sports: netball, hockey, tennis, lacrosse, baseball, basketball, soccer and, increasingly, cricket, footy, rugby, swimming, sailing, croquet and even bowls. As you can see, I have a very active electorate.

There has been a huge increase in female participation across all codes but particularly in Aussie Rules football, rugby, soccer and cricket. Unfortunately, investment in change room facilities has not kept up with this rapid growth, so I've worked very hard since being elected as the member for Boothby to see this situation rectified. I've supported new club room and change room facilities, particularly to help support women's participation at the Flagstaff Community Centre, Hewett Reserve, Blackwood Footy Club, the Brighton Oval precinct—which supports a number of different clubs—Glenelg Footy Club, Glenelg Baseball Club, Price Memorial Oval, Kingswood Oval and Mортlock Park. These upgrades will support female footy players, cricketers, netballers, soccer players, tennis players, runners, lacrosse players and baseballers, and many of these upgrades are already in progress. For example, just a few weeks ago I visited the Blackwood Football Club to see their new change rooms installed. The additional change rooms will help cater for the 25 teams that the club currently has in the competition, including eight women's teams, which is really exciting. I also recently visited the Brighton Oval precinct to help turn the sod on the start of the $13 million redevelopment, which will deliver brand-new club rooms and change rooms including for women so that the lacrosse, cricket, football and rugby clubs can continue to grow. Player numbers are also growing at the Brighton Lacrosse Club, where I recently attended their annual Ladies of Lacrosse day, which celebrated the female players.
Ms TEMPLEMAN (Macquarie) (11:48): It's a pleasure to speak to this motion moved by the member for Lalor. Everywhere you look right now, Australian women are kicking goals on the international sporting stage. Ash Barty won the French Open and is ranked No. 1 in the world, and golfer Hannah Green won the Women's PGA Championship. The Hockeyroos made the final of the International Hockey Federation Pro League, the Australian women's cricket team have just won the Ashes led by captain Meg Lanning, and the Matildas, who I love to watch when they play in Penrith, reached the final 16 in the FIFA World Cup, while our Netball Diamonds fought hard in the Netball World Cup. That's just a sample of the things women are doing on the international stage. In my own electorate of Macquarie, we have extraordinary women who are role-modelling how to be elite athletes and performers. Jessica Fox, canoe slalom Olympic medallist, is preparing for Tokyo, and Amanda Spratt, road racing cyclist, has been really making her mark in Europe in the last month.

So I want to congratulate all these women for their sporting achievements, and I also want to congratulate them for something else: for the impact they are having on the next generation of girls and women who are coming behind them. When we scroll through Facebook or Instagram, listen to the radio or watch TV, we are now seeing these phenomenal women and their achievements, their strength and their discipline all around us. It isn't just the blokes in the limelight now. Ladies, well done. You're inspiring girls and women right across the country.

We know the benefits of girls playing sport. The Hon Dame Quentin Bryce summed it up really well:

Girls worldwide who play sport are more likely to attend and stay in school, more likely to finish their education, more likely to be in better health and earn higher wages during the course of their lives.

It has such important benefits, not just that sense of achievement when you do actually win. Locally I acknowledge the great work of Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury sporting clubs in their efforts to make girls sporting competitions run and grow. This is where it all starts. These clubs are contributing to something much bigger than their local competition. As a parent I see how important those comps are for young girls especially in the teenage years—not just an opportunity to work as a team, to learn about fair play and to learn about losing but a chance to develop friendships outside the school environment, creating another support network for our teenagers. We need to continue to harness the momentum coming from these local clubs and from the success of Australian women on the national and international stages.

And we do need to invest. More money needs to go into this sector. Time alone will not do this. I think there's a long way to go, though, for women to be as respected as men in the sporting world. I'm not just talking about the enormous pay gap that most sports still face or the second jobs that women have to take in order to fund their sport. A photo taken of Tayla Harris kicking the opening goal in an AFL match highlighted her impeccable athleticism, but the response didn't reflect that. The response from some was misogynistic and highly sexualised. Instead of seeing a woman in her workplace at the top of her game, laying a path for girls in sport for generations to come, literally kicking a goal, some people saw an opportunity to attack her—and didn't they do just that! I take this opportunity to congratulate the AFL, the AFL community and Tayla Harris herself for the response. It turned what could have been another far-too-common instance of a woman being trolled online into a pivotal moment where those people were called out for their disgusting behaviour, and a conversation was had about women in sport and what treatment they should expect. The conversation wasn't just had in a boardroom with a small group of people who cared; it was on the front pages and on primetime TV.

While there is a way to go for equality in the sporting arena, looking at women like Mo Hope, Sam Kerr, Ash Barty, Meg Lanning, Ellyse Perry, Emily Smith, Caitlin Bassett, Hannah Green and Sally Fitzgibbons, thanks to the professionalism that they show I'm very confident about the future of women's sport. There's one thing I'd add: none of it would be possible without the incredible support that they have from coaches, managers, physios, dietitians and of course their families. We need to make sure all those groups stay strong and can support us to continue to achieve in women's sport.

Mr WYATT (Hasluck—Minister for Indigenous Australians) (11:53): I thank the member for Lalor for this motion. It's important that we acknowledge the efforts of individuals. I think of Margaret Court, when she first played, and I watched her play in many of those elite high-level games of tennis across the world, particularly Wimbledon; of Evonne Goolagong, when she played and beat Margaret Court, and the sense of pride that you have in two significant Australians at that part of our life; and then, more recently, of Sam Kerr and many others.

But I also want to turn our minds to the young women in our electorates who are starting the pathway to a direction that will give them an opportunity was denied so many years ago to women in sport. I consider the Swan Districts Football Club, which I'm associated with, and their women's football team, building the capacity of those women to play in a competition that they love, supported by the Hills Football Association, again giving young women the opportunity and watching them go on to be part of an AFL team and operate at the elite levels.
Then I think of baseball, softball, and T-ball—young girls starting a journey being encouraged to demonstrate their capacity to reach the elite level of sport, because it is at that level that we need to nurture, we need to encourage and we need to build and instil a confidence that we as a nation will give as much attention to our young women in sport as we used to give to males. I think we've seen this quantum shift, given the successes of the Matildas, and many of our other international competitors in national sports—for example, swimming at the Olympics.

Each time I meet someone who has reached that elite level, I'm taken aback by the humility that they often show. I met with the Paralympic team. The women in that team had hopes and aspirations, which, with support, they were able to achieve. They were at a standard and a level that encouraged them to move beyond the restrictions of what they saw as barriers. We've removed many of those barriers.

I also want to acknowledge the people who are doing the coaching, the people who encourage young women to take that journey and, equally, the very elite coaches who dedicate time to refining the skills. It was absolutely tremendous watching Ash Barty play with calmness and poise. She had that killer instinct to win while also being gracious. I loved the fact that when she lost she said: 'It's a game. I enjoyed it.' That is a great quality that is important to have.

Women in sport are continuing to excel. Our coalition government is making funding available for change rooms for women in sporting clubs. This will help provide the women with the same opportunities that men have—unique structures and infrastructure that makes them comfortable. In my own electorate, there were two clubs that came and saw me and said: 'The women don't shower after the games. They've got to go home. We want to give them something to allow them to be part of the camaraderie of our sporting facility and our club, and allow them to be an equal part of the journey of the males within our club.'

That shift is a quantum shift, and it is because of the programs that we put into place. But, equally, as members in this place, we can take a leadership role in influencing the way in which people think about providing young women with every opportunity to excel. I met a young archer who came from Western Australia, who played with an old bow and the arrows were second-hand. She competed in a national competition, because we provided those sporting scholarships. She went away, came over to the east, competed in Sydney and won the event. Part of the prize was an elite bow and arrow outfit that made it easier for her in some of the national competitions.

Women who compete in equestrian events are being encouraged, not only in dressage, because it is important that we give that level of support. I would strongly recommend that we continue to support our women, and I thank the member for Lalor for this opportunity to recognise the competencies and skills of our women in their sporting adventures and in what they achieve.

Debate interrupted.

**BILLS**

**Counter-Terrorism (Temporary Exclusion Orders) (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2019**

**Counter-Terrorism (Temporary Exclusion Orders) Bill 2019**

*Returned from Senate*

Messages received from the Senate returning the bills without amendment.

**GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S SPEECH**

**Address-in-Reply**

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That the following Address in Reply to the speech of His Excellency the Governor-General be agreed to:

May it please Your Excellency:

We, the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Australia, in Parliament assembled, desire to express our loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to thank Your Excellency for the speech which you have been pleased to address to Parliament.

**The SPEAKER** (11:59): Before I call the honourable member for Higgins, I remind the House that this is the honourable member's first speech and I ask the House to extend to her the usual courtesies. I call the honourable member for Higgins.

**Dr ALLEN** (Higgins) (11:59): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I stand here incredibly humbled by the people of Higgins who have chosen me as their representative in this federal parliament. I've always been fascinated by handwritten letters. They capture a fleeting moment in time—like a dragonfly in amber—an arrested moment for future generations to reflect on and marvel over. When I was seven, my school, Albury Public School, asked each children to write a letter for a millennial time capsule to celebrate the school's 150 years of existence. Twenty-five
years later, my brother Tim and I travelled back to our childhood town, Albury, on the banks of the mighty Murray River, to retrieve those letters. To our surprise a further four letters dropped from our family's time capsule: one addressed to each of my three siblings and me. They were letters from mum, who had died of lung cancer at age 58, and they were like a voice from the grave. Even now the hairs on my arm rise when I think of those letters to our future selves.

Mum knew us as only a mother can. She knew our little foibles, and, being from country stock of many generations, she didn't hold back. She was always someone who called a spade a bloody shovel. She told me I'd go far if I could just get hold of my emotions; that I shouldn't worry about my brother Andrew teasing me and that he would grow out of it—he has; and that I loved my little sister Penny and she would be my lifelong best friend—she is. Like all mothers, she had dreams and aspirations for all of us. I was to be a teacher. She wasn't to know I would become a university professor. She worried about how my generation would juggle work-life balance. She could already recognise the warm winds of change for the place of women in the world.

But it was my eldest brother Tim's letter that was the most difficult to read. Mum and dad didn't know what lay ahead for Tim. They couldn't yet see the struggles with mental health and the development of schizophrenia that would consume Tim and our family for decades—a cruel and unrelenting illness that, but for a minor difference in a brain receptor, any one of us could have had. Tim, you've lived a life of grace and dignity. I know it hasn't been easy, and never once have you used it as an excuse. You remind me every day of the humility of life and that we cannot take our health for granted.

I am proud to be part of a new government that has made a significant commitment to mental health and, in particular, to youth and Indigenous mental health. Too many young lives are lost prematurely, including my beautiful cousin Matthew at only 25 years of age. Words like ‘widow’ and ‘orphan’ describe our losses but no word in the English language describes the loss of a child. We should never give up hope to prevent these tragedies.

While mum kept my feet firmly on the ground, dad lifted my aspirations to follow in his footsteps as a doctor. Dad loved his patients and his patients loved him. I know, because they told me so, whether it was the nurses at my work experience at the Albury Base Hospital or when many of them unexpectedly turned up to the church for our wedding or at his funeral in Melbourne. When Dad developed Alzheimer's he knew what lay ahead. It was heartbreaking to watch as this gentle man who had cared for so many with this disease was himself tortured by it. But throughout his slow and unrelenting deterioration he never once complained. In the last year before his death he lost the faculty of speech, but he had two words left: 'thank you'. Dad's gratitude for the family and life he was given was boundless—and even Alzheimer's could not defeat it. He taught me that no matter what you are dealt there is always someone in greater need. And he lived by example. For both mum and dad, actions spoke louder than words.

It was only much later that I realised we were raised by Liberal values. In Albury a town where Menzies laid the foundations for the Liberal Party, years later my parents lay the foundations for our family. We were brought up to understand reward for effort, to have a strong belief in ourselves and in Australia, and that financial prudence is as important in the home as it is for the country.

I came to Higgins as a teenager and I've grown and changed with this vibrant inner-city electorate ever since. I'm not just for Higgins; I'm of Higgins, and it has shaped who I am. I remember when I first arrived in Melbourne. I felt so excited by the opportunities a big city could offer. I loved the hustle and the bustle, but most of all, as a self-conscious teenager, I loved the anonymity of the place. I felt that I could be who I wanted to be, not what was expected by others. But as I've grown older I've realised that Higgins is filled to the brim with interconnected and vibrant microcommunities; communities around culture, country of origin, sports, education, social support networks—too many to name—and, of course, the vibrant culture of food and fashion that stretches from Chapel Street to Chadstone. We are home to a thriving LGBTI community, and I'm proud to be a member of the first LGBTI branch in Victoria, Liberal Pride.

Higgins is home to the full social spectrum. Younger than most electorates, we have a high proportion of university students. They worry about finding jobs in an ever increasingly competitive market and the cost of renting. Many have given up on the Australian dream of owning a home. Aspiring families juggle bills and constant work-life pressures. They worry about caring for their ageing parents. They want a positive future for their kids. They want politicians to get on with the job of delivering for Australia so they can get on with the job of delivering for their families. I'm here to represent you all, but Higgins is not just aspirational for itself. We care about our sense of self as a country. We care about Australia's intergenerational responsibilities, international responsibilities and role in the global order.

Higgins is a proud of its previous members of parliament and its record of federal leadership. It was Harold Holt, the first member for Higgins, who dismantled the White Australia policy and rejected racism. It was Holt
who successfully passed the 1967 referendum for our Indigenous people. It was John Gorton as member for Higgins who established the first Department of the Environment and moved to end the criminalisation of homosexuality. It was Peter Costello as member for Higgins who repaired the budget, introduced the GST and set up Australia for the 21st century. It was Kelly O’Dwyer as member for Higgins who proved that a working mother could sit at the cabinet table. She set us on the road to superannuation reform and improved productivity through increased female participation and a reduced gender pay gap. I pledge today: as member for Higgins, I will continue this proud Liberal record of achievement. Personal responsibility, individual opportunity unfettered by government, mutual obligation, reward for effort, lower taxes and higher incentives, free trade and, above all, strong economic management—these are the hallmarks of a strong Liberal government.

I bring to this place a lifetime of opportunity that I hope will serve my community and my country well. I've been a paediatrician at the Royal Children's Hospital, serving the families of Victoria in their times of need. I've helped them make some of the most difficult decisions of their lives, ones that can affect the future of their child profoundly. The decisions paediatricians make cascade through the lives of others. But, more than caring for people, I've always wanted to prevent problems, not just wait with the ambulance at the bottom of the cliff for the problems to arrive. I want to send resources to the top of the cliff so that we can keep people healthy and safe from the precipice. As a result, I've now worked as a medical researcher for more than 25 years. It is no secret that Australia has produced some of the best medical research on the planet. Our unique blend of Aussie character, of seeking opportunity but being resourceful by making do with what we have, can be seen equally in the corridors of our research institutes and universities as in the outback of our sunburnt country. Like our farmers dealing with the unrelenting drought, our researchers are resilient because they've had to deal with constant setbacks. Despite 75 per cent of national medical research projects considered fundable, only 13 per cent actually receive grants. Who knows what loss of productivity results from these unfunded and untranslated ideas generated in our own backyard.

But for all the thrills of discovery and translation that research has provided, the biggest professional joy for me has been to enable others and their ideas, including as Population Health Theme Director at the Murdoch Children's Research Institute. It's been an enormous privilege to be on the board of the only hospital in Higgins, Cabrini, and to serve as Chairman of Melbourne Girls Grammar, a school that my grandmother came to from Rutherford 100 years ago in 1920, and which four generations of my family have attended. These roles taught me that building our human capital is the most important aspect of a good society. Empowering individuals through education and ensuring their health ensures our society itself is healthy and prosperous. More than that, the health of our institutions is central to the health of a good society.

That is why I have put my hand up for public office. The decisions we make in this place affect each and every one of us each and every day. I wish to contribute to the good and wise collective decision-making that is our parliament. I want to champion the ideas that will make a real difference to the lives of those I serve. I want to champion Australia and its place in the world. I am here as a sensible, practical voice with a passion to serve the people who have put their faith in me to represent them.

Being born in Australia is luck, but you also make your own luck. Australia makes its own luck through a stable democracy, strong institutions, a strong economy, responsibly utilising our resources—both natural and human—and maintaining productive friendships with our international neighbours; this is 'Brand Australia'. And these are the central tenets that will always exist no matter which political party is on this side of the chamber. How these are addressed is what marks a successful government.

Immigration is central to our economic prosperity. I want to ensure that those who seek a better life in our country are warmly welcomed and made at home, that they are given the same opportunities as all Australians to aspire to a better life.

Climate change is real and affects us all. There is now a major and inevitable transition occurring in our energy sector to a clean and sustainable energy future. It is not just an environmental imperative to act, it's an economic one. We need to be open to new possibilities to reduce emissions to hasten that future and use our Australian pragmatism to lead the world in sustainable energy. I believe that the Australian public is ready for a mature conversation on new technologies, such as hydrogen, and even alternative energy sources, such as nuclear, which will only move forward with bipartisan support.

As a scientist I will champion scientific solutions for the challenges we face. Science is a contest of ideas, just like politics, and in both cases we are the servants of the taxpayer. Disagreement is part of being a scientist, as it is for politics. As our Prime Minister is apt to say, we don't need to disagree less as a parliament, we just need to disagree better.
We do well when we think of others but, even more, we do better when we enable others. A robust education that provides resilient learners is the best way to create opportunity. Our education system needs to continue to respond to the increased challenges of the 21st century. Work is rapidly automating and digitalising; it is changing faster than ever. But learning doesn't stop when you finish school, or TAFE or university, and we need to support a system of continuous learning. As our third-highest export, our higher education system needs support and investment to capitalise on its excellence. I will fight to defend academic freedoms.

We should be ambitious for our healthcare system. It is one of the best in the world. It is a unique and effective blend of public and private, where the private sector provides innovation and the public sector provides a safety net for all. Technology enables improved access for patients remotely and we need to explore healthcare systems that are better decentralised and more efficient—not just in our regions but in our cities too.

As our population inevitably ages, so too will the burden of the lifestyle diseases of the 21st century: diabetes, obesity, asthma, allergies and heart disease. With an ageing population, costs will rise while the tax base to support those costs will narrow. Our healthcare dollar needs to work harder. Most importantly, we need to incentivise preventative healthcare solutions rather than costly reactive ones. We need a strong economy to deliver the new wonder drugs that our scientists are now delivering to us at lightning speed.

A strong country is one that is at peace with its past. We still have more to do ensure our First People have the same opportunities for a safe, healthy and prosperous life, but I believe constitutional recognition of Indigenous Australians is an important next step on that road to a stronger future for all Australians. My time in the Northern Territory looking at the high rates of mortality among newborns in our Indigenous population shocked me. It mirrored what I had seen in Kenya, yet here we are in Australia, a First World country.

I grew up through the Thatcher years, when we as women felt the glass ceiling of possibility was finally shattered. At school, we were told we could do anything but not the practicalities of how to do it if we wanted to juggle a family. As the oldest of Generation X, I know many of us have privately struggled with having it all, but we were also lucky the digital revolution helped us to forge the way on part-time, flexitime and working from home.

One of our greatest opportunities for increased economic growth and productivity lies in increasing the engagement of women in the workforce. This will be achieved by answering tough questions relating to child care and responsibilities. True equality starts in the home. Our children need more than child care; they need universal quality early-life education to give them the best start in life. To me, that's non-negotiable. My cousin Margaret Bondfield was the first female member of cabinet in the UK parliament almost 100 years ago. In those days, women like our party's co-founder Dame Elizabeth Couchman had to choose between public life and having a family. The legacy of these women is left to us to champion. Some women choose not to have a family. For others, the choice is made for them. We should never judge.

To the people of Higgins: I promise to serve you to the best of my ability. My intentions will always be honourable. Politics is the complex art of balancing the needs of many voices but just on a very big scale. I am deeply grateful to the Liberal Party, from the support of the parliamentarians and secretariat to the more than 800 volunteers that gave up their time to help hold Higgins. Thank you. Our opponents threw everything including the kitchen sink at us, and they expected to win. My campaign team was incredible. After campaigning for 19 months in Prahran at the Victorian state election with an unsuccessful outcome, every single one of them got behind me just a couple of months later to do it all in Higgins. If that's not resilience, I don't know what is.

It is here that I want to personally thank the Prime Minister, Scott Morrison. The victory you delivered is one for the history books. Along with our party's deputy leader, my friend and electorate neighbour Josh Frydenberg, you have delivered a strong, united and stable leadership.

To my family and friends, so many of you here sharing this day with me: there are too many of you to thank individually, but thank you from the bottom of my heart. Thank you for believing in me and for your wise counsel over that essential cup of tea—Melbourne breakfast, of course.

Mum always said that women marry their father. I used to scoff at such silliness, but after 30 years of an extraordinary partnership with my husband, Malcolm, I realise he has a lot in common with Dad. Both are gentlemen, thoughtful and considered, and deeply committed to family. But what attracted me most to you, Malcolm, is your ironclad sense of what is right and wrong. You are always someone who will choose what is right over what is popular. This is the core of who you are, and your wise counsel will be more valuable than ever in this next phase of my career.

But children are my greatest joy. How good are kids! As Enid Lyons said in her maiden speech as the first female MP in the Australian parliament, when people began to think less of large families, it became 'a matter of courage, even of hardihood, to have a family of more than two or three'. Certainly, Malcolm and I took the
Howard-Costello baby bonus initiative a bit too literally: we had one to replace each of us, one for the country and even one for the Liberal Party! Kids—Monty, Jemima, Arabella, Archie—I am not going to publicly embarrass you by telling you how much I love you. Know that what I do in this place, I am doing for you and your generation, and for those who follow. I don't know how long I have in this place or, indeed, on this planet, but I've always stood up for a better future, and I'm not stopping now.

But my final thanks are to my mother. I didn't always have an easy relationship with my mum. She had a difficult childhood and she carried a lot of unresolved anger. She taught me grit and determination because, as she said, she came from good peasant stock—although our friends think she came from wine aristocracy, as the sister of the great Mick Morris, of six generations of Rutherglen winemaker fame. I know it was mum's deepest sadness she didn't get to meet any of her grandchildren. I'd always thought she was gone, but, as I've written this speech, I realise she's here now: beside me, guiding me. As my uncle Mick said when he rang me after the election: 'Your mum would be proud of you, Kate.' I thank the House for its indulgence.

The SPEAKER: Before I call the honourable member for Curtin, I remind honourable members that this is her first speech. I therefore ask that the usual courtesies be extended to her.

Ms HAMMOND (Curtin) (12:26): The House of Representatives begins each day with an acknowledgement of the traditional custodians of the land and the opportunity to say a prayer. And so I start my first speech here today by acknowledging and paying my respects to the elders of the Ngunawal and Nambri peoples, who are the traditional custodians of the Canberra area; the Whadjuk Noongar people, who are the traditional custodians of the land I call home; and the Ballardong Noongar people, the traditional custodians of the land on which I was born. As a person of faith, I also start by giving thanks to God.

An Australian music icon of my generation once sang, 'I should be so lucky—lucky, lucky, lucky.' As a woman who was born in the late 1960s in the regional town of Northam in Western Australia to two hardworking and loving parents, the third of four girls, these words strongly resonate. I have been very lucky—lucky, lucky, lucky—fortunate and blessed. I was born into a family where love was unconditional. My parents encouraged each of their four girls to find their own passions in life, find their own strengths, find and develop their potential and live their own best lives while always being open to others and contributing to society. My parents, through their own initiative, discipline, hard work and love, created a home and a world for us which was beyond compare. And by their example, we learnt about hard work, reward for effort, and service to others. We were allowed to fail and to fall. We were given freedom, and we were given praise and rewarded when appropriate. But we were also held responsible, accountable and disciplined where appropriate. My three sisters and I owe our parents a huge debt of gratitude. And while neither my beautiful mum and dad nor my three incredibly talented sisters can be here today, I trust they know how much I love them. I know that my sisters will give me brutal feedback on what I say and do in this place both now and in the future. They will also continue to comment on my hair. Such are sisters!

I was born in a time and a place where we had material comfort. I had educational opportunities, which I encouraged to pursue. My race, my gender and my beliefs were no barrier to what I wanted to do or achieve. The only limitations were my own desires, my own skills and attributes, my own initiative and motivation. In later years, I found a career, a vocation, which combined my passions for law, teaching, service and management. I was privileged to work at a university, the University of Notre Dame Australia, for two decades and have many, many people who mentored and taught me all manner of things—from the governing boards, to staff and students. I was indeed very lucky to be surrounded by such people, and I owe a debt of gratitude to all. There are five who I want to acknowledge by name: Peter Tannock, Neville Owen, Peter Prendiville, the Hon. Chris Ellison and Peter Tranter.

I have also been lucky to find many friends, some going back to my early teen years and some of more recent origin. For those whom I’ve known the longest: we share many great memories, and we all know how lucky we are that social media didn’t exist when we were growing up and that our memories are shared solely between us. And how lucky were we to grow up in the eighties? How good were the best music, the best movies, the best fashion, and big hair or a mullet?

Of course, the greatest luck of my life was meeting the love of my life, Simon, more than two decades ago. Thank you. I would not be here today without you. I love you. Together we hit a jackpot of joy in having three wonderful sons: Sam, Josh and Tom. To quote a book: Katie didn’t want to embarrass her family. I do. As a mother of three teenage sons, I frequently tell them one of the responsibilities of a mother and the greatest joy is to embarrass her teenage sons. It builds resilience, Katie. To quote a book that we frequently read when you were younger: I love you all to the moon and back. I also thank Simon’s family, many of whom have quite different political views from my own, but we all share the wonderful, loving bond that is family.
I am lucky, again, to be living in one of the most beautiful places on earth, the electorate of Curtin, a place which I have called home for almost 80 per cent of my life, first moving into it at the age of 10. Curtin was created in 1949 and named after a magnificent Australian, our outstanding wartime Prime Minister John Curtin. There have been four previous members, all outstanding in their service to the people of Curtin, the state of Western Australia and the nation more generally: Sir Paul Hasluck, Sir Vic Garland, Mr Allan Rocher and the Hon. Julie Bishop. The Hon. Julie Bishop served with distinction in this place, including as the first female deputy leader of the federal parliamentary Liberal Party for over 11 years and as the first female foreign minister for Australia.

The area of Curtin is 98 square kilometres, bounded to the west by the Indian Ocean and the best beaches in the world—Cottesloe, Northcott, Swanly, City Beach, Floreat and Scarborough—to the south and south-east by the magnificent Swan River, and to the east and north by roads which are critical parts of the Perth transport network. Our part of the world is rightly known for its natural beauty: leafy green suburbs, vast tracts of natural bushland, some spectacular lakes, and beautiful natural flora and fauna.

The 140,000 people who live in Curtin belong to over 36,000 families. Families in all their shapes and sizes are the lifeblood of Curtin. We have 54 schools, one university and a number of vocational training providers. Twenty-nine thousand children are in school, and more than a third of our population attend an educational institution. We have 11 hospitals—a mix of private and public, serving the people of Perth and beyond—some incredible health research institutions and 40 aged-care facilities. We are home to the SAS at the Campbell Barracks in Swanbourne and to the Irwin Barracks in Karrakatta. I pay tribute to the members of the SAS, the reserves and, indeed, all Defence Force men and women, past and present, for the service they have given and continue to give to our country. I also say a big thank you to all of their families.

Curtin is home to the Royal Agricultural Society of WA, surf lifesaving clubs and every possible sporting club you could want. We also have some great sporting facilities which service the whole state. We are the home of a number of wonderful volunteer and philanthropic organisations, including a dogs home and a cats home, of environmental organisations and of great arts and culture, including the wonderful annual Sculpture by the Sea. Lest you get completely the wrong impression about Curtin, we also have one of the largest wastewater facilities in Perth servicing far beyond the boundaries of the electorate. We have one of the highest levels of employment in the country. Over six per cent of people in Curtin work in hospitals and over five per cent in education, and, for better or worse, we have more than the average for lawyers. There are 26,000 small and medium businesses operating in Curtin, employing thousands of people from across the wider Perth region. Curtin is home to hardworking people: retirees, families and business owners. There are those who are financially well off and those who are struggling, but all are people who care about each other. They are people who care about our environment, our arts and culture, our health and our world. They are generous, open-hearted and philanthropic people. I am humbled and privileged to represent and serve all of the approximately 140,000 people who live in Curtin. I shall at all times seek to fulfil the trust and responsibility which they have placed in me.

I would like to acknowledge and thank all those who helped me to be in this position today: the Curtin campaign committee, chaired by the Hon. Peter Collier MLC, with Curtin division president Tim Walton, Daniel White, Jon Betjeman, Anne-Marie Patrick, Cody Hudson, Adele Coyne, Julie Lloyd, Stefan Deselys-Claite, Melanie Lynn, Peter Moore, Shannon Coyne, Damian Collins, Roz Baker, Patrica and Murray Turner, and Phil Patterson; our Liberal Party state office, president Fay Duda, state director Sam Calabrese and Louis Meyer; and all of the Young Liberals. I also thank the Hon. Chris Ellison, Senator Mathias Cormann and other state and federal members of parliament present and former, including former Premier of Western Australia the Hon. Colin Barnett and former Prime Minister the Hon. John Howard. I also thank all members of the Curtin division of the Liberal Party.

To the donors and hundreds of volunteers who did mailbox deliveries, worked at pre-polling, handed out how-to-vote cards, worked on election booths, made cakes and sent nice notes: I thank you from the bottom of my heart. I would like to note with special thanks my regular doorknocking buddies—Angela, Pauline, Dylan, Cody, Matt and Sam—and all of my old friends for keeping it real—Helen, Elena, Mel, Bree, Susan and Rommie. To the Prime Minister: thank you for your leadership. Your authenticity, realness and humility are clear and inspirational. You even convinced my mum, and she can spot a phoney a mile off!

Australia is a wonderful country. But, as wonderful as it is, I recognise that the luck which has been mine is not the same for everyone. I have a beautiful family and the bestest of friends. I have had opportunities, and I have had the encouragement, love and support to pursue those opportunities. That is what I want for all Australians. I want Australian families to be supported so that they in turn can provide the support and love which individuals need to flourish. I want all Australians to have equality of opportunity and strong encouragement and support, so that everyone has the opportunity to reach their potential as individuals, to make their own decisions about life.
and to take personal responsibility for their lives so that they can lead their best lives and contribute to the
communities in which they live, and to society more generally. To do this, I believe that we need to ensure that
our wonderful country has a strong and robust economy, has the essential services people rely on and need and
continues to uphold, promote and embed our core liberal and democratic values of human dignity, individual
freedom and equality. These are the core values of the political party to which I belong, and it is for this reason
that I stand in this place as a proud member and representative of the Liberal Party.

I am proud to be part of a government which promotes policy positions supporting free enterprise and which
understands and emphasises the importance of a strong and robust economy. I am proud to be part of a
government which is committed to doing this through keeping taxes low, creating the right environment for job
creation and ensuring our employment settings and frameworks are balanced so that the interests of both
employees and employers are protected. I'm proud that our government is backing small and medium businesses,
and that we are keeping expensive, frequently repetitive and ineffective red tape to a minimum, pursuing trade
agreements with other countries and boosting our exports, and ensuring that we, as a government, spend within
our means—that we spend wisely, efficiently and productively. I will advocate for and support all of these and
other initiatives which strengthen our economy.

But I would emphasise that our pursuit of a strong and robust economy is not done as a standalone goal for its
own sake. The economy is not our master and we mere blind servants to it. The economy must always serve us.
We pursue and emphasise a strong economy because it is a necessary foundation for us to live our lives to their
optimum: for us to flourish individually, to thrive collectively as a nation and to contribute to the wellbeing of the
global community.

A strong economy is both dependent upon and ensures that our country has all of the essential services and
ingredients which are vital to our individual and national wellbeing. We need educated, skilled, healthy people;
we need quality infrastructure; we need social services to help those in need; and we need a secure, protected and
safe country so that we can deliver a strong economy. But we also need a strong economy to deliver these. They
are intertwined. Some of these are deliverable by the government, some are best served through an efficient
private sector and some by a combination of both.

Of these essential services ingredients I will mention only a few about which I am deeply passionate. The first
of these is education. We must ensure that we have excellent educational and training opportunities for all and that
there is a diversity of offerings and opportunities and real choice, from early education through to postgraduate
education. Our schools and all those who work in them are one of our country's most valuable assets, and we
recognise that we need to continue to support them so that they, in turn, can do the best by our children. Our
educational offerings must be properly balanced. We need to teach skills—basic skills, life skills and work skills.
We need to prepare people for the changing world. But we also need to impart knowledge. It is true that nearly
any piece of information you want can be found on the internet, but this is information; it is not knowledge. And
mere access to information does not guarantee wisdom.

Part and parcel of our responsibility to provide excellence in education is a need for us to continue to invest in,
courage and value research and entrepreneurship. We must continue to emphasise and build the links between
research and industry and ensure that our research is directed towards the betterment of our society at large,
because good, strong and ethically responsible research should underpin the decisions we make, individually and
collectively.

We must ensure that our health services, public and private, are supported so that all Australians can access
timely and excellent health care. We have rising demands and needs—and our government has rightly recognised
the criticality of them—particularly in areas of mental health, palliative care, chronic pain and dementia. Like
many here in this House and many across Australia, I have had personal experience with all of the above areas of
need; I know how they impact on those suffering and also on their families and loved ones. The measure of a good
country is how well it provides for those who are ill or are in need, and I am proud that we in government are
giving the necessary attention to these areas.

We must ensure that we have appropriate and resourced social services so that we can support and help those
who need it. Our social services and support systems must uphold the dignity of each person and their individual
needs and to do so they must, to the greatest possible extent, facilitate and enable self-sufficiency and individual
autonomy. In this regard, I note this government's commitment to ensuring that the NDIS actually works for the
recipients and is tailored to their individual needs rather than a one-size-fits-all approach.

I also note our rising needs in aged care. It is the very circle of life that the very people who raised us, loved us
and supported us in turn need to be loved, respected and supported by us as they age. Again, I am proud to be part
of a government that understands this and is actively taking steps to ensure that we take proper care of those who cared for us to enable them to live the twilight of their years with dignity.

We must ensure that we continue on our path to closing the gap between our Indigenous peoples and the broader Australian community. Symbolic steps without effective action are ultimately pointless and potentially do more harm than good, but symbolic steps can give momentum and effect to concrete actions and initiatives. To that end, I will be fully supporting the efforts towards constitutional recognition of our Indigenous peoples and exploring new ways of working together to ensure that the concrete actions and initiatives which are delivered actually work.

We must be responsible stewards of our natural world. We must protect and preserve the environment in which we live, and we should do this individually and collectively through evidence based and effective steps. We live in a beautiful country; let's make sure it remains so, so that our children and their children's children can say the same things—boys, you're too young yet!

We must ensure that there is rightful support and encouragement for the arts and culture in our country. I have not a creative streak in my body, and there are many works of art which I don't get or, truth be told, don't like. However, I strongly believe that while a work of art might not save your life in the way that good healthcare can and while it might not make your trip to work any quicker or easier than a good road system can, we need the arts to challenge us, to entertain us and to help us to look at the world in different ways.

For Australia to have a strong economy and essential services, it is imperative that we continue to uphold, promote and embed our core Liberal and democratic values including the innate dignity of every individual, of individual freedom, rights and responsibilities and of equality.

There is evidence of a rising lack of understanding of and confidence in democracy and free enterprise both here in Australia and in other parts of the world. Our form of government is not perfect. No government can do everything. It cannot fund everything. Choices need to be made. I also readily acknowledge that free enterprise and market forces cannot do everything. But I nonetheless firmly believe that democracy is the best form of political system and that free enterprise, a strong federalism and small government are key for our country to continue to flourish, just as they have proven to be in the past.

There is evidence of an increasing lack of trust in our institutions, not only government but also public service, banks, religious institutions, the media and universities. Much of this is understandable. These institutions have never been and will never be perfect, and some actions carried out by these institutions, or those associated with them, have been unconscionable and despicable. Such institutions need to be held accountable and we need to have appropriate legislation and regulation to ensure that they are held to account and that the same things are not repeated. But let us resist being lured into the false belief that regulation or legislation will, or even can, fix everything. We need to be circumspect and considered in our responses and we need to resist overzealous legislative reactions. There is always the danger of unintended and unconsidered consequences, some of which can have long-term and wideranging negative repercussions.

Finally, there are also signs that we are becoming increasingly intolerant of the views and opinions of others, of extreme polarisation, of excessive individualism, of blame, of victimhood and of division. We all want our own individual freedoms and we want to exercise our own rights but we're not so happy when others do it in ways which differ from us. Instead of arguing the point there is an increasing tendency to attack the person—to label them and to seek to shut down the discussion. It has always been a vital part of our country that we have a diversity of opinions and views, and part of the success of our country has been that these different views and opinions have been able to be expressed and debated freely and robustly. What's more, in many cases the differing views and opinions and robust debates have led to what I would call sensible and pragmatic compromises, compromises which have been accepted by the majority and compromises which have worked.

To make sure that we continue to do this we must hold fast to our key values: the inherent dignity of every individual and our individual freedom. But we must also recognise that none of our individual freedoms or rights are completely unfettered. We owe responsibilities to ourselves, to each other and to society more generally. We must balance our freedoms and rights with our responsibilities, and while there is a very important role for the government to play in ensuring that the right balance is struck there is also a big role to play for the individual. We, as individuals living in society, must take personal responsibility for how we live, how we act, how we react and how we respond. The golden rule, present in many religions and cultures—treat others as you would like to be treated—is one worth remembering at all times.

We live in a wonderful country, and I'm a proud Australian—and an even prouder Western Australian—who is privileged and humbled to represent the people of Curtin in this 46th Parliament. I shall at all times strive to live up to the trust and responsibility which has been placed in me. We face some challenges, but it's not the first time
we've faced challenges, and nor will it be the last. In the maiden speech of the first member for this seat, Sir Paul Hasluck, he referred to the:

… troublous times in the half century that lies ahead …

Likewise, the Hon. Julie Bishop stated in 1998:

We are experiencing a revolutionary societal change in time, space and power.

The exact type of challenges we face may be different, but it would be the height of conceit to think that we have never faced challenges before.

We can, and we do, rise. We learn, we adapt and we make change when change is required in the best interests and for the common good. Let us remember our resilience, our can-do, our fair go, our compassion and our humour. Let us embrace and encourage our individualism and celebrate our diversity, but at all times remember our shared humanity. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Debate adjourned.

Ms MADELEINE KING (Brand) (12:56): on indulgence—I'd just like to congratulate the member for Curtin for her election to the seat of Curtin and also for her excellent first speech. I'd also like to acknowledge her husband, Simon; and her sons, Josh, Sam and Tom, and their uncles Matthew King and Jamie King—my husband. I can only acknowledge the great support both Celia and I have had from the wonderful King family in Western Australia. I thank the House. Thank you for the indulgence.

RESOLUTIONS OF THE SENATE

Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability

Consideration of Senate Message

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Goodenough) (12:57): The Speaker has received a message from the Senate transmitting a resolution agreed to by the Senate on 25 July 2019 relating to the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability:

(1) That the Senate—

(a) notes:

(i) that Mr John Ryan AM, and Ms Barbara Bennett PSM, are recognised for their long and distinguished public service careers,

(ii) that however, as key decision makers of public service institutions which will be the subject of investigation and examination during the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, they have significant and unmanageable conflicts of interest which are highly likely to jeopardise the integrity of the Royal Commission,

(iii) that over 60 disability organisations have called for the resignation and removal of these two individuals as commissioners for the Royal Commission,

(iv) that these organisations have created a set of six criteria to guide the government in the appointment of replacement commissioners,

(v) the 1500 individuals who have signed a petition calling for both Mr Ryan and Ms Bennett to step down—many individuals and advocates from the disability community, including former People with Disability Australia President, Mr Craig Wallace, have said they will not give evidence to the Royal Commission should these individuals remain, and

(vi) that it is essential that disabled people, their families, and their organisations have confidence in the processes and recommendations of the Royal Commission; and

(b) calls on the Federal Government to immediately remove Mr Ryan and Ms Bennett as Commissioners, and replace them with individuals who meet the positive criteria set out by the disability community.

(2) That a message be sent to the House of Representatives seeking its concurrence in this resolution.

Copies of the message have been placed on the table for the information of honourable members. I do not propose to read its terms, which will be recorded in the Votes and Proceedings and Hansard. The Senate requests concurrence of the House in this resolution.

STATEMENTS ON INDULGENCE

Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction

Mr TAYLOR (Hume—Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction) (12:57): Mr Deputy Speaker, I seek your indulgence to make a brief statement.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Goodenough): Please proceed.
Mr TAYLOR: First, I want to address the matter of my declaration of interests. I am required by the rules of this place to disclose my shareholdings. My Register of Members' Interests entry discloses my shareholdings in my family company, Gufee Pty Ltd. I am required by the rules of this place to disclose any partnerships I am part of. My Register of Members' Interests entry discloses Gufee's interest in Farm Partnerships Australia. This is a legal partnership set up with my three brothers and a business associate over 20 years ago to farm across this region, close to where I stand now, via leased, managed and owned farms. We originally set it up to work with ageing and absentee farmers to allow them to continue living on and owning their farms beyond their ability to farm themselves. This farming partnership, a common legal structure for rural holdings, has in recent years held a one-third interest in a farm near Delegate in south-eastern New South Wales.

If the register of interests were required to record minority, non-controlling interests held at three levels down in a family company structure, this would be a major change to current practice. For instance, investments made by public companies held by members would need to be disclosed. It would require changes in disclosures for many in this place, including for those opposite. I have therefore fully met my obligations to declare my interests in Gufee and Farm Partnerships Australia.

I turned to the revised EPBC listing of Natural Temperate Grasslands of the Southern Tablelands ecological community. In late 2016 and early 2017 I spoke with farmers from Boorowa and Goulburn in my electorate, and from Yass, which had been in Hume until mid 2016, about this listing and their concerns with that listing. On 21 February 2017 I spoke with a farmer near Yass who expressed strong and detailed concerns about the revised listing, pointing out that it had occurred despite the concerns of the National Farmers' Federation and the New South Wales Farmers Association and with little consultation with farmers themselves. All of these farmers were completely disconnected from our family farming operations.

There has been strong antagonism expressed by the farming community about federal and state native vegetation regulation for some time. The concern was very serious. The revised listing requires farmers to assess whether there is 50 per cent native vegetation down to parcels of one-10th of a hectare, at highly unfavourable times of year because clover, an introduced species, must be excluded from the assessment. The revised listing extends across most of my electorate's farming country, both pre- and post-2016 redistribution, as well as much of the Eden-Monaro. It goes well beyond New South Wales regulations and is costly and unmanageable, as it is difficult or impossible to be sure that routine pasture improvement or weed management is compliant. Ultimately, the revised listing would halt pasture improvement and efficient weed control across the Southern Tablelands and Monaro. It has the potential to do untold damage to agricultural productivity throughout the region, undermining the livelihoods of many of the 2½ thousand people who work in agriculture in my electorate.

On 21 February 2017, at the suggestion of the Yass farmer, I contacted the policy director of the New South Wales Farmers Association, who provided me with their June 2014 submission to the then Department of the Environment expressing serious concerns about the proposed revised listing. On the basis of these concerns I sought a briefing on the revised listing from the then minister's office, which I made clear was not to include any discussion of compliance matters. This has already been confirmed by departmental documents released to journalists under FOI, in which an official writes in internal correspondence that the meeting with me was, 'to answer questions on the technical aspects of the listing outcome,' and highlights that they would completely stay out of any compliance action underway. The official also writes, 'We will confine our discussion to the EPBC Act-listing process'.

On 20 March 2017 I attended the meeting. At no time during this meeting was any compliance matter or any personal interest of mine discussed. At that meeting we discussed precisely what the department had said we would discuss. Officials in attendance were determined by the department.

In conclusion, the facts are clear and straightforward. My interests have been declared in complete adherence to the rules. I have had no association with the events leading to the compliance action that has been the subject of these allegations and I have never made a representation in relation to it; I never would. All available information supports my repeated statements that the compliance action was never raised. My focus was advocating for the interests of the farmers in my electorate and across the region. This is my job as the elected representative for Hume, with a large farming population and agricultural sector. I am proud to represent the interests of farmers; the backbone of so many regional communities. I will continue to do this at every opportunity.

I would like to table two documents. The first is the initial 2014 letter from the National Farmers' Federation to the department expressing serious concerns about the revised listing. The second is the geographic distribution of the natural temperate grasslands of the south-eastern highlands ecological community. I thank the House.
RESOLUTIONS OF THE SENATE
Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability
Consideration of Senate Message

Consideration resumed.

Mr PORTER (Pearce—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Leader of the House) (13:04):
Earlier, Deputy Speaker Goodenough noted that the Speaker had received a message from the Senate. I move:

That the consideration of the message be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

Mr BANDT (Melbourne) (13:05): I move:
That all words after "That" be omitted with a view to substituting the following words:
"the message be considered immediately."
The calling of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability was a significant occasion. It was a very significant occasion for people right across the country who had campaigned for it for many years. It is going to involve an estimated cost of more than half a billion dollars by the time its investigations are completed. We don't actually know the sheer number of people with a disability who have died in care, but it is estimated that between 2014 and 2017 in New South Wales government-run institutions alone there were 43 preventable deaths.

There can be no questioning of the significance of this royal commission. It is something that Senator Steele-John pushed for for quite some time, and we congratulated the government when it was finally called. But for it to be of impact and for the findings of the royal commission to have widespread public support, including the support of people with disabilities, there has to be confidence in the commission process itself. What we are dealing with at the moment is not a case, if I can use legal terminology, of actual bias amongst commissioners; we are dealing with a question of perceived conflict of interest.

In this, perceptions will count for a lot. This royal commission must not only be independent but be seen to be independent. If it is seen to be independent, then the many people in this country with disabilities who've been pushing for this for many years will have confidence in the investigative process and the outcomes. But that is not where it sits at the moment, and that is why this motion needs to be passed. Where it sits at the moment is that a significant proportion of the communities of people with disabilities in this country are saying they do not consider this process to be safe. Not only that, the community are saying that if two of these commissioners stay part of the commission then they will, in fact, boycott the process. That would be a disaster. It would be a disaster if this incredibly significant royal commission were to be impeded because the government was not willing to put in commissioners that were not just independent but also perceived to be independent.

We are dealing here with two commissioners in particular. For all members in this House, I want to repeat the point that I made at the start. We are dealing here not with claims of bias; we are dealing here with claims of perceived conflict of interest. The kinds of claims that I think would see a judge stand down from hearing a case. I say this without impugning the reputations of these two people or suggesting any wrongdoing. In this instance, the right thing for them to do would be to step aside, and if they're not going to do it the government should do it. If the government don't do it, they run the risk of creating a rod for their own back and sabotaging the very process that they themselves have set up, and it will not have legitimacy. What is at stake is whether or not this process is going to be seen as being legitimate by the very people who were calling for it to be established in the first place.

I'm going to go into a bit of detail about the two people in question in particular—again, and I stress, not because I'm making claims against them, but because this is about having the confidence of the community. When you understand the background of the involvement of these two people, you can see why the calls for them to step aside are eminently reasonable. The first is John Ryan. Before he was appointed to the royal commission, he was the director of contemporary residential options in the New South Wales Department of Family and Community Services. In that role, he was partly responsible for more than 300 government operated group disability homes, as well as overseeing the closure and redevelopment of the state's largest residential institutions. The largest of these, the Stockton Centre, has been in the process of closing down since Mr Ryan assumed the role in 2011. Residents are being moved into community settings as part of this process. Between 2014 and 2017 a New South Wales Ombudsman's report found that two women had died of dehydration and a third woman was severely injured after being moved out of the Stockton Centre and into residential care. And it found that inadequate staff training about the complex needs of these patients was a factor contributing to the deaths of these women. The same report concluded that another 41 individuals had died in that three-year period whilst under the care of Mr Ryan's employer, the New South Wales Department of Family and Community Services.
Those matters are very likely to be the subject of inquiry by the commission—or at least the people who have called for the royal commission will be seeking to have those matters investigated by the royal commission. People will be asking for an investigation into one of the commissioner's former employers in one of the single largest areas of investigation undertaken. Mr Ryan was the director of contemporary residential options for the New South Wales Department of Family and Community Services at the time, a role he only resigned from in order to join the royal commission. So it is, in fact, a potential inquiry into the impact of actions that he directly oversaw. That is a direct conflict of interest or at least an appearance of a conflict of interest.

The second commissioner, Ms Barbara Bennett, worked for the Department of Social Services for over a decade and was involved in the rollout of the NDIS, as well as other social programs that regularly interact with people with disabilities. The NDIS is necessarily going to be a huge part of the investigation undertaken by the royal commission, as will the interactions between other government social programs and disabled people. If the royal commission is going to be looking at the interaction between NDIS and people with disabilities then it may well traverse on the very areas that the commissioner was involved in overseeing. That is not just some wild claim; it is just manifestly obvious, on the face of, it that, if you have someone who has been involved in implementing and rolling out the NDIS, the subject matters that that commissioner oversaw are likely to be some of the matters that people will want to bring to the commission's attention and the commission will investigate.

But what we can't have is a case of an appearance that the Public Service is investigating a public service, in the case of Ms Bennett, or, in the case of Mr Ryan, a suggestion that investigations of actions potentially under his watch, or at least under his employer's watch, will now be under a cloud or may not progress in the way that people wanted.

I come back to what I said at the start: the calls for these people to step down are now growing. We are here debating this because a majority of the Senate has asked that, if they don't stand aside, the government stand them aside. So we now have a very large section of the parliament, from across the party-political spectrum, representing broad community support saying that these two people ought not sit as the commissioners. And we now have the community itself saying: 'We've got some alternative proposals that would ensure that the government can independently pick some people who would meet the selection criteria. We are not seeking to appoint them, but there are some criteria that could be applied that would ensure independence.' And the government itself is being stubborn and pigheaded. As a result, people with disabilities are now saying they don't feel safe before this royal commission and are going to boycott it. The royal commission will be tarred from the beginning if these two people do not do the right thing and stand aside. If this was a case before the court, in a heartbeat the judge would stand aside—because they would know that you can't have the appearance of a fair trial if it is into matters that you yourself were directly involved in. But that is what we have got here.

My message to this place is that the disability community can't do it by themselves anymore. They pushed and pushed and got a royal commission up, and they want this royal commission to be successful. People are prepared to come and participate in it. But they do not want a royal commission where people don't feel safe before it because the government is picking the very people who should be investigated by the royal commission! If the government could just put aside its pig-headedness and stubbornness for one second, it would realise it would be doing itself a favour—because if it just put in two other people that have the broad support of the community then it would have widespread political support and it would be understood and appreciated for having done the right thing. But if the government is not going to do it then the parliament should make the government do it. I commend this amendment to the House.

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

**Ms SHARKIE** (Mayo) (13:15): It is a great honour to second this amendment to this motion today. When the Prime Minister announced the royal commission in April 2019, he said that Australia needed to:

… establish a culture of respect for people living with disabilities and the families who support, love and care for them.

He said people with a disability 'deserve our respect' and that the establishment of a royal commission was 'so above politics'. If the government is serious about respect for those living with a disability then the government must act to prioritise their voices and their experiences.

Sixty disability organisations have called for the removal of Mr Ryan and Ms Bennett, and that is a decision I am sure they have not taken lightly. Fifteen hundred people have signed a petition calling for the removal of Mr Ryan and Ms Bennett. The government should listen to those people living with a disability who have already stated that they no longer feel safe in giving evidence to the royal commission. We can't have that. We need people with a disability who would like to give evidence. That in itself is a very daunting procedure and a decision people do not take lightly. If they want to provide evidence then we need to ensure that they feel safe to do so. When people who are desperate to have their voices heard are considering walking away from the very
opportunity that they have fought so hard for, that they have spent years fighting for, then there can be no mistake that the commissioners have lost the confidence of the people they very much need to have confidence in them—and that is the disability community.

The very integrity of this royal commission is at stake. This is a very serious matter. I make no comment on the individual commissioners and have no doubt that they accepted their appointments seeking to further the interests of the disability community. But the perceived conflicts of interest presented by their past roles and experiences, I believe—and I know that many people across both chambers believe this—are unmanageable. Sixty disability organisations and 1,500 people were willing to put their name to the petition. I strongly urge the government to reconsider the appointments of Mr Ryan and Ms Bennett.

I would just like to acknowledge the tremendous and courageous work of Senator Jordan Steele-John. Since entering this parliament, he has been a tremendous advocate for not just the royal commission but people living with disability.

Coming from the NGO space, I know that organisations are often fearful of going on the record against government policy. Organisations are often fearful that there will be some kind of backlash against their organisation from a funding point of view. So it is very, very rare for an organisation to stand up against government policy like this. These are, I believe, very reasonable calls that are being made by many in the disability sector and many individuals who are living with a disability.

So, I would urge the government: please reconsider the appointment of Mr Ryan and Ms Bennett. And if Mr Ryan and Ms Bennett happen to be listening or reading the Hansard, perhaps they could reflect on the concerns of the disability organisations, on the concerns of those who have been willing to sign a position and perhaps consider resigning from their roles. Again, I am very pleased to second this motion and very pleased to second the good work of the member for Melbourne and of course Senator Jordan Steele-John, and I commend this motion to the House.

Mr ROBERT (Fadden—Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme and Minister for Government Services) (13:20): I thank the members who have spoken during the debate on this motion, and it's good to see Senator Steele-John here in the House. As always, you are very welcome.

The Australian government—and I know I can also speak for the opposition in this role—takes violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with disability very seriously. That's why on 5 April this year the government announced the establishment of a Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability. The royal commission will run for three years, delivering an interim report no later than 30 October next year and a final report no later than 29 April 2022.

It's important to recognise that all state and territory first ministers provided formal or in-principle support for a joint royal commission. This is a national effort. A joint royal commission will allow the royal commission to look into matters that are the primary responsibility of the states and the territories. That includes health, mental health, education, justice settings and other interface issues between levels of government. Once the royal commission commences, details of how and where to make submissions will be available on the commission's website, and I encourage all Australians to be involved if they feel led.

In the meantime, the government will continue to take significant steps to make sure that the services and the supports provided to people with disability adhere to strong quality and strong safeguards. This includes establishing the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, which is already operating in every state and territory except Western Australia, where it will commence operations from 1 July 2020. It is very important that people with disability and their families, carers and advocates know that during the royal commission they should continue to report any violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation to the appropriate authorities.

The total funding for this important inquiry is $527.9 million. Over half a billion dollars is being put forward to ensure that voices are heard and truth is achieved. This includes $102.2 million over three years allocated to the Department of Social Services to fund individual advocacy support and counselling services for people participating in and impacted by the royal commission. The government has consulted widely on the development of the terms of reference, including disability peak bodies, state and territory governments and members of the public. Indeed, the Prime Minister personally wrote to all premiers and chief ministers on 21 February this year seeking their in-principle agreement to establish the royal commission. The government also held an out-of-session meeting of the Disability Reform Council on 8 March this year to seek agreement to establish the royal commission.

Furthermore, the Department of Social Services ran a public consultation on the draft terms of reference from 13 to 28 March this year, closing at midnight on that later date. Targeted consultation was also undertaken with disability peak bodies and advocates and of course more widely with state and territory governments. The
government received over 3,700 responses to the online survey on the draft terms of reference. Thirty per cent of respondents were people with disability, which was pleasing to see; 96 per cent of respondents agreed that the terms of reference should cover all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with disability in all settings where they occur; and 95 per cent of people agreed that the terms of reference should look at all aspects of the quality and safety of services for people with disability.

This entire process has been done with the widest possible consultation, the widest possible support from state and territory governments and the full concurrence of the COAG Disability Reform Council. The Hon Ronald Sackville AO QC was appointed as the chair of the royal commission, supported by five other royal commissioners: Ms Barbara Bennett PSM, Dr Rhonda Galbally AC, Ms Andrea Mason OAM, Mr Alastair McEwin and the Hon John Ryan AM. Appointments of commissioners were made by the Governor-General based on recommendations from the Prime Minister. The government will continue to stand by these appointments, noting that this process has had significant and sustained consultation.

Mr Ryan and Ms Bennett were appointed because they have valuable contributions to make to the inquiry. Both commissioners have been recognised for their significant contribution to public service in their respective fields. To the extent that any commissioner's association with people with disability has the potential to be in conflict with an aspect under inquiry, the commissioner has processes in place to identify and manage that matter. I'll go into those processes shortly. I am confident that the royal commission will undertake its inquiry with diligence and the necessary impartiality for all those engaging with the commission. The panel of six commissioners was selected to represent a diverse range of backgrounds, including lived experience of disability, judicial and policy experiences and Indigenous leadership. In making these appointments the government sought recommendations from both the disability sector and state and territory governments. Again not only the formation of the royal commission and the establishment of its terms of references but the appointments of the commissioners were done with wide state and territory consultation, including with ministers that sit around the Disability Reform Council and/or their respective premiers or chief ministers.

At the time of the appointment of the royal commission each commissioner was required to disclose any conflicts or risks of conflicts to the official secretary and take any steps reasonably required by the office of the royal commissioner to resolve or deal with any conflicts as a condition of appointment. Indeed at a meeting of the royal commissioners on 19 June 2019 the issue of potential conflicts of interest was carefully and fully traversed by the commissioners. The commissioners declared their real, perceived and potential conflicts of interest to each other and there was a careful analysis of these declarations and a considered review of the potential impact each person's declaration may have on the conduct of meetings or hearings of the commission and the conduct of research and the formulation of recommendations and the times when it may be necessary for an individual commissioner to excuse themselves from participation in a particular issue or a component of an issue. Generally where individual commissioners have previously been engaged in a statutory or public sector position which intersected with the work or potential work of the commission then that intersection was clearly identified and noted and will be acted upon when and if such an issue arises at any time during the life of the commission.

It is important also to understand the current quality and safeguarding arrangements in place for people with disability, because the government is taking significant steps to make sure services and supports provided to people with disability adhere to the strongest quality and safeguards possible. This includes the establishment of the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, which has hit the ground running. All governments of all persuasions across this country remain committed to ensuring appropriate safeguards are in place. It is important to note that the NDIS commission is an independent statutory authority that works to improve the quality and safety of NDIS services and supports. The commission will register all providers, handle complaints, receive reportable instances, manage quality standards and enforce a code of conduct for NDIS providers and workers. As stated, the commission commenced operations in New South Wales and South Australia at 1 July last year and in the rest of the country from 1 July this year, except in WA, where it will start 1 July next year.

The government has put an enormous amount of thought into the royal commission, its terms of reference and commissioners. It has gone out of its way to embrace fully the reflections of states and territories, their respective disability ministers and respective Premiers and Chief Ministers. The Prime Minister has been personally involved in—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hogan): The debate is interrupted in accordance with standing order 43. The debate may be resumed at a later hour.
Mental Health

Mrs ELLIOT (Richmond) (13:30): I would like to raise the important issue of the urgent need for more support for young people to access mental health services in regional areas. According to Beyond Blue, half of all mental health issues develop before the age of 14, and 75 per cent develop before the age of 25. On top of this, one in seven people under the age of 17 are dealing with mental health conditions in any given year.

These statistics are staggering, and are why a young person in my electorate, Curtis Cloake of Byron Bay, has taken the initiative to start a Change.org petition calling for more support for young people to access mental health services in our regional areas. Curtis's petition is resonating with people right across the country and he has so far received more than 50,000 signatures. I'd like to commend Curtis for his strong advocacy in starting this very important campaign.

On behalf of Curtis, I have written directly to the Minister for Health about the issue and forwarded him Curtis's petition. I have also raised this issue with many of my Labor colleagues, including the shadow health minister. Labor has a strong history of supporting and expanding youth mental health services, particularly headspace.

We as a nation must do so much more, and I'm very proud of the outstanding efforts of Curtis in ensuring this issue is at the forefront of our national agenda. The fact is that we all have to work together to get more mental health services for our young people in regional areas. It's up to all of us in this parliament and indeed the community. We have to get to get together and get involved to make a real difference.

Whitford, Rachel APM

Mr VAN MANEN (Forde—Chief Government Whip) (13:31): I wish to reflect to acknowledge and reflect on the recent passing of a much-beloved member of our community, Rachel Whitford APM. Rachel was an amazing woman who dedicated her life to her family, her friends and her work and to the community of Logan. For many, Rachel was a trusted friend and someone to look to for help and support. For over 20 years she served the Logan community and devoted herself to a number of community organisations in a wide variety of roles. Her most significant contribution to the community would be her almost 22 years of service to the Queensland Police Service. In recognition of Rachel's service she was awarded the Australian Police Medal in the Queen's Birthday honours in 2012.

She was also branch manager of the Logan PCYC for many years, where she oversaw the delivery of vital programs to the youth of Logan. She also served as chairperson and board member of Access Community Services before going on to chair the board of Access Community Enterprises Limited and, most recently, as director of the board of Access Group International.

Her leadership and contribution to the community is a source of inspiration for those who have had the pleasure of meeting and working with her. Rachel was a truly selfless person who gave much of her time and energy to helping others and she will be sorely missed by her loved ones and by those who knew her.

Solomon Electorate: Dolly's Dream

Mr GOSLING (Solomon) (13:33): I recently attended an Australia Day Council lunch event in my electorate in Darwin where we heard from Kate and Tick Everett, who were the Northern Territory's Australia Day Local Heroes. Kate and Tick set up the not-for-profit Australian charity Dolly's Dream in memory of their daughter Dolly Everett, who, when aged 14, took her own life after an extended period of bullying and cyberbullying.

Dolly left behind her parents Tick and Kate and her sister Meg, who are now focused on raising awareness about the devastating impacts of bullying and cyberbullying, especially in schools and particularly in boarding schools. They want to encourage kids to 'Speak up, even if your voice shakes'—which was one of Dolly's favourite sayings. They are hoping that every school in Australia tackles the issue of bullying and tries harder to protect children in their care.

The NT government has partnered with Dolly's Dream, and together they will co-fund the rollout of eSmart Digital Licences for all NT grade 6 children, the implementation of the eSmart framework for 10 high-priority schools, and 100 Dolly's Dream Connect workshops in NT schools. I commend Kate and Tick and the work of Dolly's Dream to the House.

Wentworth Electorate: Darling Point Society

Mr SHARMA (Wentworth) (13:34): This past weekend I had the pleasure of attending the annual afternoon tea at historic Lindesay manor at Darling Point. Lindesay is the oldest surviving residence in Darling Point, dating from 1834. For a period it was occupied by Sir Thomas Mitchell, the Surveyor-General. The event was organised...
by the Darling Point Society, and is one of the most popular of their year. We were joined on the day by music
from Ascham Strings and by several Woollahra councillors.

The Darling Point Society does a first-rate job in consistently advocating for residents on issues in the area and
bringing the community together for regular social events. The society's stated mission is to ensure that the
concerted voice of residents is heard. It has earned a respected opinion at council. It expects accountability and
demands transparency. It aims to save what is iconic and what is valuable in one of the most densely populated,
olest and most historic areas of Sydney.

The society is ably served by its president, Charlotte Feldman, and its committee members: Gary Newton,
Robert Pompei, Harry Rich, Jillian Blackall, Rowena Hamilton, Jasmine Steele, Nerida Alyott, Jean-Marc
Feldman, Luisa Skene, Karen Olah and Lorraine Jones.

Our community is lucky to have a number of active and dedicated residents associations. The Darling Point
Society is among those who go above and beyond.

Hunter Electorate: Infrastructure

Mr FITZGIBBON (Hunter) (13:36): We all love our local ABC. I wake up to Newcastle ABC at three
minutes to six every morning to hear Dave Anderson's surf report, even though I don't go to the surf! The other
highlight for me is the traffic report from the local RMS representative. Every morning in the Hunter the traffic
report starts not in busy Newcastle but on the New England Highway just south of Singleton, where a roadblock
occurs every morning and every afternoon because of the economic activity driven by the coalmining industry.

When last in government, under the guidance of the member for Grayndler, we invested $1.7 billion on the
Hunter Expressway, an important project which has driven further economic growth. But our needs didn't finish
there. We need to end that traffic nightmare south of Singleton every morning and afternoon. We need a Singleton
bypass and we need an expanded highway between the Hunter Expressway and what will be the Singleton bypass.

For the last six years we've been absolutely let down by this government and the New South Wales
government. Tired of waiting for New South Wales, we promised $250 million to build that bypass by the
election, a commitment not matched by this Prime Minister. But it's time he showed some support for our
coalminers by investing in the area and removing that traffic roadblock.

Herbert Electorate: Employment

Mr THOMPSON (Herbert) (13:38): In Herbert—Townsville—the latest figures show the unemployment rate
of people aged 15 years-plus has fallen from 11.6 per cent in February 2017 to 7.1 per cent in June 2019, based on
12-month averages. The total number of people employed in Townsville has increased from 94,300 in February
2017 to 106,600 in June 2019. The youth unemployment rate in Townsville for people aged 15 to 24 years fell
from 22.4 per cent in September 2017 to 16.1 per cent in June 2019, based on 12-month averages.

The government's sound economic management in getting the budget back in the black, and infrastructure
investment, have helped to achieve this. Small and medium businesses are being given the help they need to
enable them to create employment opportunities but there's always more work to be done: these numbers are still
too high. Our role in government is to create a healthy environment so that small and medium businesses have the
opportunity to employ more people.

The Townsville City Deal is helping all levels of government work together to achieve great things for our
community while creating jobs. Six-hundred and ninety-one new positions will be created over the three-year
construction period of stage 2 of the Haughton pipeline, fully funded by the Commonwealth. (Time expired)

Jagajaga Electorate: Homelessness

Ms THWAITES (Jagajaga) (13:39): The community of West Heidelberg in Jagajaga are doing their bit to
tackle homelessness. Led by the indefatigable Brother Harry, they have rescued four local houses slated for
demolition and turned them into affordable housing. This will mean 14 disadvantaged people will have an
affordable place to stay. More than 60 people volunteered their time and worked on making sure that these houses
were liveable—renovating, doing plumbing, fixing the gardens. Olympic Adult Education took over the leases of
the properties from Banyule council and provided volunteers to help fix them up. Our well-known and well-loved
community group 3081 Angels donated baby clothes, kitchenware and other goods.

I want to thank and congratulate everyone involved in this project. They are truly showing what community
effort can achieve. You could say they are 'putting a positive spin on homelessness'—but they shouldn't have to.
The people of West Heidelberg deserve a federal government that is invested in tackling homelessness, a federal
government that is doing its fair share to invest in social housing. I'll be standing up for the people of West
Heidelberg and for people across Jagajaga who need affordable housing. Labor knows that secure housing is the
foundation for people to build better lives. Thank you again to everyone involved in this incredible community project.

Motor Neurone Disease

Mr VASTA (Bonner) (13:41): Taking on the ice bucket challenge in winter—the thought of it sends shivers down your spine, doesn't it? Recently, I put on a brave face and took part in the second annual Carindale Cougars' ice bucket challenge to raise money to find a cure for motor neurone disease. Carindale Cougars have been touched by this disease, and it was heartbreaking to hear of one family's struggle with the loss of their father and patriarch just three months following his diagnosis. It's a tragic story. Unfortunately, medical experts are still scratching their heads as to what causes MND and there is currently no known cure. It is fatal and it can affect any one at any time.

Alongside coaches, officials, players and parents, I took my turn in the hot seat—or, more appropriately, the cold seat!—and braved the ice bucket challenge. Three ice-cold buckets later and it was done. But it was nothing compared to what families and victims of this horrible disease endure. Last year's challenge raised $4,700. This year, the Carindale Cougars bettered that number by $1,300, raising a whopping $6,000 for motor neurone disease research. Bring on the 2020 ice bucket challenge—maybe not three icy cold buckets next time, though; I'll just stick to the one!

Mayo Electorate: Environment

Ms SHARKIE (Mayo) (13:42): The Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island have undergone extensive land and habitat clearance since European settlement. Less than 10 per cent of the vegetation is left. Our government is yet to adopt effective policies on climate change and so the leadership for action in this area has largely fallen to our local community environment groups, but they need ongoing funding in order to do their important work. For three years, I have been advocating for funding for community environment groups in Mayo—for example, for: Trees For Life to rehabilitate local waterways at Lions Park in Currency Creek and at the Meadows Creek reserve; for the Willunga Environment Centre to revegetate Aldinga Washpool, recognised by the government as a nationally important freshwater wetland; and for Conservation Volunteers Australia to plant native vegetation and put up nesting boxes to repopulate the western pygmy possum across the Fleurieu.

What's really fantastic is how young people and our schoolchildren, in particular, are getting involved in these environment programs. As the member for Mayo, I look forward to continue to advocate for and work with these and other community environment groups across my electorate. We have one of the most pristine and beautiful parts of Australia and we want to keep it that way.

Curious Minds Winter Camp

Mr PEARCE (Braddon) (13:43): Congratulations to Chelsea Brumby from Burnie High School and Zoe Chipman from Ulverstone High School, who recently attended the 2019 Curious Minds winter camp in Canberra. Representing the electorate of Braddon, the girls had the opportunity to pursue their passion for science, technology, engineering and mathematics—STEM—along with more than 60 other young women from all over Australia. As part of the program, Chelsea and Zoe received specialist coaching, attended lectures with industry experts, participated in interactive sessions and went out in the field undertaking STEM related activities.

Congratulations to all young people in Braddon who are pursuing their passion for STEM and to the hundreds of dedicated teachers in these fields who are supporting them. I want to encourage all people from the north-west coast, west coast and King Island in Tasmania with similar dreams to get involved. STEM skills are critically important for Braddon's current and future productivity. It's vital that our young people are equipped for whatever the future job market holds and STEM skills go a long way to helping with that.

Congratulations to the Morrison government for providing $2.35 million to continue and expand the Curious Minds program. This means more opportunities for young women in my region, like Chelsea and Zoe, to explore their interest in STEM.

Afghanistan

Mr HILL (Bruce) (13:45): August 19 this year is the 100th anniversary of Afghanistan reclaiming their independence from Britain, and 2019 is also the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Australia and Afghanistan. The signing of the Anglo-Afghan Treaty of 1919 heralded the beginning of mutual relations between Afghanistan and Britain, and this treaty followed three Anglo-Afghan wars between 1839 and 1919. Each conflict resulted in Britain relinquishing more and more of their power over Afghanistan. I saw an ironic reminder of this when I visited Kabul in 2016. The Afghans had positioned a cannon that they captured from retreating British forces, in 1919, right outside the military training academy in Qargha, which is currently run by the British—a
little sense of humour they had to walk past every day. The reclamation of Afghan independence should be celebrated as our region is stronger without unwelcome colonial interference.

This year also marks the 50th year of diplomatic relations between our two nations and we share a friendly and longstanding relationship traced back to the 1860s when Afghan cameleers came to Australia to assist explorers and industry. We're cooperating now on security matters with Australians serving in Afghanistan and we honour those who have sacrificed their lives. Development cooperation is growing, underpinned by people to people connections. I'm proud to represent thousands of people in my electorate with Afghan birth and heritage. We mark these milestones, and I believe we should deepen the friendship and cooperation between our two nations.

Robertson Electorate: Schools

Mrs WICKS (Robertson) (13:46): There are 50 outstanding schools in my electorate of Robertson on the Central Coast. It is always a privilege to visit them, as well as to host students from year 6 when they come to Canberra.

I rise today to encourage all 50 schools across my electorate to consider applying for funding under this government's new Local Schools Community Fund. It's a fantastic program, which will see up to $200,000 delivered to each electorate to help local schools with small but vital projects. Every school can apply for funding with a project between $1,000 and $20,000. Projects could include things like small extensions; landscaping; installation of shade structures, air-conditioning, playgrounds; sports equipment; the installation of new ICT equipment or software; musical instruments perhaps; or faculties for students with a disability.

Applications are now open and schools and P & Cs can apply through the SchoolsHub portal with applications closing on 30 September. I encourage all schools to get involved.

Once the applications are submitted we'll convene a local advisory committee. This process is very similar to the very successful Stronger Communities Program. I'm looking forward to seeing some great outcomes from this particular program too.

School leaders are best placed to know which projects will benefit their school community and students. The fund will allow them to pursue those projects that will make a huge difference. There are guidelines and eligibility requirements, and schools can expect to receive some further information over the coming days. I can't wait to see some of these important local projects come to life.

Macnamara Electorate: Albert Park Kinder

Mr BURNS (Macnamara) (13:48): Last Friday I visited Albert Park Kinder to visit my friend Jenny and all the brilliant educators at that centre. Albert Park Kinder is an outstanding local facility that is all about quality education and is one of a handful of such preschools with an excellent rating from the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority—the highest rating a service can achieve under the National Quality Framework.

This visit was extra special because we went on a walking tour to the Garden of Eden Nursery in Albert Park. It was there that the children taught me about the different plants, where to find them, how to take care of them and which ones we were going to take back and plant in the tree garden at the Albert Park Kinder.

Albert Park Kinder has been a brilliant community preschool in council facilities since 1948. Albert Park Kinder is also one of the many early education and childcare services offered in the City of Port Phillip which are currently under review of council run and owned facilities and services.

I stand with the Community Alliance of Port Phillip, and all concerned families, in supporting the value of these outstanding local early learning services. This is about the fair delivery of essential services open to all and they deserve to be spared from council cuts and privatisation. We are lucky to live in a state that values and invests in early childhood learning—free three-year-old kinder—even if our federal government won't. Now is the time for council to keep investing in our early education, just like Albert Park Kinder, and not to be closing them down, because our parents and our kids deserve nothing less.

Fisher Electorate

Mr WALLACE (Fisher) (13:49): The electorate of Fisher's greatest assets are its people and their passion for giving back to our community. I saw that passion at the recent endED Main Event, where more than 100 Sunshine Coast locals came to support Mark and Gayle Forbes and their pioneering charity. As thousands were raised through auctions and raffles, we heard an incredibly moving reading from Gayle and got an update on the progress of Australia's first residential facility for eating disorders, endED Butterfly House.

I saw the coast's community spirit again at the 30th Anniversary Grand Winter Ball for STEPS, a terrific Sunshine Coast organisation providing cutting-edge support for people living with disability all over Australia.
More than 550 tickets for this event sold out in just weeks, while 20 local businesses provided sponsorship helping to rise tens of thousands of vital dollars for this innovative charity.

Finally, I saw that spirit most movingly at the Gift of Music Concert for Kayleen. Coast music legend Barry Bull and his wife Kayleen had been organising a concert in support of childhood hearing impairment charity Hear and Say for the past three years, already raising more than $30,000. But after Kayleen sadly passed away last year during the event, Barry was determined to keep her work alive. One hundred and fifty locals shared in that tribute, raised thousands more for vulnerable children and showed, once again, that Fisher truly is a community of communities.

**Adelaide Electorate: Aged Care**

Mr GEORGANAS (Adelaide) (13:51): I rise to speak to an issue that many constituents have been contacting my electorate office about. I suspect many others around Australia have been contacting their MPs about it too—that is, the waiting time for home care packages for our elderly Australians who want to remain at home but need care to do so. I have heard stories in my electorate office from constituents who have been waiting up to two years, two whole years, for a package for home care.

What's happening is that these people are applying for packages and are then waiting for months on end to get them approved. But in many instances, once they're approved, people have been waiting for 18 months, a year, two years, before they're actually put in place. What does this mean? It means that those elderly Australians who've worked all their lives, who've paid their taxes and who now need a bit of help from the government are becoming frailer, sicker and ending up in nursing homes, costing the government many, many more dollars. This is a disgrace; it's not on. We should be looking after our elderly, giving them the dignity they require in their final years and we should be doing everything to provide these packages for these people. There is a list. We know the list is about 127,000 people across Australia and that list is blowing out every three months by 25,000. This is wrong. It is another example of this government not doing the right thing.

**Goldstein Electorate: Royal Brighton Yacht Club**

Mr TIM WILSON (Goldstein) (13:53): I would like to start by congratulating the mighty Royal Brighton Yacht Club for its Victorian sailing awards Yacht Club of the Year and sustainability awards. The club achievements included the Boot camp for Sailors program and sustainability measures to help protect the health of the bay by using reusable water bottles during the George Mac Regatta.

Neil Patterson was named Sailor of the Year with a Disability and received first place parasailer at Sail Melbourne last year and third place overall. Thomas Trotman was named male Sailor of the Year following his success in the 2018 WASZP European Championship in Lake Garda. Congratulations to both, as well as to Matty Goss, the Junior Sailor of the Year for the 2018-19 season.

Hats off to all the volunteers and staff who've contributed to royal Brighton Yacht Club's success as well as the general committee, who've made the club an outstanding success: my good friend, the Commodore, Paul Pascoe; Vice commodore, Peter Strain; Rear Commodore, Peter Coleman; Peter Demura; Paul Jenkins; Brett Heath; Cath Hurley; Jim Leckey; Marnie Irving; Niesje Hees; Steve Ingram. Thanks to each one of you as well as all the sailors young and old seeking to chart the waters of the great Port Phillip. Enjoy the beautiful bounty that sits around the Goldstein electorate, and encourage and inspire the next generation to huge success on our waterways and to take care of our environment.

**Newstart Allowance**

Mr DICK (Oxley) (13:54): When it comes to Newstart, our country has reached a tipping point, and, after six years of neglect and inaction, members of the government are starting to realise this. But unfortunately neither the Prime Minister nor the Treasurer seem to be listening.

The member for Monash, Senator Dean Smith, Senator Arthur Sinodinos, former Prime Minister John Howard and even the poor old member for New England have all gone on record saying that the rate of Newstart must be higher. Thirty-nine dollars and 83c a day—at the moment, that's all the government is willing to give people without a job to survive. Even the Business Council of Australia's CEO, Jennifer Westacott, agrees.

One million Australians rely on Newstart. On average, people are on Newstart for three years, and over 358,000 Australians have been on the payment for more than two years. There are over 183,000 people over 55 who are on Newstart. We need to recognise that it is incredibly difficult for many people who have been retrenched to get another job quickly. This is just another sign of the weakness of the economy under this government. And, as the Prime Minister so famously says, if they want to have a go, they should get a go. So we call on the Prime Minister and the Treasurer to do the right thing and give these people the dignity they deserve and the chance to have a go by increasing the Newstart rate. It's time the government increased Newstart.
**Building Better Regions Fund: Great Southern Centre for Outdoor Recreation Excellence**

Mr RICK WILSON (O'Connor) (13:56): I rise to update the House on an exciting project that our government's Building Better Regions Fund is delivering in my electorate of O'Connor. The Great Southern Centre for Outdoor Recreation Excellence, or GSCORE, has received federal funding to help it deliver a trail master plan and school camp activities in the Great Southern region of Western Australia. GSCORE received more than $129,000 from the Building Better Regions Fund to help develop infrastructure for the Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan and $20,000 for Great Southern Learning Adventures. The trails master plan will identify a coherent and clearly outlined program of trail infrastructure development across the Great Southern region over the next 10 years. GSCORE's goal is to develop and maintain a network of trails with outdoor recreational elements to promote a healthy community and make the Great Southern a world-class trails destination. GSCORE's master plan will focus on a range of interconnected active leisure trails suited to different user groups, including land-based, aquatic, heritage and cultural trails. This trails master plan will complement other projects being pursued to boost tourism, cultural awareness and active leisure activities in the Great Southern.

The City of Albany is also in the process of establishing a network of mountain-bike trails in and around the city, with a view to becoming one of Australia's primary mountain-biking destinations, a project which has my full support. I commend both GSCORE and the City of Albany on these projects and their endeavours to enhance our regional community and to help tourists and locals more fully appreciate the natural beauty of the Great Southern.

**Taxation**

Dr LEIGH (Fenner) (13:57): Australians are rightly concerned about multinational tax avoidance. They want a crackdown on tax havens and profit shifting. But what do they get instead? They get Senator Cormann, who received free flights from Helloworld, a company headed by Andrew Burnes, the former Liberal Party federal treasurer, and a company that received a contract to provide travel management services to the Commonwealth in 2015. They get the member for Hume, who co-founded a company located in the Cayman Islands, a notorious tax haven. It's called Eastern Australia Irrigation, and its headquarters is, to be fair, a long way east of Australia—16,000 kilometres, to be exact. They get the member for Fadden, who organised for the firm Shac Communications to donate $112,000 to the LNP's Fadden Forum before the firm went bust owing $129,000 to the tax office. When he was asked why the LNP should get money before the ATO, the member replied, 'The Fadden Forum does not exist.'

The Liberals were the party of the 1980s bottom-of-the-harbour schemes. Today, they're the party that fought a banking royal commission, tried to undermine the Future of Financial Advice reforms and wound back tax transparency. If only this government were as tough on tax havens as they are on welfare recipients, asylum seekers and pensioners! This mob aren't a meritocracy; they're a mateocracy.

The SPEAKER: It's not quite 2 o'clock. If anyone wants to make half a 90-second statement they're welcome to; otherwise, we'll just wait for people to take their seats—if members who are standing could take their seats as quickly as possible. In accordance with standing order 43, the time for members' statements has concluded.

**QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**

**Newstart Allowance**

Ms BIRD (Cunningham) (14:00): My question is to the Prime Minister. Could the Prime Minister live on the Newstart rate of $40 a day?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (14:00): I thank the member for her question. For all of those who are on Newstart or many of the other welfare payments that are provided to them by the taxpayer, those payments are certainly modest. Those payments are indexed every six months, along with every other welfare payment. The Australian public provides that support. But the most important support that is provided by this government is to ensure that people can get off welfare and into work. This government has set records both for youth unemployment and getting people into jobs, people right across the spectrum—older Australians, younger Australians, female Australians—getting them into work. Because the best form of welfare—

Government members: Is a job!

The SPEAKER: The Manager of Opposition Business on a point of order?

Mr Burke: On direct relevance. It ought not to be the case in a question like this that anything about Newstart is instantly in order. The Prime Minister has strayed well away. There has been no reference whatsoever from the Prime Minister as to whether or not he could live on the amount—no reference at all.
The SPEAKER: I have been listening very carefully to the Prime Minister. I have listened to the Manager of Opposition Business. Whilst I believe the Prime Minister is the being directly relevant, as the standing order provides, it doesn't surprise me that he's raised a point of order, because there have been a series of these. I have been reflecting on this matter. As I said the other day—I also said I didn't want to detain the House for too long—but I feel I now should, at the start of a sitting week.

In reviewing direct relevance, which the Leader of the Opposition well knows came in in 2010—he knows very well indeed, but I won't go to all of that—various speakers have had to navigate this. I think I'm navigating it consistently, providing the answer is on the policy topic. I did look at a ruling from former Speaker Harry Jenkins, which I think does sum it up pretty well. I will read it to the House. This is when there was a series of points of order—actually, there would have been one point of order, because the rule was changed—relating to former Prime Minister Gillard's answer. Speaker Jenkins summed this up as best he could when he said, 'I believe so far she's been directly relevant, if not giving a direct answer.' They are different things. The standing orders demand direct relevance. He then went on, as I think the Leader of the Opposition would remember, to say that if there were going to be any other changes the procedure committee needed to look at it et cetera.

But I think that's the principle I'm sticking with. If the Prime Minister strays on to another policy topic, you will be sure that I'll act very quickly to ensure he doesn't. On the point of order, the Leader of the Opposition?

Mr Albanese: To be fair, when former Speaker Jenkins was making that ruling I doubt very much whether he was giving a ruling on the basis of a 12-word question.

The SPEAKER: Yes, I think that's—

Mr Albanese: We are asking one-line questions. That didn't happen in 2010.

The SPEAKER: No. I think the Leader of the Opposition actually does make a reasonable point there. I have reviewed the question. The question at that time was a question about climate change, as members would appreciate. However, in relation to the standing order for direct relevance, whilst a tighter question obviously demands a tighter answer, where a question simply demands a yes-no answer, which that really does, you're entitled to ask them, but you're not entitled to demand they be answered in that way. I'm listening to the Prime Minister. He's being directly relevant.

Mr MORRISON: The best form of welfare is a job. That's what those on this side of the House believe, and I believe that's what Australians believe. I want to commend all of those Australians who are on Newstart now who are looking for a job. Our government will not rest until we get all of them into jobs, because that's the pledge we made at the last election: 1¼ million new jobs over the next five years. That comes on the back of 1.3 million jobs created since we first came to government.

I'm asked about the rate of Newstart. $555 a fortnight. But, on average, an additional $130.50 is paid per fortnight to Newstart recipients, and some 99 per cent, I am advised, actually receive payments over and above Newstart. I'll tell you what I won't do when it comes to Newstart in this place: I will not engage in the unfunded empathy of the Labor Party. I will not go out as the Labor Party did at the last election, pretending they're going to do something about Newstart but not telling Australians how much they're going to increase it by, how much that is going to cost and how they are going to pay for it. I won't do that. Our government has set priorities on investing in health, in schools, on education, on mental health, on combating the terrible curse of suicide in our country and on supporting our veterans. We have made those choices about priorities rather than increasing the size of the welfare budget.

At the last election, the Labor Party came up with $387 billion of higher taxes, and they still couldn't come up with a way to fund an increase in the Newstart allowance. I will not allow the Labor opposition to go out and make all sorts of promises to Australians about Newstart when they have no intention of funding it and no intention of backing it up with a real policy.

Internet Content

Dr ALLEN (Higgins) (14:06): My question is to the Prime Minister. Will the Prime Minister inform the House how the Morrison government is on the side of Australian families by acting to shut down online child exploitation?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (14:07): I thank the member for Higgins for that question. We are on the side of Australians, as the member for Higgins is. I congratulate her on her first speech in this place. We're on the side of Australians on a whole range of issues. We're on the side of Australians who want to keep more of what they earn. We're on the side of Australians in rural and regional Australia who wanted their drought fund and who wanted to ensure that their roads are safer. Our $100 billion
worth of infrastructure is an investment in a whole range of projects, including keeping our rural and regional roads safer.

We're standing up to those big tech companies who have such an important role to play in keeping our children safe online and combating sexual predators online. Right now, our Minister for Home Affairs, who is absent from the House today—he's being represented by the Attorney-General in this place—is overseas in the UK working with our partner agencies overseas to crack down on child exploitation. We have the Combatting Child Sexual Exploitation Legislation Amendment Bill 2019, which has been introduced into this place, which takes action, backed up by increased resources for the AFP and others, on keeping our children safe. We also have to ensure that we take on the big internet companies and make sure that the internet is not weaponised for sexual predators any more than it's weaponised by terrorists. At the recent G20 event in Osaka, the G20 members agreed to take this issue on, on Australia's recommendation. And that work continues here in this country as a result of acting on our taskforce report, as it does working with other jurisdictions to make sure we crack down on them.

Our government is committed to the Australian people and taking on the issues that they are focused on. They are focused on trying to keep their children safe, whether it's online or in the physical world. They do want to keep more of what they earn. They do want to have access to a stronger economy and to more affordable medicines. They do want to get the best deal out of their energy companies and make sure that this parliament keeps those energy companies to account with the legislation that will come before this House that the Labor Party opposes. They want their workplaces to be kept on their side, to not be disrupted by militant unionists and to not have their workers' entitlement funds siphoned off by unions and taken off to any which other form of expense they would have it.

Politics today—and I believe it always has—is not about getting people to be on your side; it's about a government that demonstrates that it's on the side of the Australian people each and every time. That's what our government is doing. Nobody knows where the Labor Party stands anymore and whose side they're on other than militant unions.

**Workplace Relations**

Dr CHALMERS (Rankin) (14:10): My question is to the Treasurer. Why does the government support cutting penalty rates when the Reserve Bank says that stagnant wages are a key contributor to slowing growth in the economy?

Mr FRYDENBERG (Kooyong—The Treasurer) (14:10): We don't support cutting penalty rates, but we do support an independent arbiter. It's taken 53 questions from those opposite for the member for Rankin to get a question to the Treasurer. Now, the inconvenient truth for those opposite is that when we came to government in 2013 unemployment was at 5.7 per cent. Today I can inform the House that it's at 5.2 per cent. Under Labor, the number of unemployed people increased by around 220,000 people. It's an inconvenient truth for the member for Rankin that when Labor was last in office those on a minimum wage were hit by real wage cuts in three out of six years. And in every year that we've been in government, the minimum wage has gone up. When Labor was last in government, in three out of six years the minimum wage was cut.

In terms of the growth in the national wages bill, which is otherwise known as the compensation of employees, it's 4.3 per cent higher through the year. This compares to 3.2 per cent when Labor was last in office. And, finally, the member for Rankin refers to the Reserve Bank of Australia. Now, in their statement on monetary policy in May of this year, they said:

Some recovery in income growth is likely, because employment growth is expected to remain solid, wages are expected to increase and the tax offset for low- and middle-income taxpayers is set to come into effect in the second half of this year.

That is from the Reserve Bank of Australia. The inconvenient truth for those opposite is that when they were last in government unemployment was higher and more people lost a job. Under us, we're cutting taxes and creating more jobs.

**Road Safety**

Mr LLEW O'BRIEN (Wide Bay) (14:12): My question is to the Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development. Will the Deputy Prime Minister update the House on how the Morrison government is on the side of regional communities who want roads to be safer, particularly in the electorate of Wide Bay?

Mr McCORMACK (Riverina—Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development and Leader of The Nationals) (14:12): I thank the member for Wide Bay for his question. He is a good member—a member who puts road safety front and centre of many of the things that he does.

*Opposition members interjecting*
Mr McCormack: Just be quiet! You need to listen to this; you really do. We're talking road safety. There's no need to yell out when we're talking road safety, and I'm going to try and do it in a bipartisan fashion. If you want to carry on like that, I won't be bipartisan!

I can well recall that on 23 April 2018, when I stood beside the member for Wide Bay at a press conference announcing the $800 million for section D of the Bruce Highway—a highway that is having a $10 billion spend on it for road safety upgrades and for upgrades in general—the member for Wide Bay was quite emotional. And I'll tell you why he was quite emotional: it was because before he came to parliament, as a police officer he spent far too many nights doing that unfortunate death knock to tell a family that their loved one was not coming home. And that is—why are you shaking your head, Member for Barton? This is just unbelievable. This is truly unbelievable! I'm talking about a death knock; I'm talking about road safety. I mean, seriously!

Australia has entered the age of infrastructure. We are spending money on important road safety upgrades—$10 billion in making Queensland's Bruce Highway safer, because one crash, one fatality, one injury is one too many, and the member for Wide Bay knows that better than anyone as a former police officer. And we've brought forward funding for works on the $1 billion section D project. It will bypass the town of Gympie.

Here's the bipartisanship, and I know the Leader of the Opposition knows this all too well as well. He committed as well to road safety upgrades for the Bruce. Successive governments have put in place upgrades on that road. There's been a 31 per cent reduction in crashes, a 32 per cent reduction in fatalities and a 28 per cent reduction in injuries. Hopefully, the good police officers from Wide Bay and elsewhere won't have to do those terrible early-morning or late-night knocks on the doors of families to tell them that their loved ones are not coming home.

As part of the 2 April budget, we established the Office of Road Safety to provide greater leadership—national leadership and coordination of road safety efforts at an Australia-wide level. The office was a recommendation following the inquiry into the National Road Safety Strategy 2011-20, and through this strategy the government and the states and territories have a goal of reducing the number of deaths and serious injuries on our roads by at least 30 per cent by 2020 as we work towards Vision Zero, because that is the ultimate aim of any road safety measure.

Workplace Relations

Mr Albanese (Grayndler—Leader of the Opposition) (14:15): My question is addressed to the Treasurer, and I refer to his previous answer. Is annual wages growth now better or worse than when the government came to office?

Mr Frydenberg (Kooyong—The Treasurer) (14:16): Two point three per cent is the wages price index, and wages continue to go up.

Law Enforcement

Mr Bandt (Melbourne) (14:16): My question is to the Prime Minister. Reports have emerged that a wanted criminal wasn't arrested when he first landed in Australia and that his plane was recently searched on the tarmac but allowed to leave the country, even though an Interpol notice was in force. It's also been reported that he, in fact, got money and special treatment from Crown Casino and that ministers have lobbied Home Affairs to ensure that high rollers can fly into the country and drive to Crown Casino with a minimal amount of clearances. Can you assure the House that none of your ministers lobbied Home Affairs or its agencies on behalf of Crown Casino, which would breach your ministerial code of conduct, and can you also guarantee that no Home Affairs officials have acted improperly in these matters?

Mr Morrison (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (14:17): I thank the member for Melbourne for his question. It is a very serious topic, and it deals with the integrity not only of our gaming industry but of issues that go to law enforcement and border protection in this country. I welcome the member for Melbourne's interest in this topic.

Our government takes allegations of illegal activity very seriously. Everyone is required to abide by Australian law, and that includes casino operators, public officials, and all visitors to our country. Our law enforcement agencies are working hard to disrupt and deter criminal groups by collecting evidence and intelligence about financially motivated crime. While I can't go into the details of that—for obvious reasons, which would be known to the member—these efforts are ongoing and will continue.

In relation to the specific matters that were raised by the member, there has been nothing presented to me that would indicate there are any matters there for me to address.
Ms HAMMOND (Curtin) (14:18): My question is to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer please update the House on the ACCC's report on digital platforms and how the Morrison government is on the side of Australians to ensure that they get a better deal?

Mr FRYDENBERG (Kooyong—The Treasurer) (14:18): I thank the member for Curtin and congratulate her on an outstanding maiden speech in this parliament. She brings to this place a couple of decades of experience in academia, and that will be put to good use here.

The member for Curtin, like others in this place, is aware that the member for Bradfield and I released last Friday the ACCC's groundbreaking report into digital platforms. It followed an 18-month inquiry which was initiated by the then Treasurer, now Prime Minister, into the social media and search engine giants—in particular Google and Facebook. The ACCC used their compulsory powers to acquire information to look into the impact that the concentration in that market and the market power of those particular companies were having on consumer outcomes. There were 23 recommendations across consumer outcomes, competition outcomes and a more level playing field for traditional media businesses. It has to be understood that both Google and Facebook are among not only the most valuable companies in the world but also the most powerful, and they are absolutely ubiquitous across our economy and our society. In fact, Google has a 95 per cent market share of online search, and more than 17 million Australians log on to Facebook every month. And of every $100 in online advertising, excluding classifieds, $47 is spent with Google and $24 with Facebook.

The government accepts the overriding conclusion of the ACCC that there needs to be reform in this area—that these companies need to be held to account and their activities need to be more transparent—so the government will conduct a 12-week consultation period with key stakeholders before providing its final response before the end of the year. These recommendations refer to unfair contract terms; changing the merger laws; and setting up a digital markets branch within the ACCC and a code of conduct which would need to be approved by the regulators, which would create more transparency and a fairer deal between traditional media businesses and Google and Facebook, as well as an ombudsman's scheme that will help resolve disputes.

We understand that Australians need to be protected. Their interests need to be protected in this age of digital disruption, and this groundbreaking, world-first report provides a pathway forward for us.

Royal Commission into Misconduct in the Banking, Superannuation and Financial Services Industry

Dr CHALMERS (Rankin) (14:21): My question is to the Treasurer. How many of the 76 recommendations from the banking royal commission has the government fully implemented?

Mr FRYDENBERG (Kooyong—The Treasurer) (14:21): I can inform the House that we've already legislated recommendation 3.6, which will prohibit superannuation funds inducing employees. We've already recommended and legislated through this parliament recommendation 3.7, which introduces civil penalties for trustees and directors of super funds. We've already introduced and passed regulations which extend AFCA's remit for financial complaints back to 2008. We've already passed regulations to ensure greater cooperation with AFCA, and legislated product intervention powers about the design and the distribution obligations for ASIC. We've agreed with the states and territories to develop a national approach to farm debt mediation. We announced that Graeme Samuel would chair a review into APRA, and we've actually accepted the recommendations from that APRA review.

We've announced in the budget $649 million of extra funding for ASIC and APRA, which is a 25 to 30 per cent increase. We're extending the jurisdiction of the Federal Court to include a criminal jurisdiction. And the list goes on. We have—

Honourable members interjecting—

Mr FRYDENBERG: There were 76 recommendations. The other side are a complete joke. They took 22 days to respond. We took four days, and we're getting on with the job of legislating and passing regulations and doing it carefully, so that no mistakes are made. This is a critically important area. When it comes to an organisation like APRA, in Labor's last year in office, funding actually decreased, rather than increasing. Funding under us is now at a record level. We have passed legislation and passed regulations, and we are getting on with the job of protecting Australian consumers.

The SPEAKER: This looks dangerous! The member for Rankin is seeking to table a document?

Dr Chalmers: I ask that the Treasurer table the list that goes on and on and on.
Mr TIM WILSON (Goldstein) (14:24): My question is to the Minister for Housing and Assistant Treasurer. Will the minister outline to the House how the Morrison government is ensuring multinationals, including digital platforms, are paying their fair share of tax in order to fund vital services and infrastructure that everyday Australians deserve?

Mr SUKKAR (Deakin—Assistant Treasurer and Minister for Housing) (14:24): Can I particularly thank the member for Goldstein for his question. Can I say that the Morrison government is a government that absolutely believes in lower taxes and, importantly, it believes in a tax system with integrity. We have shown, time and time again, that we are determined to ensure that multinationals, including those on digital platforms, pay the right amount of tax in Australia, to help fund the essential services that Australians deserve and require. That's why we have consistently taken action to close loopholes and, importantly, to ensure that the ATO is resourced and has the tools required to detect tax avoidance.

Since the Tax Avoidance Taskforce was set up in 2016—a big moment for this parliament—an extra $13½ billion has flowed into the Australian revenue system. We have a lot of new members in this parliament. If somebody proposed legislation that was going to raise an extra $13½ billion to be spent on Australian schools, roads and infrastructure, from multinational corporations, to be spent in this country, do you think you'd support that legislation?

Mr SUKKAR: Undoubtedly, you would support legislation that somebody said would raise $13½ billion extra. But guess what? I can tell all those new members of this House: the Labor Party voted against it. And, believe it or not, to get that legislation passed, we relied on the Greens. The Greens showed more economic sense than the Labor Party in supporting our multinational anti-avoidance laws, which have raised $13½ billion. But it gets worse—you'd think the Labor Party would learn their lesson—so that's $253 million. So that's $253 million via GST, which is funding schools and hospitals, collected from foreign digital platforms, is now being spent—and funding essential services in Australia. Guess what? The Labor Party didn't support that either. Can you believe that the Labor Party—(Time expired)

Ms BUTLER (Griffith) (14:28): My question is to the Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction. I refer to the minister's earlier answer claiming that a letter from farm organisations, dated 3 October 2017, proves he was making constituent representations when he sought a meeting with the Department of the Environment and Energy six months prior. How could the minister seek a meeting as a result of a letter that didn't exist until six months later?

Mr SUKKAR: Mr Husic interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Member for Chifley.

Mr SUKKAR: Undoubtedly, you would support legislation that somebody said would raise $13½ billion extra. But guess what? I can tell all those new members of this House: the Labor Party voted against it. And, believe it or not, to get that legislation passed, we relied on the Greens. The Greens showed more economic sense than the Labor Party in supporting our multinational anti-avoidance laws, which have raised $13½ billion. But it gets worse—you'd think the Labor Party would learn their lesson—we proposed to ensure that foreign digital platforms that were selling low-value goods into Australia collected and paid GST, to level the playing field for Australian businesses that were competing against it. That law, I can report to the House, in the first three-quarters of the first year that it has been in place, has raised $253 million. So that's $253 million via GST, which is funding schools and hospitals, collected from foreign digital platforms, is now being spent—and funding essential services in Australia. Guess what? The Labor Party didn't support that either. Can you believe that the Labor Party—(Time expired)
the great industries that has been the backbone of this country for so long. I will stand up for farmers every day in this place. That's what we do on this side of the House.

Energy

Ms FLINT (Boothby—Government Whip) (14:30): My question is to the Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction. Will the minister update the House on how the Morrison government is on the side of Australians, who deserve a better deal from big energy companies?

Mr TAYLOR (Hume—Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction) (14:31): I thank the honourable member for her question and for her strong focus on a fair deal for energy for the people in her electorate, because on this side of the House we are focused on lowering energy prices and ensuring the reliability of the power grid. That's why from 2 July we've seen the introduction of the retailer reliability obligation. That means that the big energy companies have to have supply in place to meet their customers' needs years ahead of time. It's also why we've created our program to underwrite new, reliable generation in the market, pushing power prices down and keeping the lights on.

It's simply not enough to have power when the sun is shining and the wind is blowing. We need it 365 days a year, 24 hours a day, and that's why we're sharply focused on keeping our existing coal and gas generation in the market running at full tilt. I'm pleased to say that we will be bringing forward later this year the big stick legislation that those opposite have voted against 13 times in this parliament. This legislation is vital to ensuring that we have another tool in the toolkit to maintain supply in the market and drive prices down. We saw in 2016, as a result of the reckless targets of the Victorian Labor government, the exit of the Hazelwood Power Station, and the mere announcement of that exit saw a doubling of wholesale prices in Victoria. Since then we've seen in Victoria, as a result of the exit of Hazelwood, prices hiking and lights going out. Two hundred thousand Victorian households and businesses lost their power last summer.

Despite the clear failure of that policy and a similar policy from the previous South Australian Labor government, those opposite want to roll this policy out nationally. During the last election, we saw independent modelling telling us that doing so would double the wholesale prices of electricity and triple the price of gas. We on this side of the House sit on the side of a fair deal for the hardworking small businesses and households of Australia.

Mr Brian Mitchell interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Lyons is always a contender for 94(a), can I say. He's warned.

Energy

Ms BUTLER (Griffith) (14:34): My question is to the Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction. I refer to the minister's earlier answers. Will the minister table any correspondence about the grasslands listing from constituents received prior to his meeting with the Department of the Environment and Energy in March 2017?

Mr TAYLOR (Hume—Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction) (14:34): I've already made a comprehensive and detailed statement in the House, earlier today. I tell you: the frustration of the farmers with this listing was clear in 2014, in a table that I documented earlier today as part of that comprehensive statement. The National Farmers Federation—

The SPEAKER: The minister will resume his seat for a second. The Leader of the Opposition, on a point of order.

Mr Albanese: It goes to relevance. We've got the letter in 2014. This is about any constituent correspondence; any at all will do. Was there a single person who wrote to him about this prior to the meeting?

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat.

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Members will cease interjecting. I'll just make a couple of points from the Practice that are relevant for the Leader of the Opposition—even for the question that was asked, I have to say. The Practice makes very clear that questions can elicit a yes/no answer, and that's a classic example of it, but that that can't be demanded of the minister. I'm listening to the minister. He's not 30 seconds into his answer yet. If you need me to pull out the page of the Practice, I will, but it's very clear in there. There's a long history of questions inviting a yes or no answer. Invite as you may, you can't demand a yes or no. I need to listen to the minister to check that he's being relevant. I appreciate the question. Obviously there are other sections of the Practice that relate to not identifying constituents, but we're not at that point. The Leader of the House, on a point of order.
Mr Porter: In addition to that, it must have been the case that any correspondence or any oral representations went not in the position as a minister. They went from constituents to a member of parliament. At that stage, he did not have ministerial responsibility.

Ms Bird interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Cunningham is warned! I'm sorry, Leader of the House, could you just repeat that last bit?

Mr Porter: The representations that went from constituents did not go to the member in his capacity as a minister, because he didn't have the relevant portfolio. They went in his capacity as a member of parliament representing on a local issue.

The SPEAKER: I'll hear from the Manager of Opposition Business on that point of order.

Mr Burke: On that point: the question begins by referring to the minister's earlier answers. Whether it's relevant to someone's current portfolio or not, once they have made a statement while in the current portfolio we are allowed to question that statement, which is specifically referred to both in your own rulings and in the Practice.

The SPEAKER: I'll hear from the Leader of the House.

Mr Porter: That relies on some previous reference by the minister to earlier correspondence. I certainly don't recall such a thing having occurred.

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Do members on my left wish me to actually address the point of order or just watch them interject for 15 seconds? I've listened to both the Leader of the House and the Manager of Opposition Business. The point the Manager of Opposition Business made is right, and I've ruled that way several times: a minister can't be questioned about any of their previous portfolio responsibilities until such time as they address them, and once that's been done—that's why questions do refer to a minister's previous answers. I've ruled numerous times in accordance with those precedents. I think it's fine for the question to be asked. Obviously, the manner in which it's been asked is a matter for the minister in how he seeks to deal with that.

Mr TAYLOR: In my statement earlier today in the House, I said that in late 2016 and early 2017 I spoke with farmers from Boorowa and Goulburn, in my electorate, and Yass, which had been in Hume until mid-2016, about this listing and their concerns about the listing.

Mr Albanese interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Can I get the minister to pause for a second. This is precisely why I wanted to hear the minister. He is being directly relevant to the question. Unless you let me listen to him, I can't make that judgement. He is being directly relevant to the question.

Mr TAYLOR: On 21 February 2017 I spoke with a farmer near Yass who expressed strong and detailed concerns about the proposed adjustment to the listing, pointing out that it had occurred despite the concerns of the National Farmers Federation and the NSW Farmers Association and with little consultation with the farmers themselves. A letter from the National Farmers Federation to the department back in 2014 typified and laid out very clearly the frustration of the farm sector in response to the proposed adjustment to listing under the EPBC Act. They made it very clear that the evidence supporting the listing is not sufficiently robust. This was of deep concern to farmers across my electorate and across the region. I stood up for them, and the member for Eden-Monaro failed to do what he should have done.

Internet Content

Mr PEARCE (Braddon) (14:40): My question is to the Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts. Will the minister update the House on how the Morrison government is on the side of Australian families who want to keep their children safe online?

Mr FLETCHER (Bradfield—Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts) (14:41): I thank the member for Braddon and congratulate him on his very strong first speech last week. He is a member with a strong interest in keeping Australians safe online, and he is on the side of the Australian people when it comes to keeping Australians safe online, particularly when comes to keeping children safe online.

The Australian people know that the internet has brought huge benefits, but they are equally concerned about children being exposed to cyberbullying, about children being exposed to abhorrent, violent or pornographic material online and about how we can keep children and older Australians, indeed all Australians, safe online. Australians expect that the law will apply to maintain public safety when people interact in the physical town square, and they also expect that the law will apply when people interact in the digital town square. That is the
Morrison government's expectation of social media platforms, of search engines and of websites, whether hosted in Australia or around the world. If your services are accessed by Australians, you must comply with Australian law.

Our Liberal-National government has a very strong track record when it comes to the question of online safety. In 2015, we established the office of the world's first Children's eSafety Commissioner. We legislated a takedown regime for cyberbullying material directed at Australian children. In 2017, we expanded the eSafety commissioner's remit to include all Australians. We introduced a civil penalty regime for image based abuse online. We have a strong track record, and we have strong plans for further reforms to help keep Australians safe online, including introducing a new online safety act, adopting an online safety charter setting out our clear expectations and holding digital platforms to account through the recommendations of our task force to combat terrorism and extreme, violent material online.

So we have a strong track record, we have a strong plan and we have strong expectations of social media platforms when it comes to keeping Australians safe online, because we are on the side of Australian families who want their children and all Australians to be safe online.

**Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction**

**Ms BUTLER** (Griffith) (14:43): My question is again to the Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction. I refer to the minister's earlier answers. Did the minister receive a single letter from any constituent about the grasslands listing prior to the meeting with the Department of the Environment and Energy in March 2017?

**Mr Porter:** The member is relying on previous answers to ask that question, and the minister has just noted that, in his answers and statement, there is no reference to correspondence. What the member is seeking to have tabled is unanswerable.

**The SPEAKER:** I just have to say to the Leader of the House that, whilst he may be factually right, that doesn't prevent the question being asked. It's not an identical question. The only problem would be if it were an identical question, and it's not. The minister has the call.

**Mr TAYLOR** (Hume—Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction) (14:44): Whilst their questions may not be identical, I clearly answered this question in my previous answer. I said in my statement earlier today that, in late 2016 to 2017, I spoke with a series of farmers across my electorate and elsewhere about the concerns they had, and they pointed me to the 2014 submission from the National Farmers' Federation. And I go on in this letter—this letter is important because it captured the concerns of the farmers. It said, 'Based on the information provided, in the NFF's view it is highly unlikely that an individual farmer would be able to assess their responsibilities under the EPBC.' So this is a listing where the farmers were in a situation where they were not able to assess whether efficient pasture improvement and weed management could, indeed, be compliant. That is a very real concern for people who farm, and we understand farming on this side of the House. But I think what those opposite are actually suggesting is that farmers should be named, and there is a very important piece of legislation going in front of this parliament in the coming weeks where there is an opportunity for you to decide whether naming farmers in the face of activism should be permitted.

**The SPEAKER:** The Leader of the Opposition is seeking to make a point of order, but, as the answer is over, we'll move on.

**Internet Content**

**Mrs WICKS** (Robertson) (14:46): My question is to the Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts. Will the minister outline how the government is demonstrating it's on the side of Australians who want to protect their families from exposure to extremist content online?

**Mr FLETCHER** (Bradfield—Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts) (14:47): I thank the member for Robertson, who has a strong interest and, indeed, strong expertise in keeping Australians safe online. Like me, she's a former telecommunications executive. I was at Optus; she was at Telstra, but I'm delighted to now be on the same team as the member for Robertson. The member for Robertson shares the concerns of all on this side of the House—indeed, I would suggest of all on all sides of the House—about the online streaming of violent material, of extremist content online.

On 15 March we saw an appalling terrorist attack on two Christchurch mosques, which took 51 innocent lives and, appallingly, it was live streamed, magnifying the horror and reach of this attack. The Morrison government acted very swiftly and strongly to prevent social media platforms being used to facilitate the spread of this abhorrent content. We did that because we are on the side of Australian families, who are determined to keep their children safe online.
Prime Minister Morrison took a very strong leadership position not just in Australia but globally. Our Morrison government will not be letting up on this issue. On 30 March, the Prime Minister established a task force with representatives from major social media platforms, including Facebook, Google, Twitter, Microsoft and Amazon, as well as a range of leading internet service providers. The Prime Minister drew international attention to this issue at the recent G20 meeting in Osaka, successfully garnering the support of global leaders to secure a statement from the G20 Leaders’ Summit, which was a show of unity in the fight against terrorist and extreme violent content online. That is very much about very clearly stating our expectations of the social media platforms. We moved to legislate so that internet and hosting service providers are required to report and remove such material, and the penalty for failing to remove such content expeditiously is up to 10 per cent of the annual turnover of the company.

On 30 June, I joined with the Prime Minister to release the task force consensus report, laying out nine action areas and 29 recommendations, such as appropriate checks on live streaming. We will expect the global digital platforms to give us serious and meaningful plans in line with their commitments. We're determined to pursue this matter. We are not letting up. We are on the side of Australian families when it comes to keeping them safe online.

Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction

Ms BUTLER (Griffith) (14:50): My question is to the Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction. I refer to the minister's previous answers. Is it just a coincidence that the consultant who gave the go-ahead to spray critically endangered grasslands on the minister's land also advised the authors of the letter about so-called problems with the listing?

Mr TAYLOR (Hume—Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction) (14:50): I've already made a comprehensive and detailed statement to the House earlier today, where I made clear that my focus in my work as the member for Hume was the technical aspects of the listing and ensuring that farmers get a fair deal under this listing. That was my focus. That remains my focus, and that is my job, because there are only two people in this parliament who have regions covered by this, and only one was ever going to advocate for the farmers across that region, and that was me.

But the question whose answer I want to know is: what have those opposite got against hardworking farmers? We've seen in this place now a targeted and deliberate approach from those opposite not just to demonise them but to fail to support them when it really counts. Just last week they voted against the government's drought fund, which would help farmers when we're doing it tough.

An opposition member: No, we didn't.

Mr TAYLOR: This is a vital fund.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition might resume his seat for a second. The minister is now straying from the subject.

Mr Albanese: From reality!

The SPEAKER: No, Leader of the Opposition, you didn't have the call. Has the minister concluded?

Mr TAYLOR: It was in October that they failed to. This is a vital fund. It'll grow from $3.9 billion to $5 billion over the next decade—

The SPEAKER: No, I just say to the minister—

Mr TAYLOR: and it is the support that farmers need. You need to provide that support as well.

Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme

Mr SIMMONDS (Ryan) (14:52): My question is to the Minister for Health. Will the minister outline to the House how the Morrison government is demonstrating it is on the side of Australian families who need access to life-changing cancer and other medications on the PBS?

Mr HUNT (Flinders—Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service and Cabinet) (14:53): I want to thank the member for Ryan. He grew up as the son of two pharmacists, and so even as a young boy he understood the importance of the PBS to Australian families and what it meant for families seeking to have access to high-cost medicines for conditions that could otherwise be fatal, devastating or debilitating. He also grew up as the son of small business owners—people who understood exactly what it meant to have a strong economy and the ability to pay for these medicines. So he realised right from the earliest days that things such as we saw in 2011, when medicines were stopped from listing because the economy was not strong, were not the sort of thing that would ever happen under a coalition government.
I'm delighted to say that, because the economy is strong and because the Prime Minister has the commitment to list the medicines that the medical experts recommend, we are able to make listings such as those announced only yesterday. Yesterday, we were able to make announcements for glioblastomas, for acute lymphoblastic leukaemia and for neuroendocrine tumours. These are things that are real, significant and important. They're the things that actually matter to Australians.

These are the medicines which we announced yesterday—I was delighted to announce them with the member for Higgins. In particular, I met a patient, Hugh. Hugh has been suffering from a glioblastoma—a brain tumour. Eighteen months ago he was given a very short period of time to live. He was given access to Avastin. Avastin is the medicine we listed yesterday. Nine-hundred patients will now have access to that medicine, which would otherwise cost $31,000. He was given, in his words, 'the gift of hope and the gift of life'. He was deeply thankful for that, and understands that this is one of the hallmarks of Australia as a society—as a compassionate society and as a strong economy; as a country which is able to do extraordinary things.

Similarly, I met a patient, Michael. Michael Clout, it turned out, we discovered afterwards, had played rugby with the Prime Minister when they were students. He said that as a rugby player he makes a great Prime Minister! No offence! But, significantly, Michael was suffering from Philadelphia-positive acute lymphoblastic leukaemia. He was given two years to live in 2011, but through a combination of trials and early access to this medicine he isn't just alive today he is thriving today. This medicine, SPRYCEL, which saved his life is now available on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. It's for 80 patients, because that's the population that will benefit from it, at a saving of $51,000. This is a saving lives and protecting lives.

### Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction

Mr BURKE (Watson—Manager of Opposition Business) (14:56): My question is to the Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction. Can the minister confirm that his statements to the parliament now offer three reasons for why he held a meeting with the then Department of the Environment in 2017: (1) somebody wrote a letter six months after the meeting that was addressed to somebody else; (2) somebody wrote a letter three years before the meeting that was addressed to somebody else; and (3) he had a conversation with a bloke in Yass? Isn't the only consistent interest here his own?

Mr TAYLOR (Hume—Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction) (14:57): That question shows the disdain that those opposite have for the farmers of Australia; the contempt they have for the farmers of Australia! I'll always back our farmers. I will always back our farmers; I do it every day. I refer to the comments that I made in my comprehensive and detailed statement earlier today.

### Construction Forestry Maritime Mining Energy Union

Mr VASTA (Bonner) (14:57): My question is to the Minister for Industrial Relations. Will the minister explain how an application for deregistration of an organisation can be made under the Morrison government's ensuring integrity bill, and how this compares to the existing law and previous deregistration proceedings?

Mr PORTER (Pearce—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Leader of the House) (14:57): I thank the member for his question. Obviously, as everyone in the House would know, there is presently in the Corporations Act, under section 461, the ability to wind up a corporation. There are general grounds for doing that when it is just and equitable to do so. There are specific grounds listed as well.

There are also, presently, grounds to deregister either an employee or employer organisation. But they have proved ineffective and, in fact, they have never been able to be applied successfully to deregister any organisation. That is despite the fact that those laws are meant to apply in circumstances where we now have the CFMMEU being the most unlawful organisation in the history of Australia's industrial laws. The most—including the BLF! But we'll get to that in a moment, if you want to talk about the BLF.

What are the amended grounds for deregistration? These are the amended grounds for deregistration, this is what the bill actually seeks to do: allow deregistration where the organisation has failed to conduct the affairs in the interests of members—seems very reasonable; or where there have been multiple breaches of the law by a substantial number of the members; or where there have been serious breaches of the criminal law by the organisation itself. They are the standards that Labor now opposes. They are the standards that are needed to ensure that we can have adequate deregistration of an organisation.

The organisation that we are talking about—the CFMMEU—how might it be described? Here are the words of a Federal Court judge describing that organisation. He said:

There is no evidence before me of the CFMEU taking any compliance action … in order to prevent the re-occurrence of contravening conduct by them in the future.
Nor is there any evidence before me of any compliance regime ever put in place by the CFMEU to address its long history of prior contraventions.

How did the judge describe that long history of prior contraventions? He described it as 'an appallingly long history of prior contraventions of industrial laws.' Despite that appallingly long history, the present laws have never successfully been able to be applied.

Compare that attitude from members opposite to this situation with what real members of the Labor Party did with respect to the BLF. In 1985, when Ralph Willis was the minister, he said about the BLF that they had:

... gone far beyond the bounds of normal industrial behaviour. ... the thuggery, violence and intimidation have had a disastrous impact not only on building employers but also on fellow workers in the industry.

What did Labor do then when faced with similar circumstances? They actually brought in a specific bill to give executive powers to get rid of the BLF, to deregister it. Now they will not even support a slightly enhanced standard. How the Labor Party has fallen!

Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction

Ms BUTLER (Griffith) (15:01): My question is to the Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction. I again refer to his earlier answers and to the letter from farm organisations dated 3 October 2017. Is the single alleged EPBC breach referenced in that letter the alleged poisoning of critically endangered grassland on the minister's land?

Mr TAYLOR (Hume—Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction) (15:01): The environment is not my portfolio responsibility. I have no idea how you expect me to answer that question. This is the ongoing contempt and disdain that you show for the farmers of this country.

Environment

Ms SHARKIE (Mayo) (15:01): My question is to the Minister for the Environment. On 26 October 2018 I joined local conservation groups in writing to the secretariat of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance about the deterioration of the Coorong and Lower Lakes Ramsar site. That letter constituted an article 3.2 notification and requires the government to respond within three months to a detailed questionnaire on what measures have been put in place to rectify the deterioration. Would the minister please advise the House of the government's response?

Ms LEY (Farrer—Minister for the Environment) (15:02): I thank the member for Mayo for her question and her keen interest in the Coorong, a vital part of her electorate of Mayo, and indicate that the letter that she refers to was received before I was sworn in as environment minister. The Ramsar Convention, as she notes, is an international convention on the conservation of wetlands, particularly when it comes to the habitat of waterbirds. I am very happy to follow up where that information is and get back to the member.

Workplace Relations

Mr ANDREWS (Menzies) (15:03): My question is to the Minister for Industrial Relations. Would he advise the House on whether payments have been made from workers' entitlement funds to organisations of employers and employees and whether the Morrison government is protecting workers' entitlements fund bill will address these practices?

Mr PORTER (Pearce—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Leader of the House) (15:03): I thank the member for his question. As the member is well aware, workers' benefit funds not being properly regulated means the theft of money that should go to workers. The need for the Fair Work Laws Amendment (Proper Use of Worker Benefits) Bill 2019, presently before the House, probably dates back as far as the Cole royal commission. These funds are meant to keep capital amounts safe and protected to pay for workers' entitlements.

Back in the days of the Cole royal commission, the royal commissioner noted that the funds provide substantial income streams to employer and employee associations in the form of surplus distributions. He noted that there was an incentive for these bodies to note or agree to increases in employer contributions in the course of negotiations, and he said very properly, 'These funds should be used for the purpose for which they were intended no other.' Back then in the Cole royal commission he was talking about the surplus, the interest earned on the capital. As we have heard in parliament over the last several days, we have an example before us as a parliament where they have actually distributed the capital out of the account. The point that needs to be made very clearly here is that the regulation of these funds that the government brings to the House will regulate it for the purposes of both employee and employer organisations.

In making that point I want to make some further comments about this $32 million, a capital amount, that was moved from the organisation Protect, meant to pay for severance funds for electrical workers in the future, to the
ETU. Over the last several days the ETU has been referring people to a joint statement they gave with the National Electrical and Communications Association, the employer association. In effect the ETU now say, "$32 million was transferred to us but it's okay because we kept only 75 per cent; the other 25 per cent went to the National Electrical and Communications Association, an employer association.' Very disturbingly, over the last few days NECA, as they are known, have been asked, and indeed their chief executive officer has been asked, to explain the use of that money—that's $10.4 million, by the way. They have declined to respond to the journalist's inquiries. I would very warmly encourage some kind of proper response. When you look at NECA's accounts, you will see they note in their last financial report that the $10.4 million profit share from Protect 'helped to turn around' a $600,000 operating loss for the employer group and create a $9.7 million profit. 10 million will tend to do that. It tends to turn around your financial accounts. But how is that money being spent to benefit workers? Where is the answer as to how that money is being spent to benefit workers and why will you opposite not support a bill that allows for transparency, regulation and adequacy of those arrangements? (Time expired) A government member interjecting—

The SPEAKER: I remind the minister not to refer to me if he can avoid it.

Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction

Ms BUTLER (Griffith) (15:06): My question is to the Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction. I again refer to his earlier answers and to the letter from farm organisations dated 3 October 2017. Given the minister refused to answer, I ask again: is the single alleged EPBC breach referenced in that letter the alleged poisoning of critically endangered grassland on the minister's land?

Mr TAYLOR (Hume—Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction) (15:07): That is the same question and it will get the same answer: it is not my area of portfolio responsibility. But let's be clear: through the course of the questions today and the actions of those opposite over recent weeks and months, it is clear that they believe that farmers subject to regulation where they can't assess their responsibilities don't deserve representation. They have made clear that a regulation which implies farmers can't with any confidence improve their pastures or manage their weeds is okay and they don't deserve representation. They have in recent times made clear that they think farmers don't deserve a drought fund and they are okay with farmers being named in the face of activism.

Mr Brian Mitchell interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Lyons is warned.

Mr TAYLOR: We will stand up for farmers. You need to learn a lot more about them.

Drought

Mr DRUM (Nicholls—Chief Nationals Whip) (15:08): My question is to the Minister for Water Resources, Drought, Rural Finance, Natural Disaster and Emergency Management. Will the minister update the House on how the Morrison government is on the side of Australian farmers and communities battling drought?

Mr LITTLEPROUD (Maranoa—Minister for Water Resources, Drought, Rural Finance, Natural Disaster and Emergency Management) (15:08): I thank the member for Nicholls for his question because he sees firsthand on a daily basis the impact this drought is having on his constituents—not just farmers but small businesses that support these communities. That is why he understands the historic nature of the Future Drought Fund that we passed last week. This is, for the first time in our nation's history, a drought centrepiece, a $3.9 billion fund climbing to $5 billion and giving a $100 million dividend year in, year out.

Mr Brian Mitchell interjecting—

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

The member for Lyons then left the chamber.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: This is in addition to the $2 billion worth of measures that this government has put in place around the farm household allowance, mental health, rural financial counsellors and, importantly, the community drought program: $1 million to the 110 shires out there to help support them to procure local materials and tradies to do projects that give the community some economic benefits. This is a stimulus to keep these communities moving. Also, the on-farm water infrastructure will be $50 million to help preparedness into the future for our farmers by investing in desilting dams while they are dry. I have asked the Prime Minister, who has approved, to extend this not just for livestock producers but now to permanent plantings in horticulture, a common-sense approach to make sure we are delivering.

The $100 million will be delivered on 1 July next year, and we are putting probity around that to make sure that we are consulting with those who own this money—the Australian public—and, more importantly, those
communities out there, about a way to give them real benefits in climate risk, in extension work and also in leadership. This is about engaging with the community, who deserve this money, to build for the future.

The consultation group will have a wide range of skills that will be able to make sure that the 42-day legislative consultation period gets real outcomes back to this parliament in order to give integrity to this $100 million a year. This is not something that has been appropriated, as the Labor Party wanted to do. It is to make sure that it is there and can only be changed by legislation; it cannot be taken away by the whim of a Treasurer. It is legislated because we took the hard track, despite the setback that we got in October last year by those opposite not supporting it, not standing with us, not standing with Australian farming families or with Australian communities. It took a federal election for those opposite to not only listen to the Australian people but, more importantly, listen to Australian farming families and communities that this government from the very start of this drought was going to stand shoulder to shoulder with them. We were going to support them and their communities and that is why this fund will go to the longevity of regional and rural Australia, and we will continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with Australian farming families and communities into the future.

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (15:11): I ask that further questions be placed on the Notice Paper.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

Mr BROADBENT (Monash) (15:11): Mr Speaker, I wish to make a personal explanation.

The SPEAKER (15:11): Does the honourable member claim to have been misrepresented?

Mr BROADBENT: Yes, I do, most grievously.

The SPEAKER: The member for Monash may proceed.

Mr BROADBENT: Firstly, the member for Oxley, in his address to the parliament earlier today, claimed that I had called for an increase in Newstart allowed. I had called for an increase in Newstart allowed; and secondly, the Canberra Times of this day suggested I had called for an increase in Newstart allowance. I have not.

The SPEAKER: I thank the member for Monash. Can I say to members before I leave, that is exactly how a personal representation should be made. A personal explanation should be made without debating the matter.

DOCUMENTS

Mr PORTER (Pearce—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Leader of the House) (15:12): 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.

BILLS

Farm Household Support Amendment Bill 2019

Second Reading

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr FITZGIBBON (Hunter) (15:13): The Farm Household Support Amendment Bill 2019 will amend the Farm Household Support Act 2014 to maintain the farm assets value limit at $5 million. It will also amend the treatment of income from business, such as allowable deductions that can be claimed against related income—that is, either income from the farm enterprise or income from a business other than the farm enterprise and income earned by the farm household allowance. The farm assets value limit was set at $5 million until 30 June 2019 and this bill will put it in place infinitum.

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 criticises the Government’s lack of action to assist drought-affected farmers including those who have experienced difficulty accessing the Farm Household Allowance since the scheme’s commencement in July 2014’.

This bill is the most recent example, despite what the minister was just saying at the close of question time, of this government's clumsy and protracted and inadequate approach to drought policy. The debate today follows the Prime Minister's less than inspiring address—not was it encouraging—at the recent Bush Summit in Dubbo. There he did his best on the spin but all he could promise was yet another parliamentary inquiry. Sadly, it is the same inquiry we had last year—and the government still hasn't responded to the recommendations of that inquiry.

To be fair, there was one announcement which I did welcome. Major General Michael Jeffery was first appointed to the position of Soils Advocate by Julia Gillard in 2012. On the occasion of that announcement, in a
keynote address to the National Farmers' Federation congress, Prime Minister Gillard expressed her concern about the deteriorating state of our soils and her determination to give policy priority to productivity-enhancing soil rejuvenation. Michael Jeffery has done a very fine job over the last six years. His comprehension of the challenges that we face is considerable. His various reports have been weighty, helpful and impressive.

Sadly, though, the government has continued to give no more than lip service to the work of Major General Jeffrey. The Michael Jeffery story is, I would argue, emblematic of the 'all-talk and do-nothing' nature of this government. We've had the drought envoy. We've had the drought coordinator. We've had the drought task force. We've had a drought summit. We've had a drought committee. And now we're going to have another committee. Part of this bill relates to a recent independent review of farm household allowance. The Prime Minister, in Dubbo, was still talking about what his government might do about that review sometime in the future. This is six years after the 2013 election and this is the government's third term in office.

The reality is that, after all that time, the Morrison government still has no strategic overarching plan for drought policy in this country. And yet it was gifted such a wonderful opportunity to have such an architecture. May 2013 was a historic month. The Commonwealth, the states, the country's farm groups and both the major political parties all agreed to effectively tear up all of the existing—and failing—drought support arrangements and start the process again. This miraculous consensus was put in place after a 2008 Productivity Commission review into the effectiveness of drought support in this country—and very expensive drought support it was.

The intergovernmental agreement signed that month heralded a new era of optimism among politicians and farmers alike. For the first time, an emphasis was to be placed on the management of our natural resource base, drought resilience, preparation and long-term sustainable profitability. It was also agreed to continue to have an income-support system for farmers in need—not just those affected by drought, but farming families who had hit upon hard times regardless of the cause. That payment, the farm household allowance, is the subject of this bill.

Sadly, though, having secured that historic agreement and a united determination to progress a new framework for drought policy, the Standing Council on Primary Industries was abolished. The then minister, the member for New England, abolished the very committee, the COAG committee, which was charged with progressing the reforms necessary to put in place an architecture to replace all of those programs which had been agreed should go, all of those programs under the program commonly known as exceptional circumstances.

So, sadly, the drought reform program was almost dead before it was born, because the member for New England pulled the rug out from under the very platform designed to give effect to those reform. By October 2014, in the face of worsening drought, it had become clear that the farm household allowance was not delivering for farmers. The reality is that, other than some hype over some concessional loans, which of course cost the government next to nothing and which are not always a helpful option for farmers, the farm household allowance was about the only thing that the government had going for it back in October 2014.

But there began one of the many scandals of this government's time in office. The member for New England was asked a question on that day about the effectiveness of the government's drought assistance package, and Minister Joyce told the House this about the farm household allowance:

… it is not the case that you apply for the money and then you have to wait for your application to be approved … You actually get the money straight away.

Of course, that was patently wrong, and we knew it was wrong at the time. So, we checked the Hansard and we discovered that what was in the Hansard did not reflect what the member for New England told the House in question time on that day. The great sadness about that, of course, is that not only had he sought to outrageously doctor the Hansard but it demonstrated that he was completely out of touch with what was affecting farmers so much—that is, how much difficulty they were having accessing this household support payment.

To make that saga even sadder, the whole incident of what became known as 'Hansard-gate' cost the head of the member for New England's department his job. His crime was to stand up for his professional public service. His concern was that his public servants were being dragged into Hansard-gate. I quote from Dr Grimes's letter to the then minister dated 2 March 2015:

I am writing to advise you that I no longer have confidence in my capacity to resolve matters relating to integrity with you. This follows the sequence of events before and following the alterations to Hansard that were made in October 2014.

As I said, what had concerned Dr Grimes most of all was the way in which the minister's failure to take responsibility for the Hansard changes—and, indeed, the cover-up of the matter—had caused his staff to be drawn into the scandal.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Andrews): The minister on a point of order?

Mr Sukkar: I understand these are wide-ranging debates, but this wouldn't appear to be relevant to the subject matter before the House.
The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I thank the minister. I’ve been listening to the debate very carefully. I think that up until now the shadow minister has been in order, but I fear the direction that he’s about to go in may cross that boundary. I will listen to him further.

Mr FITZGIBBON: We shall see, Mr Deputy Speaker, we shall see. There is evidence in Dr Grimes’s letter where it says:

I have been very careful to avoid having officers of the department involved in any of my recent decisions relating to the Hansard matter.

This comment highlights the extent to which the former minister was involved in covering up his Hansard changes. It is with deep regret that Dr Grimes paid the ultimate price, and worse that such a shameless attack on a senior and respected public servant was condoned by the Prime Minister of the day. The precedent we will now all live with—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The shadow minister may pause for a moment. I think you’ve now crossed the boundary that I was talking about. And, in any event, you’ve made the point that you were seeking to make, and I invite you to come back to the substance of the bill.

Mr FITZGIBBON: I will indeed, Mr Deputy Speaker—even though I do believe I’m in order, but, out of respect to you—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I thank the honourable member.

Mr FITZGIBBON: I will be very happy to. So one might have thought that the events I just referred to might have caused the government to pay more attention to the failings of the farm household allowance. I would have thought that the best way to scramble and rebuild some political capital following those events might be to accept that the farm household allowance was broken and to do something about it. Remember: we’re talking about 2015—or 2014, if you’re talking about the beginning of those events. And here we are today, still fiddling with the farm household allowance.

The opposition will support these changes as they will do no harm and will help a few. But they don’t fundamentally change the complexity of the farm household allowance. They basically ignore the bulk of the recommendations of the independent review of the farm household allowance.

Back then, I would have thought that the government might have also paid some attention to what our rural financial counsellors were saying, because what they were telling me was that the system was broken—and, indeed, they’ve told me that it remains broken until today, because I’ve met with them in recent months. Surely they were telling government ministers the same thing. So I can only conclude that they were ignored. I can’t imagine how happy they were when Minister Littleproud kept telling farmers: ‘Go and talk to your rural financial counsellor; they’ll fill out the paperwork for you!’ Well, that’s not their job, and they’ll be inundated with farmers who are trying desperately to secure this payment but are unable to do so because of the complexity of the paperwork.

Let’s fast forward now to May 2018. Labor was again asking questions in the Senate—still. In May 2018 we were being told up until this point: ‘There’s nothing wrong with the farm household allowance; nothing to see here’—that it was just fine and that thousands of people were benefitting from it. But by now the minister in the hot seat was conceding—this is in Senate estimates—that there were both new and emerging issues with the farm household allowance. So there we were, in May 2018, with acknowledgements that things were still going bad—and, indeed, that new problems were emerging, as cattlemen, for example, turned off stock. But here we are in July 2019 still fiddling with farm household allowance.

At that point, the Senate committee was inquiring into the then recent review of the intergovernmental agreement on drought reform, the agreement that states and territories entered into with the Commonwealth to progress drought reform right back in 2013. So finally we’re having a review into the intergovernmental agreement! It wasn’t much talked about—what happened to the vehicle charge with implementing the agreement and further progressing reform; but that is another story.

In estimates in May 2018 Senator Chris Ketter—who was doing a fantastic job, I should say—asked:

Were concerns raised in the review about farming families that have exhausted the Farm Household Allowance and are still facing drought conditions?

Extraordinarily, when Senator Ketter asked that simple question, of whether they were hearing from people who were now being forced off farm household allowance because they’d exhausted the maximum period available to them, the official responded:

I would have to take that on notice. I do not recall them.
Well, that certainly energised the then chair of the Senate committee, the colourful Senator Barry O'Sullivan, who intervened:

I can help you. The answer to that is 'yes'. It is very widespread.

Have a think about that: we had government officials—obviously, with the minister looking over their shoulder—saying, 'No, we've had this big review, but no-one's raised this issue with us,' but we had a member of the LNP, the chair of the committee, completely contradicting that statement and sharing with the committee what we've been saying for a long time, and that is: people continue to have extensive problems with this allowance and the way it has been implemented.

Let's fast forward again, this time to October 2018. By now, the relatively new Prime Minister is like a rabbit in a spotlight. He realises that not only is the drought getting worse but it's becoming clear to most farmers, if not all Australians, that in the period from 2013 to October 2018 this government had not put in place anything adequate to address the pain that drought-affected farmers are going through. What does he do? In the absence of any other ideas, he has a drought summit. Great! Very exciting; a big do down at Old Parliament House, with the usual people invited. We knew in advance what was going to be said, because we fully anticipated people would be trying to tell the government the same thing they had been trying to tell it since 2013—that is, we need a more meaningful approach, and more strategic guidance and an overarching approach, to drought policy. But it didn't really matter, because the Prime Minister didn't wait for the drought summit to convene. That morning, rather than wait for any contribution from any of the participants, he decided to announce the Future Drought Fund, which the minister was just talking in question time. He said, 'No, we've had this big review, but no...'

Now, of course, we've had the debate about the so-called $5 billion drought fund. But we know it's not a plan to spend $5 billion; it's a plan to steal $3.9 billion out of another important fund, the Building Australia Fund, which is there to fund and invest in important road and rail projects, particularly in regional Australia. I won't dwell on it too long—we've had the debate—but we're stealing money from Peter to pay Paul. But that's not where the problem is. The real problem is that the drawdown each year is $100 million. When you think about that, that's a lot of money in any person's language. But in the face of the significant challenge we face, it's a very modest amount of money. Already we see a debate emerging amongst the states and territories, who, of course, all have a full expectation now that they will get their fair share of the money. If you distribute it evenly—not that it would be distributed evenly—you're talking something more like $12 million a year. That raises very significant concerns. We don't know where the $100 million is going to be spent. We don't know how much will be spent in each of the states and territories. We don't know what the money will be spent on. The minister—again, during question time—was crying about transparency and accountability, but they were measures forced upon the government by the House of Representatives and the Senate. In any case, they don't give me any real confidence that, as a result of the passage of the Future Drought Fund, we won't end up seeing yet another pork barrelling exercise.

Six years have been lost. People often say to me, 'What would you do differently?' The problem is you can't claw back six years. You can't fix the damage caused after six years of inertia; that is just something we have to live with. But you can stop the spin, and you can at least start talking and thinking about things which are more meaningful. I've said before in this place that we have seen some change in language from government ministers, and, indeed, a change in language from the Prime Minister. In Dubbo, at the bush summit I referred to, the Prime Minister made mention of the importance of increasing our carbon levels in our soils and the impact that that has on our capacity to retain moisture in those soils. It's not something, I believe, that you would have heard from the now Prime Minister even months ago, let alone a year or two ago. I do welcome the change in language, and I encourage the Prime Minister to continue to challenge his own thinking and to pay more attention to a changing climate, adaptation and mitigation, the encouragement of changing farming practices, acknowledgment that we must increase the carbon levels in our soil and the other organic matter levels in those same soils.

The foundation of any drought policy has to be an acknowledgment that the climate has changed and will probably continue to change. It may be that we're living in what is the new normal, that the continent will continue to have more protracted, hotter and drier spells, which will continue to challenge our agriculture sector. So we must mitigate. We need to put the climate wars behind us and come to a settlement on mitigation.

There will still be some who don't believe that countries in aggregate attempting to mitigate can make a difference. I disagree with those people. But I say to them: embrace the precautionary principle, because if the science gets even more compelling in future years, if that's possible, and the climate continues to change in more adverse ways then it will be too late to turn back the clock. As is the case with the matters we're discussing today, it will be too late to act. We need to act together now. We need to adapt too, doing all those things I was talking...
about earlier: regenerative agriculture, taking care of our landscape, using our water more efficiently and making
sure we address the misallocation of our natural soil and water resources—the list goes on and on.

Of course, water infrastructure will be an important part of that equation. We hear, 'Dams here, dams there, d

dams everywhere', from this government. We've heard it for six years, but we haven't built a dam. Water
infrastructure will be important. In office Labor built them—the Tasmanian Midlands Project being the best
example.

It probably also means that there are landholders in this country, who are holding properties that have been
marginal for a long time which will move from the marginal column to the unviable column. That's the sad reality
of the way in which our landscape is changing, which brings me back to the immediate topic of conversation, the
Farm Household Allowance.

One of the things that was made clear in the independent review is that there has not been sufficient emphasis
on the adjustment side of Farm Household Allowance. Farm Household Allowance, rightly, is not designed to be
a support payment infinitum. Farm Household Allowance is designed to help farmers in trouble over a period of
time until either they make the adjustment back to profitability—or survivability at least—or they make a decision
to restructure their way out of agriculture. That was the agreement of all the states and territories, the
Commonwealth and the key farm leadership in this country back in 2013. Yet all the emphasis on Farm
Household Allowance has been: how long are you going to be able to get the payment, how much the payment
will be, the bonus—remember the Prime Minister talked about the $2,00 to $6,000 bonuses? Again, it's all about
the headline. The independent review makes it clear that the government has dropped the ball on the other side of
this very important equation, and that is the way in which the Farm Household Allowance is meant to be a tool to
help farmers make other decisions, or, indeed, to help farmers train to do something else, which will secure off-
farm income for them.

I was very interested to go to the last rising cattle champions awards. Interestingly, the seven finalists from
each of the states and the Northern Territory—young people—all had secondary sources of income. They were all
heavily engaged in agriculture but all had secondary sources of income, and for many small- to medium-sized
players that may be an increasing trend in the agriculture sector. The farm household allowance needed to be used
to help people find their way to other forms of income yet there seems to be no emphasis on that despite the
recommendations of the independent review.

In its rawest form the review made about six recommendations. The permanent rise to $5 million for the asset
test was one of them, and I welcome that the government has picked up on that recommendation, but it made other
important recommendations as well and I've seen no sign that the government is planning to pick those up other
than the statements recently made by the Prime Minister at the Bush Summit in Dubbo. It's more than passing
Strange that the Prime Minister has to use the Bush Summit to say that they're still thinking about some of the
others. Surely this independent review has been with us long enough—the consultations took place in October last
year—for the government to either accept or reject the other recommendations of that independent review. Why it
hasn't done so I don't know. I don't know whether they want to drag things out so they can keep making piecemeal
announcements in the absence of a larger strategic plan.

I close by saying that I hope the Future Drought Fund is spent wisely. It will be an inadequate amount in the
face of the challenge we face in this country—it could have been funded out of appropriations, as we offered to
support—but there is an opportunity here to change the direction, to help entities change their farming practices,
to lift productivity, which has been flailing for a decade now, and to establish greater levels of sustainable
profitability. On that basis we extend bipartisan support once again, as always. The opposition has supported
every drought measure put forward by this government. They would argue that we voted against the drought fund
in the House during the last parliament but that doesn't suggest at all that we ultimately wouldn't have been forced
to support the fund. We were still seeking to make improvements to that fund.

The fact of history is that the government never ever put the drought fund to the Senate prior to the last
election. All these claims that we somehow delayed the drought fund are just untrue. We did no such thing. The
government was in control of the legislative timetable. They brought it to the House when they wanted to bring it
to the House. They could have easily put it to the Senate prior to the election but for whatever reasons—not
political gamesmanship, I hope—they chose not to. I think the drought fund is a sad part of our history now. I
think we could have worked together to do this thing much better, but in opposition we continue to support every
measure this government takes to assist our drought affected farmers. Farmers in some areas are now facing the
worst drought in the history of the nation. The drought fund may give them some assistance beyond 12 months
time. Everyone in this House knows that farmers can't wait 12 months or more for assistance; they need assistance
now and they should be getting that assistance now. I thank the House.
The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Andrews): Is the amendment seconded?

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

Mr DRUM (Nicholls—Chief Nationals Whip) (15:43): The member for Hunter finished his contribution with 'the farmers of Australia need to be supported now' and that's exactly what we're going to do. They can't and won't wait for another 12 months for the drought fund to become available. They won't another day and they won't wait another second, because we've been supporting our farmers, who have been in drought for the last four years, every step of the way. When the milk crisis came through northern Victoria, right through the Australian dairy industry, we supported our dairy farmers then. We didn't have a drought fund available, but we didn't wait. The Labor Party have been very deceptive in relation to their language around the $100 million per annum contribution to a drought resilience fund by saying that it's not going to come on stream for another 12 months. It won't, but in the meantime we are going to continue to pour billions of dollars into supporting our farmers in a way that the Labor Party never would.

If you read carefully between the lines of what the shadow minister for agriculture is saying, he is saying that if he had the rudders of power he would do things dramatically different. This is quoting back his words from his latest contribution. He would make sure that any money that was going towards farmers was going to make sure they either got back to profitability or were enabled to exit the industry. The understanding is that it's never that clear cut. It's never so black and white.

When I first came to parliament, the vast majority of the farm household allowances was to make up for the incredible hit that many of our dairy farmers were getting due to the milk price, which dropped from around the $6 mark to $4.40. All of a sudden, a solution that had nothing to do with drought was desperately needed in an area to assist one certain commodity of our agricultural sector. Once milk prices started to improve we were hit with this ridiculous drought. The drought was incredibly short in the northern Victorian regions, but the consequences were incredibly harsh on nearly everybody. The price of water escalated at an unbelievable rate. Never before had the price of water been seen to rise so quickly, to a value far out of the reach of dairy, horticulture and most of the commodities grown throughout northern Victoria. Only certain types of commodities, such as citrus, almonds and table grapes, were able to afford to purchase the water that was currently available.

It's not as simple as the member for Hunter would like to believe. His whole contribution was effectively just commentary from outside, being critical of minister Joyce, when he was in the role; critical of what minister Littleproud had done; critical of what minister McKenzie is doing currently; and critical of what the Prime Minister is doing. But not once in the 30-minute contribution did Labor put forward one policy, one area where they would like to change things or one area of improvement. Thirty minutes of commenting on what's going on in relation to the farm household allowance is typical of Labor, wanting to be negative about everything that's going on within the agricultural sector; all the support packages that are in place; the fact that we have extended farm household allowance out to four years to fix up the very issues that he is going crook about; and the fact that we've moved to reinstate, with this amendment, the $5 million asset limit. Because of the reinstatement of the $5 million limit we've got about an extra 380 people that have been able to access farm household allowance; around $37,000. We've still got lower interest loans in place. We're still able to give people respite in the interest rates that they're paying, to the tune of half of their outstanding debt. This is genuine financial assistance. Yes, it's costing the government and the taxpayers of Australia money, but it's being put into an area where we think it's going to have the biggest impact in assisting our drought-affected farmers.

What the drought-affected farmers really want is the ability to be able to purchase water to enable them to look after their own interests. What we have seen from Labor is policy after policy that is going to make water more expensive, not less expensive. It will make water less affordable and further out of reach of our drought-affected farmers. Right throughout the southern Riverina, right throughout northern Victoria and up into the Sunraysia, we're going to find that water is becoming further out of reach because of what the Labor Party are proposing.

What we're suggesting is that we need to have a real look at the amount of water that has been taken away from agriculture and returned to the environment, but we don't get any support at all from the Labor Party, who could, in fact, make a meaningful difference if they were to come to the party in favour of agriculture and in favour of our farmers. If they were to start arguing for the wellbeing and the financial longevity of our farming sector—if they were to take that line—we could simply sit down and have real conversations about how we can assist our drought-affected farmers, but the Labor Party will not entertain that line of debate, that line of conversation and that line of policy. They just won't go anywhere near it. They continue to prioritise the health of fish above the health of our farmers, and unfortunately this is the truth associated with the Labor Party when it comes to drought-affected farmers.
We are putting in place the necessary legislation to ensure that we take this cap up from $3 million to $5 million to include a whole other range of farmers who are asset rich but cash poor, to enable them to stay in the industry by including all those farms valued up to $5 million as being able to be recipients of the farm household allowance, as they were under the legislation that ceased as of 30 June this year. This amendment is going to reinstate that limit back up to $5 million. What we are doing here is putting in place the support that our farmers need—this is the conversation that we’ve been having with our people—to ensure that they will have the best chance of maintaining their place in one of the great industries of Australia, and that is agriculture.

Yes, at various times they need a bit of support, but you’d also like to ask the people of Melbourne and Sydney whose side they are on. Are they on the side of this unlimited amount of water that has been given to the environment irrespective of the outcomes, the pain, the damage and the detriment that that water is causing amongst our agricultural communities and amongst the Murray-Darling Basin communities? Two point three million people are all suffering, because it would seem as though the science that we used when putting together the Murray-Darling Basin Plan right back in 2009 might not now be accurate. What we’ve now found is that we’ve got these incredible consequences where there is damage that was never perceived or envisioned, which would be the pain and the detriment that our communities would go through. Not just the farming communities and the farmers but also the nearby towns and regional cities are all feeling the effects of taking too much water out of agriculture and having it returned to the environment.

In a very short time—maybe eight or nine to 12 months—the dry spell that we envisaged, went through and lived through was hopefully broken at the start of May this year, but again we are at the beck and call of nature. We've had three months of a really good start to this season, but we need the winter rains to continue throughout northern Victoria. We need spring rains to materialise to give those farmers a genuine break. At the moment we’ve got a chance, but we need it to continue. If it doesn't continue, all of the consequences associated with the drought are still in play, with grain and water still too expensive for our farmers to purchase.

What do we have from the Labor Party? We have no ideas and no policy—just criticism and this underlying threat within the language: ‘If we were in power, we wouldn't be giving them the farm household allowance unless they could definitely show a way back to profitability or unless they could definitely show a way how they were going to get out of the industry altogether.’ It just shows a complete lack of understanding and a complete lack of empathy. As I've said often before, the people in northern Victoria don't need sympathy from the Labor Party or from Melbourne and Sydney; they just need the water.

Ms CHESTERS (Bendigo) (15:54): I rise to speak in favour of the amendment moved by the member for Hunter. It disappoints me that I am here speaking again on this bill. The government have danced around reforms to the farm household support since they've been in government. Here we are again, and we're finally dealing with it. The member for Hunter does raise some valid questions. Have they finally got it right? Are the reforms before us today actually going to deliver the reform that the government need? I think the government themselves are sceptical just judging by the lack of speakers they have on this bill. For all their talk—and we've heard speaker after speaker on issue after issue and question after question ranting about supporting farmers—where are they to speak on this legislation?

This legislation is actually the one bill before the House that would deliver support for farmers tomorrow—not in two years time, like the drought fund, and not like their campaign in relation to trespass on farms, which is largely the role of the states. This bill, the Farm Household Support Amendment Bill, will help right now farmers who are suffering the effects of drought, those who are in drought declared areas. So we have to question the government and their ability to deliver for farmers based upon their experience with this bill.

The farm household allowance goes back to when Labor was last in government. It was first in the budget and declared a priority in 2012-13. Whilst back then it was estimated it would cost just under $100 million, we weren't in the severe state of drought we are today. It was demand driven and uncapped. So there was an expectation that, if the drought got worse, it would in fact increase. It was set at the equivalent Newstart rate, or youth allowance if under 22, for accessing for up to three years. Case managers were assigned to support recipients as they undertook activity to improve their long-term viability and financial situation. I will get to the rate of Newstart and accessing Centrelink, because that has been a big part of the challenge when it comes to our farmers accessing this allowance.

Unfortunately Labor did not win the next election and so it fell to this government to implement the farm household allowance. Quite frankly, they've stuffed it up. There is no other way you could put it. With all the different ag ministers they've had and all the different ministers they've hard in Social Services, they've really struggled to implement this in an effective way to ensure that farmers get the support they need when they need it. As a result of that, we've had review after review into how they've got this so wrong. You just have to read the report of the government's own review into the farm household allowance to see how badly it has been managed.

CHAMBER
The review made a number of recommendations on this measure and how it's failing. What comes up a lot in the recommendations is that the government should decouple the farm household allowance from social security legislation, tailor it to deliver and recognise the unique and often complex financial businesses in relation to agricultural businesses.

For a government that claims to intimately understand farmers, why has it taken so long for this bill to get here? Why has it taken so long for them to come up with reforms and deliver them so that more people can access the allowance?

Another recommendation was to redesign the program and have a farmer-centric approach to mutual obligation and allow some flexibility to acknowledge the wide range of reasons why people access income support and ensure that progress is not hindered and that it does not create welfare dependency. Again, if the government really reflected the bush, they would know how to do it. And, yet, they have failed to date.

Another key recommendation was to improve communication. The report talked about how the government need to rebrand the program to more clearly communicate the objectives. Farmers in some communities don't want to access this program; they would rather struggle. That's because of the complexity involved, the stigma involved and, quite frankly, the way this government demonise anybody who seeks support from Centrelink. Ultimately, at the end of the day, this is a Newstart payment. Perhaps if they didn't vilify people on Newstart payments so much, more farmers would be willing to take this up.

The recommendations also talk about improving data collection methods to evaluate whether the allowance is working, to continue to adapt and change in a timely manner to ensure that the allowance is reaching the people who need it. These are the recommendations of the government's own report. Here we are today. This wasn't the first bill that this parliament debated; no, it's a bill we're debating this week. It aims to improve, but we haven't seen any demonstration that it will actually improve, farmers' ability to access.

Quite often, when we're on the ground in these communities, we hear about the confusion around eligibility. They've had to employ more and more financial counsellors to reach out to farmers to explain the process. What farmers are discovering is that they need a financial planner in order to access this program, much like our pensioners do to access the pension. Under this government, it has become so hard and so complex for people to access basic support payments that more and more of them are seeking financial planners. The good news for our farmers is that that comes subsidised, through a financial planner, in a government funded system. That is not so for our pensioners, who are paying out of their own pockets for financial planners to assess what rate of the pension they can receive. You've got to ask yourself: how adequate is our Public Service if people need to access private financial planning in order to get a payment that they're entitled to?

What's also disappointing, as I have mentioned, is the timing of this bill. This was first a measure in the 2012-13 budget, it was introduced in 2014 and here we are today finally fixing up the mistakes that this government made with the rollout. We all remember Hansard-gate and the doctoring that occurred under one of the ministers, but that shouldn't have stopped reform from happening to ensure that farmers were able to access this when they needed it. I'd also call on the government to consider who else in the community should be receiving support. When drought affects farmers, it affects their entire supply chain. It affects entire communities, as more and more farmers pull out or don't harvest or don't plant to harvest. What about the small shops in a town? What about the infrastructure in a town? Towns in our regions are continuing to die on this government's watch as more and more people move to metro areas or bigger regional cities in order to survive. It is disappointing that it has taken so long for this government to bring this bill forward. Whilst the government have moved on farm household assistance, I again say to them that they should look at what is linked to this bill and the fact that that could be a big reason why farmers aren't accessing it.

Newstart payments are too low. Whilst the government dance around the issue and blame each other for not speaking out, they have to consider raising the Newstart rate. It is an issue about decency and respect. I say to the government: just talk to farmers who are trying to survive on Newstart about how difficult it is; if you're not going to talk to farmers, at least listen to farmers. You can forgive the Australian people for thinking that this government only cares about farmers, even though it does it in a really bad way. This is one area where increasing Newstart will have a knock-on effect to support people who are seeking farm household support.

Then we get to the issue about Centrelink—again, accessing farm household assistance. Whilst you might get access to a financial planner, you are ultimately being processed by Centrelink. The fact that the government has cut so many staff from Centrelink and failed to invest in building up a strong Centrelink workforce means that processing claims are delayed and drawn out. Whether it be a farmer seeking farm household assistance, a pensioner seeking the pension or someone seeking youth allowance because they have just started university, I, like many people in this House, continue to hear of long delays; three to six months is not uncommon. The worst
case was of someone trying for 13 months to access the pension. This particular constituent had all of their paperwork in, only to be told that their paperwork had expired and they had to start again. If the government was genuine about supporting people in need—people who have worked really hard their whole lives, whether it be on a farm or in a small business or for any other organisation, and are now seeking support—then it would invest more in Centrelink to make sure that staff had the skills, were directly employed and weren't subject to the outsourcing that is going on.

There is a need for more financial counsellors in the regions and there is a need to assess which areas are deemed 'drought affected' so they are able to access this. Planners have become more crucial as the forms required to be completed have become more complex. None of the people engaged that I have spoken to have said that accessing the farm household assistance has been easy. They have therefore talked down the program and told people not to bother. For the minimal amount that you get—because it relates to Newstart—it's hard work, demoralising and debilitating, and sometimes you get knocked back.

Farmers can be quite private and proud people, and knowing that people are prying into their personal life is something that is hard for them to overcome. Some have tried to take on the task of applying for this allowance and still are being caught out. For the talk, talk, talk of this government, they really have failed to listen to the concerns of people accessing this support payment and failed to adopt them in in these reforms. I hope what is before us today will help improve the access and I hope that the minister takes on board everything that our farmers are saying about the regulations and the support services, and adopts it going forward because, to date, in the five years they have had this program, they have failed to deliver for farmers. As I said at the beginning, this is the one bill before the House that will help people who are affected by drought, right now. It is not a fund that will kick in in two years' time to build infrastructure. This puts some money—not big money, but Newstart money—into the pockets of farmers who otherwise wouldn't qualify for Newstart.

For all of this government's talk about supporting farmers, they have really let the farmers down. They are quite happy to stand next to people for photo ops and go out there, do the tour and shake the hands, but they are not there to do the real reform that is needed. And that has been picked up, particularly by regional media. ABC's national rural reporter Kath Sullivan summed it up best at the end of last sitting week:

You could be forgiven for thinking Australia's farmers are front and centre in the national debate this week.

Between drought tours and bush summits, the Basin plan and activists trespassing on farms, you can barely turn on the box without seeing a pair of boots kick the dirt.

Farmers don't just make for pretty pictures, they're solid fodder for party politics.

While the attention is often welcome, it doesn't always translate to meaningful action.

That is the point. For all the photo ops, for all the poses, where is the meaningful action from this government? This bill is the one before the House that will deliver and create real action, yet I am not convinced it will go far enough to deliver the action our farmers need.

The report goes on to say that, for all of the lovely stories that we tell, it is leaving farm groups 'desperate' and rural groups 'underwhelmed'. WoolProducers vice-president and Victorian farmer Steve Harrison said this week: 'We're tired. We're looking down the barrel of a third consecutive failed spring.' He said of numerous politicians, state and federal, 'They're all talk and no action.' Whilst they will turn up for the photos, they won't turn up for the action.

I really hope the government does more and actually has more action. For all of their ranting in this place about the farmer, the farmer, the farmer, they are doing very little help on the ground, day to day. Neither the talk about water from the previous minister nor the talk about grasslands from the minister in question actually deals with the fact that this is one measure that could help people. If they fixed Centrelink, if they increased Newstart, if they got genuine and practical support, if they rebuilt respect for our social security network, as opposed to demonising it, then just maybe the people most in need of support will access it when they need it.

Mr KATTER (Kennedy) (16:09): We appreciate the government's initiative in this matter and I regret to say this. In a poll taken in Queensland in 1988-89, if you said the phrase 'National Party' the first words associated with that were 'Bjelke-Petersen', and the next words were my name. So I was the standard-bearer—No. 2 to Bjelke-Petersen himself—in the later years of the National Party's existence in Queensland. I use the term 'National Party', but I'm describing people who were then Country Party. In Queensland, of course, there is no National Party now; they are all members of the LNP. People who state that they are members of the National Party here are not; they are members of the LNP. And the LNP is an affiliate of the Liberal Party. I don't mean to have a go at them—and one of the finest members of parliament I have worked with in my lifetime in the parliament would be George Christensen. George is rapidly being pushed into the same situation that I was pushed into in this place. He was well-bringth-up on Country Party principles—John McEwan, no less.
We have seen the extraordinary phenomenon of the ALP moving for a minimum price scheme for milk and five speakers who claim to be members of the National Party get up and oppose a minimum price scheme for milk; that was the reason it was formed. Blackjack McEwan, at the age of 28, in the most famous event in Australian history, called a meeting and a few of them there said all milk should be sold through a cooperative and we should have quotas and a minimum price. He belted the living daylights out of them and, from that day forth, he was called Blackjack McEwan. And the other great founder and pillar upon which the Country Party was built was the Anthony family. And it was exactly the same story. It was reputed that Larry Anthony took two of them there out the back of the tent and belted the hell out of them over the banana farmers' cooperative—bananas were to be sold through the cooperative and, if you didn't like it, you took a hiding. Whether you agree with this behaviour or not—Jack McEwan was called Blackjack from that day forth. This party was formed to deliver minimum pricing, and we have come to the extraordinary position where the five speakers against the minimum price for milk are all from the National Party—and they all gave exactly the same reason that McEwan faced back in the twenties and thirties: 'We have international agreements and we may offend our trading partners and the world will come to an end!' They sounded to me like the CO2 doomsayers: 'The world will come to an end if we give the farmers a decent price for their product!'

Look at what has happened in agriculture. John Anderson, as Leader of the National Party in this place and Deputy Prime Minister of Australia, at an infamous meeting in what was later to become his own electorate—I think it was Gunnedah or Bourke—said: 'Australia has 240,000 farmers. We can produce what we produce with 120,000 farmers.' People in my area interpreted that as: 'What's this bloke coming at? Does he reckon 120,000 of us should go to the wall, does he?' Well, 120,000 farmers have gone to the wall. The figure now is that there are 87,000 farmers in Australia. There are different series, and I don't want to mislead the House here. On the series they were working on, there are about 120,000 farmers now and there were 240,000 then. On another set of series, in 1990, the year of the deregulation of the wool industry by Mr Keating—I don't want anyone to believe that the National Party were entirely responsible for the destruction of agriculture; I wouldn't want to leave the Labor Party out—there were about 140,000 Australian farmers and, on this series, there are 87,000 today.

I don't have to be told that. Where we had five sheep stations, we now have one cattle station. We had 1,000 shearsers and backups in the wool industry in the midwest towns—my homeland—stretching from the Northern Territory border, or Mount Isa if you like, back to the coast. We had five sheep stations and 1,000 people employed—in shearing and all the backup industries that were required. But we now have only one property where we had five before. So where there were five families employing people, there is now one family employing nobody.

The populations in these towns have dropped clean in half. Through all of the central west and North Queensland's mid-west, the towns' populations have dropped clean in half. That can be attributed to the deregulation of the wool industry by Mr Keating. It doesn't account for the destruction of the tobacco industry in the electorate that I represent. A town in Victoria had 3,000 tobacco workers and we had 2,000 in Mareeba in North Queensland. The industry has gone completely through deregulation by the National Party. In the dairy industry we had 240 farmers and we now have around 40 or 50 farmers. That is all that is left, and a lot of them exited in the worst possible way.

Why is agriculture collapsing? Everywhere else in the world a farmer gets 41 per cent of his income from the government. Be it a good thing or be it a bad thing, the reality is that farmers throughout the rest of the world get 41 per cent of their income from the government. In Australia, the farmer gets 5.6 per cent of his income from the government. Do we think that we are 34 per cent better farmers? I did a quick trip into America and into southern Brazil, and I can tell you that you would want to get up very early in the morning to compete against the cattlemen of South Dakota and you would want to get up bloody early in the morning if you want to compete against the sugar farmers of southern Brazil. So, in our government's wisdom, we give them a 41 per cent advantage less 5.6 per cent. So let's call it six per cent. So it is a 36 per cent, or whatever it is, advantage. So we are not competing against farmers in other countries; we are competing against the subsidy given to the farmers in other countries.

We established a sugar industry in Thailand. Aren't we good boys; isn't that wonderful? Thailand farmers were getting 22c a pound for their sugar, whilst our farmers were getting 7c a pound for our sugar. That will give you some dimension of the subsidy in Thailand. In India there's $23 billion a year in subsidies just for fertiliser alone and in the European community they get $700 a tonne for raw sugar on the world market and we get $400 a tonne on the world market. As for free trade, our sugar is not allowed into Europe or into America. They are the two biggest markets for food in the world and we are not allowed into either of them, and sugar is the fourth biggest agricultural item in this country—and we get preached to about free markets.
So the first reason is the 36 per cent advantage in subsidies, or tariffs or whatever you want to call it. The technical name is 'support level'. So we are disadvantaged in support levels by 36 per cent. Secondly, we have only two people to sell food to in this country. We are the only country on earth that has a concentration of market power such as we have in Australia with Woolworths and Coles of around 90 per cent. I would say it is around 93 per cent or 94 per cent—and we can all argue about that. So we have two people to sell to and two people to buy it from. When the LNP in their wisdom deregulated the dairy industry, we went from 59c a litre on the Friday to 41c a litre on the Monday—no free market there; classical oligopoly pricing. Did the consumers get a benefit? No, the price went up nearly 30 per cent to the consumers. So consumers got hit and the farmers got hit, and the people in the middle get $1,000 million a year of extra profit.

Our cattle numbers are down 23 per cent from where they were and where they should be. Our sugar production is down 16 per cent from where it was and where it should be. Our sheep herd is down 60 per cent from where it was and where it should be. Our dairy herd and dairy production are down around 20 per cent from where they were and where they should be. We are a net importer of seafood, pork and, believe it or not, fruit and vegetables. Now, that goes up and down. I think at present we are not a net importer of fruit and vegetables, but it goes up and down. Over the last 10 years, it's a fair call to say we've been a net importer of fruit and vegetables. We have had what I can only describe as a galoot—a National Party member, a big tall bloke walking around wearing a stupid hat on his head. He said, 'We will be the food bowl of Asia.' Hey, listen: thanks to your policies, we'll be the begging bowl of Asia. You can see where this is going. In seafood, we are a net importer. In pork, we are a net importer. In fruit and vegetables, on average, we are a net importer. We can clearly see where we're going. Our cattle herd is down. Our sheep herd is down. Our sugar production is down. Our dairy herd is down. We know where agriculture is going. We had 240,000 farmers and now we have 120,000.

What we are talking about today is family farm assistance. You blokes had better watch out, because the farmers are not all stupid, and they're watching. It was these blokes, the ALP, who introduced the family farm assistance scheme. If ever I have seen a Treasurer who did everything he could for us, it was Wayne Swan. There's no doubt about that. He in his wisdom deregulated the dairy industry, we went from 59c a litre on the Friday to 41c a litre on the Monday—no free market there; classical oligopoly pricing. Did the consumers get a benefit? No, the price went up nearly 30 per cent to the consumers. So consumers got hit and the farmers got hit, and the people in the middle get $1,000 million a year of extra profit.

Where would the dairy industry be if our milk marketing bill were introduced, bringing the price scheme back? I'll tell you where it would be: the price would be over $1 a litre. Our farmers are getting 58c a litre in Queensland. They were getting 59c prior to deregulation in the year 2000. Twenty years ago, arbitration at a fair tribunal—the arbitration commission for milk, the milk marketing board or whatever you want to call it—gave us 59c a litre. Twenty years later, we are on 58c a litre. I can tell you that, when it was 59c, I didn't see many of my dairy farmers driving around in Mercedes Benz cars or even in top-of-the-range Range Rovers; they didn't have them either. They were making a quid and staying alive, but they weren't taking trips overseas every year or anything of that nature. But now, 20 years later, when money is buying 30 per cent less, they are on less money than they were 20 years ago.

It was very, very sad for me to see the once great party of Jack McEwen and Larry Anthony, founded by them physically bashing people to get a minimum price, being led by the Labor Party and opposed by—(Time expired)

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Andrews): Does the honourable member for Kennedy wish to move his amendment?

Mr KATTER: Yes. I would like to speak to it as well. I move:

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

"the House:

(1) is of the view that the income support provided to farmers and their families through the Farm Household Allowance is inadequate due to the current maximum of four cumulative years of income support provided; and

(2) calls on the Government to consider extending this maximum period to seven years, the average duration of droughts in Australia".

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is the amendment seconded?

Mr Wilkie: I second the remarkable member for Kennedy's worthy amendment and reserve my right to speak.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The original question was that this bill be now read a second time. To this the honourable member for Hunter moved as an amendment that all words after 'That' be omitted with a view to substituting other words. The honourable member for Kennedy has now moved as an amendment to that
amendment that all words after 'reading' be omitted with a view to substituting other words. The question now is that the amendment moved by the honourable member for Kennedy to the amendment moved by the honourable member for Hunter be agreed to.

Mr KATTER: The Labor Party introduced this act, and they will go down in history and be applauded and respected for what they achieved there. The coalition government expanded it from two years to four years, and we applaud and thank the coalition for having extended it to four years. But our droughts on average are seven years, and so I've chosen a period of seven years. There is structural damage in our industry, which I just outlined, from the situation where we have two supermarkets chain—and I'm not blaming them for that—completely controlling the marketplace and paying the farmers whatever they feel like paying the farmers. I pointed out that we're competing against people enjoying 40 per cent support levels—'total support estimates' is the technical term used.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have to interrupt the member for Kennedy. I've sought some further advice from the Clerk, and that advice is that the member for Kennedy is not able to speak further at this stage. But I have a point of order from the Manager of Opposition Business.

Mr Burke: Yes, Deputy Speaker. Given the circumstances of how that unfolded and not wanting to have a situation where the member for Kennedy doesn't get to explain the amendment, if the government wants to as well, we'll provide leave for him to speak for a further five minutes.

Mr Coulton: I'll agree to five minutes for the member for Kennedy to describe his amendment.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: This is a little unusual, because the member for Kennedy did have an opportunity in his earlier remarks to speak about his amendment, but, given that there's a great deal of unanimity in the chamber about this issue, the honourable member for Kennedy has a further five minutes.

Mr KATTER: I was speaking to the bill. I'm now speaking to the amendment. I thank both sides of the House for giving me the five minutes. I'm just asking for the support to be extended. It was two years originally under the ALP. The coalition extended that to four years, and God bless them for that. It needs to be extended to seven years, because the crippling drought is going on unabated in very large sections of central and southern Queensland. I think realistically it should be for seven years, and that's why I have chosen seven years here in moving this amendment.

The only other thing that I must add is that—while I said there's 41 per cent support levels in other countries and we only have a six per cent support level in Australia, and we have the situation with two huge combines controlling the marketplace—the third problem we have is an inflated dollar. Where the rest of the world was under one per cent in their interest rates for nearly a decade, Australia was over three per cent, and that propped our dollar up to artificially high levels. When Paul Keating free-floated the dollar, it went down to 49c, and then he propped it up. He did the right thing and then he did the wrong thing. When Peter Costello came in, he did the right thing and allowed it to free-float, and it went to 51c. Again, he lost his nerve and propped it up. He did the right thing and then did the wrong thing. There is in doubt that the dollar has been held to twice the level that it should be at, and that has been enormously detrimental to farmers.

So, to ride the situation with drought, is it fair that a person on a farm has his whole life destroyed because he can't get a welfare payment? If everyone else is entitled to a welfare payment, why should a farmer be deprived of a welfare payment? So I don't think that welfare payment should be limited to two years or to four years. It is not going to allow him to stay on the farm. Eventually it will be sold out from under him; there's no doubt about that. All we're saying is that humanity should prevail. The farmer should be allowed to feed himself and his kids.

If anyone wants to read a heartbreaking story, 1932, a book by a famous journalist in Australia, describes a family that was sold up in Western Australia. Well, that's happening every day of the week in the dairy area. In probably the biggest dairy area in Australia, the Atherton Tablelands, we had the highest suicide rate in Australia, which was three years after dairy deregulation.

These horrors can be avoided, to a very small degree, with this decision to give farmers welfare payments—and I won't hesitate to use that word; why should everyone else be entitled to welfare but farmers be deprived of it? These are living payments—allowing-to-live payments—and we're asking here that they be extended from the current four years to seven years.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Andrews): The question is that the amendment moved by the honourable member for Kennedy to the amendment moved by the member for Hunter be agreed to. I call the honourable the minister.

Mr COULTON (Parkes—Minister for Regional Services, Decentralisation and Local Government and Assistant Trade and Investment Minister) (16:30): I rise to sum up on the Farm Household Support Amendment
Bill 2019. I understand we'll be dealing with the amendments after I sum up. This bill demonstrates the government's responsiveness to the needs of farming communities in rural and regional Australia.

The Farm Household Allowance Program provides up to four years of eligible income support to farmers and their partners while they take steps to assess and improve their long-term financial situation. While on the payment, farmers and their partners have access to a healthcare card and a pharmaceutical allowance, rent assistance, telephone allowance, energy supplement and remote area allowance where applicable. These features of the program are unchanged.

Farmers accessing the program are subject to income and on-farm and off-farm asset thresholds. Between 1 September 2018 and 30 June 2019, the on-farm asset threshold known as the farm asset value limit was increased from $2.6 million to $5 million. This bill proposes to maintain the farm asset value limit at $5 million from 1 July 2019. The government understands farmers can be asset rich but cash poor and need support to improve their circumstances, particularly if they are experiencing poor climatic conditions.

The program supports recipients to consider alternative employment, or to make the decision to transition away from farming but to implement the change on their own terms. We know things are tough for a growing number of farmers. In the last year, government outlays on the program have grown from more than $230 million to over $340 million. We have helped an unprecedented number of farmers and their partners, with the number climbing to over 12,000 recipients over the life of the program.

This bill also clarifies the treatment of deductions and income for recipients. As to allowable deductions, the business running costs can be claimed against the earnings to which they relate. For example, fuel, insurance, cartage and interest payments related to the farm enterprise can be taken off the income of the farm. People who have a second, unrelated business can deduct the running costs from that business against their income.

The bill maintains the farm asset value limit at $5 million. It clarifies the treatment of deductions and income for recipients and helps farmers and their partners plan for their future financial security.

I thank the members for their contributions, and I commend the bill to the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Andrews): I thank the Minister. The question is that the amendment moved by the honourable member for Kennedy to the amendment moved by the member for Hunter be agreed to.

Question negatived.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question then before the House is that the amendment moved by the honourable member for Hunter be agreed to. All those of that opinion say aye; to the contrary no.

Honourable members interjecting—

Mr Burke interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I believe I heard two voices, but maybe my hearing is a little more acute than the Leader of the Opposition Business's! The noes have it. There's no division required.

Question negatived.

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

Question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Message from the Governor-General recommending appropriation announced.

Third Reading

Mr COULTON (Parkes—Minister for Regional Services, Decentralisation and Local Government and Assistant Trade and Investment Minister) (16:34): by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

COMMITTEES

Membership

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Andrews) (16:35): Mr Speaker has received advice from the Chief Opposition Whip that members have been nominated to be members of certain committees.

Mr COULTON (Parkes—Minister for Regional Services, Decentralisation and Local Government and Assistant Trade and Investment Minister) (16:36): by leave—I move:
That Members be appointed as members of certain committees in accordance with the following list:
Publications Committee—Mrs Phillips be appointed a member of the committee;
Standing Committee on Petitions—Ms Templeman be appointed a member of the committee;
Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights—Mr Georganas be appointed a member of the committee; and
Select Committee on Regional Australia—Ms L. M. Chesters, Mr Clare, Dr Haines, Ms Swanson and Mr J. H. Wilson be appointed members of the committee; and
Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training—Dr Haines be discharged from the committee.
As the list is a lengthy one, I do not propose to read the list to the House. Details will be recorded in the Votes and Proceedings.

Question agreed to.

**BILLS**

**Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Amendment (Ensuring Integrity) Bill 2019**

Second Reading

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr BURKE (Watson—Manager of Opposition Business) (16:37): I move:

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

"the House:
(1) declines to give the bill a second reading; and
(2) notes that:
(a) this Government has not proposed legislation to deal with important workplace relations matters, such as wage theft, flat lining wages growth, or deaths in the workplace;
(b) this bill and the Act it seeks to amend represent an inconsistent approach by the Government to responding to Royal Commissions; and
(c) the Government's entire approach to workplace relations laws is to attack workers' organisations with the specific intention of weakening the capacity of those organisations to combat wage theft, achieve wage growth, and ensure that workplaces are safe".

This Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Amendment (Ensuring Integrity) Bill 2019 is poor legislation. It is unnecessary legislation and, for the way it can be weaponised, it's dangerous legislation.

At a time where the economy is at the moment and where workplaces are at the moment, there is a reason for industrial relations legislation to be brought to the parliament. But at a time when wages are flatlining and when the key economic challenge is how to get wages up, the government's response is to attack the organisations that argue for wage increases. At the time when wage theft is being reported weekly and people are scandalised by what they are seeing happening to ordinary workers' wages, the government's response is to attack the organisations that would defend those workers against wage theft. At a time when occupational health and safety has reached the extraordinary situation where we talk about deaths in the workplace—we talk about workplaces that kill more than 200 workers in Australia every year—the government's response is to attack the organisations that have always argued for better work safety laws.

How do we get wages moving in an industrial relations system like we have? The government will argue, 'What you need is for company profits to go up,' because if company profits are improving they'll say that's the way to get wages moving. Except for this problem: we've got stagnant wages and wages growing eight times—eight times!—slower than the rate of profit growth. Wages are growing eight times more slowly than profits. We've got the slowest economic growth since the global financial crisis. Australia is now in the longest per capita recession since the 1982 recession. The national economy has fallen from the eighth-fastest growing in the OECD to the 20th. We have stagnant wages, rising underemployment and youth unemployment, slowing employment growth, five years of weak productivity growth, weak household spending, failing consumer confidence, weak business conditions, living standards growing slower under the Liberals than under Labor—and this government says, 'Here's the answer; attack the organisations that argue for improving workers' conditions.' It has been worse over the last few days. They've been saying, 'Here's the way to get wages to improve; just freeze super.' Guess what? This government did freeze super since coming to office—and what have we seen since? Stagnant wages growth.

Whenever wage increases come in through a minimum wage case it's not because there's a submission from the government furiously arguing to keep penalty rates or that we need to significantly improve the minimum wage; whenever those hearings result in a wage increase it's because of the advocacy of the union movement, led by the
ACTU. That doesn't automatically mean it then gets passed through to every award; it gets passed through to the awards because each individual union makes the application for it to be passed through. At every stage if unions and workers' organisations are strong then the Australian workplace becomes a better place for wages growth. That's how the industrial relations system works in our country.

Let's not forget that we have a record number of people now relying on awards, but the response from the government, is never, 'How do we make the system work better to deal with the fundamental challenges that we have in the Australian economy at the moment?' There was a time when it was at least contestable—it was not my view but some people were seriously arguing for it—that wages growth was going too far and you needed to pull it back. They would then argue, 'That means we need to attack the unions.' Now, when the economic facts are so transparent and the Reserve Bank has been so clear that we need to get wages moving, the only thing that could be driving a bill like this is a pathological hatred of unions, because it is not interests of the economy, it's not in the interests of the workplace, and it's a law that is begging to be weaponised—and I'll get to that shortly.

But the legislation that's in front of us is at least consistent with how this government has behaved. Effectively they've had three themes whenever they talk about workplace laws in Australia. They had the Registered Organisations Commission—thoroughly politicised and discredited; the organisation that decided its biggest issue to go after just happened to be something from a time years back when the previous Leader of the Opposition had been outside the parliament. Just by accident that happened to be the one they focused on. Then they were involved in the extraordinary circumstance where the police turned up after the media. David De Garis, an adviser to Minister Cash, resigned that night after admitting he had tipped off the media. Later it was revealed that Mark Lee, an adviser to the Registered Organisations Commission, had been about to start a job in Minister Cash's office. He also resigned but denied he was the source of the leak. Then her former chief of staff, Ben Davies, tells the Federal Court that, no, he had in fact been the source of the leak. That's their first organisation.

The second is the ABCC, headed by Nigel Hadgkiss at the time—and why did he have to resign? For breaching the Fair Work Act. These sorts of people are the ones they want for integrity. Throughout all of this, for the simple game of desperately trying to get members and former leaders of the Labor Party in the dock in a royal commission, they established the trade union royal commission, headed by the talent at a Liberal Party fundraiser, who, when challenged as to whether or not he was biased, decided there would be a hearing as to whether he was biased—a hearing presided over by himself, where he heard the arguments from both sides and then decided he was not biased and went ahead with the royal commission. That has been the way this government has sought to deal with workplace laws.

Today is just the next instalment in a ridiculous, antiworker line. Let's not pretend: if you come up with anti-union legislation, it's going to turn out to be anti-worker legislation, because workers will not get improvements in their conditions, they will not get pay raises and they will not get policing for occupational health and safety and against wage theft unless unions are strong. This legislation is about trying every step of the way to attack workers' organisations and to attack union representatives in the workforce.

Unions, of course, are fundamentally different organisations to corporations. A corporation's first job is to carry out a fiduciary duty. Their first job is to seek profit, and they have to do that within a competition framework. The first duty of a union is to be representative. Their first duty is to be democratic organisations. So we don't accept the whole argument that the government has wanted to put on corporate equivalence. But, if that is the test, they've still failed it.

The bill in front of us goes through four different areas. It goes through: disqualification of union officials; deregistration of organisations themselves; administration of organisations; and amalgamations. I want to have a look at each of those four in turn. The first is the disqualification point and, to hear the government's talking points, it's the only one they want to talk about. It's the one that they've decided to pin all their rhetoric to. All their rhetoric is on the disqualification point, and they hope that they can just shepherd everything else through without anyone noticing. That's how they've argued. How many times have we heard them talk about the amalgamation section? It's the most fundamentally undemocratic piece of worker legislation you could imagine in an Australian parliament. It basically says the Australian Electoral Commission will conduct a ballot and we're then allowed to ignore the result. I'll get to the detail of that. It's extraordinary what is in this bill.

But let me start with the disqualification point. This is the one they want to talk about all the time. This is the one where they say they're wanting to make sure that they can disqualify the worst union officials. On the way they've structured this, first of all, who can make the complaint? The complaint can be made by any person of sufficient interest. There is no clause like this in the Corporations Law—no clause at all. You can understand why. Could you imagine company directors finding that anyone could say, 'I don't think you're up to the job,' and then could commence legal action and they would be committed to going ahead and trying to draw on a defence within the act? The government would never bring that sort of legislation in. The opposition wouldn't bring that sort of
legislation in. But the government will do it when it's about trade unions, even though there is absolutely no corporate equivalence in the concept that anyone otherwise undefined, any person of sufficient interest, is able to launch these legal actions.

What constitutes a breach, then? The bill deals with criminal and civil proceedings and unrelated conduct. First of all, it is already the case under the Fair Work Act that, for union officials, there are circumstances where they can be barred. They can be barred if they've engaged in fraud and been found guilty. They can already be barred if they're convicted of a violent crime. That could already happen. But what happens here is there's automatic disqualification opened up for anyone who is convicted of something that carries a maximum five-year sentence, even if they're not sentenced to that. There can be many occasions. Let's go through a simple example. If someone drives without a licence twice—they shouldn't do that! That's why there's a penalty if you do that. The judge might decide that in the circumstances they were in—they might have been getting someone to hospital or something like that—they get no custodial sentence at all. But they are forever barred from being a union official under this. Sorry, where's the corporate equivalent? There isn't one! Nor should there be, because it's a ridiculous law.

A technical breach, for example, is where you give notice when you're inspecting a dangerous work site but you don't give the right sort of notice, so there's an administrative error in how the notice is given; or investigating the rampant underpayment of workers and you technically do it in the wrong way, even though you do give notice of it. An application can be made by the very business that you were investigating to say you need to be knocked out as an official. Think about that. Think about the way businesses would be able to weaponise this legislation. In the course of a dispute they won't have to stick to the merit and they won't have to remain on the argument; they could in fact simply say, 'Well, I'm now going to go after you.' The parallel would be if a union could bring an action under the corporations law to disqualify the company directors as part of ambit within an argument. It's an absurd thing.

You don't have to think for long to see how this will be weaponised by the worst people. If you want to start with the worst people, start with Gerry Hanssen. Start with the donor to the Liberal Party who apparently, from all the reports, is still a member of the Liberal Party. No-one has sought to kick him out of their party, but he's a prominent construction boss in the west. He's been fined more than $60,000 by the Federal Court for blocking union officials from a building site where a worker had just died. A worker died, people went to conduct a health and safety inspection and he denied them access. He's been fined $60,000 for that. He's a well-known Liberal Party member and donor. He's donated an estimated $175,000 to the federal and WA Libs and Nats over the last five years or so. He is a repeat offender. In 2008 he was fined $174,000 for exploiting foreign workers. A decade later, an audit alleged 93 employees were underpaid more than $271,000. That's called wage theft.

Guess what his punishment would be under the law that's in front of the parliament at the moment? Wage theft, taking advantage of foreign workers, denying a health and safety inspection—what's the penalty for him? He's not allowed to run to be a union official. That'll hurt him! That's the law that's in front of the parliament right now. It's that ridiculous. The punishment for someone who remains a member of the Liberal Party, who remains cosy with those opposite, who has behaved in this appalling way and who's said to have a pathological hatred for unions is that he won't be allowed to be a union official. On the scale of things, I reckon that's unlikely to hurt him. I reckon he's unlikely to get too upset about that. That's the only penalty that comes to him as a result of the legislation that's in front of us.

The principles on deregistration in this bill are equally absurd. When people talk about unauthorised industrial action, you think, 'Oh, unauthorised industrial action sounds pretty serious,' and people often want to go to the most extreme examples. But what in fact does the bill in front of us include? What does the bill in front of us encompass? For those of you who catch public transport—maybe those opposite don't—unauthorised industrial action includes times when private bus drivers, sometimes public and sometimes private, or train drivers go through a period where they don't collect tickets. Another example of industrial action would be if, in fast food, a group of workers, as part of a campaign, said they were now refusing to follow the directive and would not ask, 'Would you like fries with that?' Or if a group of nurses decide they are going to take unauthorised industrial action by handing out leaflets explaining that they don't think the patient ratios are good enough—and it is not authorised and it is caught under the bill in front of us—what do those circumstances mean? The entire union they are members of can be deregistered. That's a bit extreme. Yes, it is. I don't know what it is doing in legislation. In the legislation that is in front of us right now, those will be grounds for deregistration of the entire organisation.

Are there defences? Yes, there are defences—of course there are—and a judge would have to work that out. But the action can be commenced, and the union then gets tied up in the courts. And the only protection you might think there is then is: 'As if the commission would bring an action like that!' That's true. The only problem is that it doesn't have to be the commission that brings the action. Once again, any person with sufficient interest gets to
take the action. It might be the boss. It might be the employer. It might be the customer. It might be anyone deemed to have a sufficient interest. It is a deliberate and calculated attempt to prevent workers from organising.

I know that those opposite want to characterise the average union member as a bloke, probably roughly my height—but significantly stronger than me!—involved in a blue-collar industry, who gets into lots of fights. That's how they want to characterise the modern union movement. But the typical union member these days is a woman in aged care. That is what the union movement has become these days. Yes, there is still membership in those other areas—of course there is—but don't pretend that the legislation in front of us affects only those people. Because it doesn't. For the sake of wanting to have an argument over a handful of union officials, this government, this legislation, is looking at fundamentally changing the balance and changing the calculation of what can happen in a negotiation. This takes you completely beyond the merits of an industrial dispute.

Some people will hear my examples and say: 'But they still shouldn't do that. They are paid. They've got their jobs. They shouldn't be conducting any sort of protest in the workplace.' Can I just remind people that the reason we ended up with the Sunday trading in New South Wales was that an employer, Gerry Harvey—a famous one; he used to run Norman Ross and he now runs Harvey Norman—decided to break the law and open even when Sunday trading was banned. He paid the fine anyway—because paying the fine was part of the business model—and he boasted on radio that he was making more money by opening the store than he was losing through the fine. I remember. It was at the Norman Ross store at Kogarah, not far from me. These are examples that will exist, not only within the union movement, of the concept of something being technically banned civilly; there is an administrative error or it something that is part of workers standing up for themselves and trying to get pay rises—or, in the case of the nurse examples, just standing up for their profession and wanting to guarantee better care.

If those opposite say they don't want those examples to apply to this bill then take them out. But if you take those examples out, there is not much of this legislation left—because everything has been drafted. This bill is not capable of amendment to get rid of these examples. With the way everything here has been drafted, they either don't understand how unions work or how this would be weaponised—if I want to think the best of the minister responsible for this; I don't really, but just work with me—or, if I'm thinking a bit more practically, they want to weaken the capacity of unions to stand up for workers. They want a law that can be weaponised. They want a law that increases the capacity of employers, in the middle of a dispute, to say: 'You want to demand that pay rise? You want to raise that condition? You want to demand those ratios? I'll show you!'

If you don't think there will be employers who'll do that, look at Gerry Harvey. It'll happen unless those opposite decide to stand up for the national interest—I'm not holding my breath, but still hopeful—or, in the Senate, the crossbench end up blocking this. There is no corporate equivalence for this sort of behaviour, if that's their test. If the test is 'what's best for the workplace' this thing fails at every level. Imagine if it were the reverse. Imagine if, when Gerry Harvey ran those protests all those years ago to get Sunday trading up in Sydney, the union had been able to say, 'We're going to take away your right to run the company.' That is the corporate equivalence of what's in front of us.

When you get to the section on whether or not a union can go into administration, it's the same story again. Once again, what's the standing provision? A person of sufficient interest. There is no corporate equivalent to that. There is absolutely no corporate equivalent for this sort of clause in schedule 3. Even the regulator can't do what this bill is saying that any person of sufficient interest will be able to do. Even the regulator doesn't have the sort of power that the government are now wanting to give to any random as long as the power is being used against a union—as long as it is being used an employee organisation. It is an absurd way of trying to govern.

But I think the most undemocratic of all is amalgamations. This is where you have two different organisations that decide that they want to amalgamate. In wanting to amalgamate the two organisations have to conduct a ballot. Those ballots are overseen by the Australian Electoral Commission. The bill in front of us says that, even if the first organisation votes majority yes and the second organisation votes majority yes, you can then take that to court to try to prevent it from going ahead. I have to say that there have been occasions, even this year, when I haven't liked the outcome from reports of the Australian Electoral Commission. You would all be aware of it. It's part of why I am on this side of the House. But the concept that this House would pass a bill that says that even if the Electoral Commission conducts a ballot you can then ignore it is phenomenal. It goes completely against the fundamental principle of freedom of association.

Those opposite have been really quick to jump and really tough to argue when it's been about freedom of speech and when they have been talking about 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act. When it has been an argument about whether someone who has racist views can be really loud, they have been big on the freedom argument. I just wish they didn't go missing when it came to freedom of the press or freedom of association. They have gone completely missing. How can you get a bigger departure from freedom of association than to say that
the Electorate Commission will conduct the ballot and you get to ignore it anyway? The Electoral Commission conducts the ballot and you get to ignore it anyway, based on an otherwise undefined national interest test.

As I said in relation to the Electoral Commission, a few months ago, I would have loved to have gone to the court arguing it was against the national interest. I don't think it really was in the national interest how that AEC decision turned out.

_Government members interjecting—_

Mr BURKE: I know you've got another view. I accept that.

Mr Pasin: Also shared by a majority of Australians

Mr BURKE: And I accept that. I will take that interjection. Here is a view. A majority of the members of both organisations share the view that they want to be one organisation. Why on earth would there be a right to then take that to the court and say, 'It's their organisation. It only exists because they've joined together and formed these two organisations. But we're not going to let them have the freedom of a democratic vote as to whether it should be one organisation'? How do you argue that?

Mr Chester: Same as shareholders.

Mr BURKE: You missed the beginning of the speech. The reason that the issue of shareholders is completely different is that a company is there to provide protection for investors in the event that they can't provide for their bills. That's what limited liability is about. Because that's the privilege of it, there's a fiduciary duty in competition law that comes in. There's no national interest test as to whether or not there's a democratic process of shareholders here. That's not how it works, because, at the start, the first role of companies is not to be representative bodies. I don't go out to buy shares in some company so that they'll advocate publicly for my interests, but that is why someone joins a union.

It's about freedom of association. The concept that there could be a vote conducted by the Australian Electoral Commission and then ignored by this government has no precedent, flies in the face of the entire concept of freedom of association and should not be backed by this House or the other house. There are other governments in the world that have laws like this; they're just not the sorts of countries that we want to be compared to. In the countries we'd usually like to be compared to, these sorts of laws don't exist.

So, whether it is the capacity to try to weaponise the law against individual union officials, whether it's to weaponise the law against the entire registration of a union, whether it's to put them into administration or whether it's to prevent a democratic vote, the legislation in front of us is transparent. The government wants to make it more difficult for unions because unions will argue for pay rises, against wage theft and for better health and safety at the workplace, and they're the principles that this government has committed to get in the way of. Be in no doubt: we're not running from the argument on this. Be in no doubt: we're fighting every step of the way on this. For those opposite: be in no doubt that, when your attack is simply on workers' entitlements and the organisations that argue for them, we will stand up to you.

The SPEAKER: Just for neatness, I ask whether the second reading amendment is seconded.

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

Debate adjourned.

GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S SPEECH

Address-in-Reply

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That the following Address in Reply to the speech of His Excellency the Governor-General be agreed to:

May it please Your Excellency:

We, the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Australia, in Parliament assembled, desire to express our loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to thank Your Excellency for the speech which you have been pleased to address to Parliament.

The SPEAKER (17:07): Before I call the honourable member for Stirling, I remind the House that this is the honourable member's first speech, and I ask the House to extend to him the usual courtesies.

Mr CONNELLY (Stirling) (17:07): While I was writing this speech, my wife, Peta, gave me the kind of wise and blunt advice which I have come to expect and to rely upon. She said, 'Vinny, don't try to be witty or charming or intellectual; just be yourself.' It is quite good advice, and so, as usual, I decided that I would take it. I was also encouraged by the eloquence and courage that my fellow new parliamentarians have applied during their maiden speeches, sharing their personal stories and shedding a light on why they have fought to be here. They've all said in a variety of ways that they are here because of others and they are here for others. Friends have asked me,
'Vince, why do you want to go into politics?' My answer has been consistent and simple: it's because this is my opportunity to do the most good that I can do.

The twin values I'm anchored in are service and teamwork. My first career was as an Army officer, and I've since worked in business, raised a family and volunteered in my local community. So today I'm going to share a few stories which I hope will illuminate the experiences that have shaped me and why I have fought so desperately to be here.

Growing up, there were six of us kids—a good Catholic family, as the saying goes. As you can imagine, it was a very busy household, and it was my first exposure to the importance—and the benefits—of teamwork. I remember what we used to call 'Saturday morning jobs', which our parents forced us to perform before we were off the hook to play. My brother Anthony emerged as a natural leader, delegating jobs to the rest of us. Naturally, the local community was extremely disappointed and some were even inclined to protest. This was the genesis of a group that became known as 'Tollbusters', led by my mother Suzzie. These Tollbusters went to the extent of setting up a campsite next to that motorway, which they staffed 24 hours a day, rain, hail or shine, for two full years. This was a committed team serving their local community.

There was even one occasion where my Mum led a black ops raid, the likes of which I'm sure my colleague the member for Canning would be proud! That night, Mum coordinated a team who snuck up and wrapped the toll booths in plastic and covered them with shaving cream, waving happy motorists through for free. Naturally, the local police kindly offered Mum a free ride back to the station. After six years of protest activity, the government finally removed those tolls. And 30 years later they're still too scared to put them back on!

So apart from the excitement of being able to go to school and tell my mates my Mum got arrested, this episode and the Tollbuster campaign taught me two important lessons. Firstly, it taught me about the power of working together as a team towards a shared mission. Here in this place, our worldviews are no doubt as diverse as those amongst those Tollbusters. But we are all here to achieve a common mission: a stronger, more prosperous nation. We are all on 'Team Australia'. Secondly, my mother's example taught me about the critical importance of volunteers serving and leading within their local communities.

With these lessons in mind, straight out of school I enlisted into the Australian Defence Force Academy and went on to serve as an officer for nine years full-time and the last 15 years as a reservist. Whilst in the Army, I had the great privilege to deploy on operations as a platoon commander to East Timor and as a Company Second in Command at Australia's first push into Solomon Islands. Through these deployments, I was a direct witness to the significant and positive role Australia plays internationally, especially within our own region.

I believe in extending compassion to those who need it. Australia truly is the lucky country; you only have to travel to any other country on earth to see clearly that our standard of living and our social cohesion, whilst not perfect, are the envy of the world. So I believe we have a responsibility and the resources to lend a hand to others. Our region of the world continues to face strategic challenges and we will also continue to face humanitarian disasters. I have seen firsthand the amazing outcomes achieved through the application of our Defence and other national resources in military and humanitarian operations, and I am thrilled now to be in a position to leverage my knowledge and experience to help contribute to the strategy which guides Australia's important deployments. Once again, the door has been opened for me to do more good.

My second career was in the mining and oil and gas sectors, where I worked as a risk and crisis management specialist—skills that some have suggested may also come in handy in politics! The experience of having worked in business for the last decade and a half has helped me understand the challenges faced by businesses small and large. I understand that, with the right policy settings, benefits can be enjoyed by individual workers, employers and shareholders.

Recently, the minister for, and tireless advocate of, small and family businesses, Michaelia Cash, joined me in visiting small businesses in Stirling. This government backs small and family businesses because we recognise that they are the backbone of our economy. In Stirling, there are 19½ thousand small and medium businesses who are benefiting from the ongoing support of coalition policies. Just one great example is Adrian's Balcatta Car Care Centre. Adrian proudly took Michaelia and I through his workshop, and he showed us hydraulic lifts that he had purchased using the instant asset write-off—a real business booster recently increased by this government. The
most important benefit was for the safety of his workers. Moreover, these new lifts meant better productivity and better outcomes for customers, with their cars back on the road sooner.

At a personal level, I’ve seen, through my own participation and volunteering in sporting and community groups, the significant benefits that these organisations provide. In my time as the member for Stirling, I will be relentless in my support for our community organisations and the amazing work that they undertake.

Recently, this belief was punctuated by a moment where deeds, rather than words, were required. My wife, Peta, loves this website called Buy Nothing. It’s a little bit like eBay or Gumtree, but instead goods are traded for no fee. What’s more, the website is ultra local, with trading occurring within just one suburb—or, at most, two neighbouring suburbs.

Through a transaction involving a cupboard, my wife met a young mother who lived just a couple of streets away. The young mother, whose name I won’t use, called Peta at about 10 pm one night. It was a Saturday night, and we were watching a movie at home. She’d called Peta out of the blue because she had no other family or friends, and her home had become unsafe for her and her children. So, of course, we jumped straight in the car and headed over there. When we got there, we defused the immediate domestic situation and bundled the young lass, along with her baby and two toddlers, into our car and took them around to our place. We were very pleased to have them staying with us for a couple of days and nights. But then we really didn’t know what to do next. So my wife googled it, and she came across the Stirling Women’s Centre. When Peta called them, they said: ‘Bring the family in. We’ll take care of everything.’ And they did. The young mother and kids stayed there for about a week before being resettled in a safer environment.

Just a few weeks later, I visited the women’s centre, because the government had earlier provided the funding which enabled the outdoor area and playground to be renovated. And then, just this month on a Wednesday night, I was with the Lions Club of North Beach, also in my electorate, at their monthly meeting. The secretary was taking us through a PowerPoint presentation of all of the projects that they’ve helped in the last 12 months, and guess what? It was the Stirling Lions Club who had, with federal government funding, provided the labour to renovate the outdoor area used by that young mother and her children during their recent stay.

Funnily enough, the story doesn’t quite end there. The next PowerPoint slide that the Lions crew showed during that presentation was a picture of them cooking a barbecue breakfast for the local RSL Anzac Day commemoration, and that RSL club in North Beach is the same one that my wife and I had joined a few years earlier after an Anzac Day morning service and a wonderful breakfast cooked by those Lions clubs.

There is no substitute for locals choosing locals to represent them in parliament. Not one part of that story would have been possible if we had not joined the local RSL club, participated in our local community and offered a safe place to stay for a neighbour in need. This is a story about the interconnectedness of local communities. This story also shows that there is a very important role that government plays, a role that I now commit to play in helping to make Stirling an even better place to live, to work and to raise a family.

Whilst Stirling lays claim to some beautiful beaches, including Scarborough, Trigg and Watermans Bay, that is just one part of our character. It is actually our social character, our diversity, which is our key national offering. Stirling is the most ethnically diverse electorate in the country. Nearly half of the people in Stirling—46 per cent, to be exact—were born overseas. And a language other than English is spoken in one in every three homes.

I come to this parliament from the most diverse electorate at a time when the parliament itself is increasingly diverse. Last week we welcomed the first Chinese-born woman as an MP in this place. Recently we also celebrated the first Indigenous Minister for Indigenous Australians. My children are also living in an age of unprecedented diversity, the age where we saw the first Australian female Prime Minister—a time when all sides of politics and the community can be thankful for this.

One example of celebrating diversity is that, in March this year, the inaugural Colours of Italy festival was held right in the middle of my electorate. Promoted locally by the community through social media channels, there were 20,000 visitors on that one day. I wish I could share with you here some of the sights, the smells, the sounds and the flavours of that wonderful day.

One of the most practical and effective ways for migrants to find a valuable place in our society is to secure employment. Under Mayor Mark Irwin's leadership, the City of Stirling, in partnership with both the state and the federal government, is helping new skilled migrants to the City of Stirling to become job-ready through the Kaleidoscope Initiative. This program matches newcomers with mentors from similar backgrounds, helping break down barriers that they might face to employment. This nation-leading initiative has been recognised, with Kaleidoscope winning the Overall Award for Excellence at this year's National Awards for Local Government.

As well as keeping our community groups strong, we have to keep them safe. The Mirrabooka mosque was successful in securing funding ahead of the election for security upgrades, thanks to the advocacy of their local
member at the time and my predecessor, Michael Keenan. Michael served this place with distinction for 15 years, and I'm grateful for this opportunity to continue his excellent work. The Jewish community centre in Dianella and the aged-care facility nearby are also in need of upgrades to their capacity and their security, and I'm currently fighting for those projects. Government's first priority is to keep our citizens safe.

I'm grateful that, on this side of the chamber, there is a strong sense that religious freedoms must also be respected and protected. Aussies just reckon that it's right that we should have freedom of thought, of speech and of belief. As a soldier, I defended these values. As a businessman, I benefited from these values. And as the new member for Stirling, I commit to upholding these values.

My presence here is due to the amazing efforts of the team who supported me: first and foremost, my wife, Peta. Peta herself is a former Australian Army Intelligence Corps major. Peta served with Special Operations, both in Australia and overseas. I fell in love with Peta for two reasons: firstly, because she's beautiful; secondly, because she is strong. I knew she was strong enough to be with me on a life journey which was not going to be normal, which has involved sacrifice—not just ours, but for our children as well. Baby, you live a life of sacrifice and of service more than I ever will.

To my amazing children, Tiggy, Tyler and Noah: sure, your mates gently teased you at school but your presence, along with their mates, in the blue Vince Connelly shirts on the campaign were absolutely awe inspiring! Now I hope that you can enjoy sharing with me and Mum this responsibility our whole family now has of contributing to our national democracy.

To Mum and Dad: as well as being amazing role models, you put your belief in me into action. You lived in our house during the campaign for two full months to make sure that, as a team, we were completely focussed on our single mission. I thank you so much. Thank you also to my siblings, Michelle, Anthony, Michael, Simon and Steven. It seems a long time since those Saturday morning jobs and building treehouses, but you were the first team I had the pleasure of belonging to.

To my campaign chair, Rob Paparde, and team leader, Chris Tan: thank you for skipping meals, showers, sleep and more to be with me during the battle. To the rest of my campaign team: you made the impossible possible. Thank you to Aiden Depiazi; Ben Martin; Melinda Poor; Lara Chambers and clan; Georgina Fraser; Eleni Evangel; Jo Quinn; Maddi White; Damien Kelly; Trish Botha; Karlo Perkov; John Iacomella; Dave Martinich; Dee Tart; Chris Hatton; Louis Meyer; Taylor Watson and Anton Lukas. And thank you to our friends on this journey: Ben Wallis; Julian Ambrose and Em Nutbeen; Brent and Daniel; the Samuels; the Ogilvie family; Tony Brooks; George Naoum; Phil Paiollo and Graham Hardie.

Thank you, Prime Minister, for your close support. When you came to launch the surf lifesaving carnival titles in Scarborough, you stayed for selfies with the kids—and with the big kids—who appreciated your passion for surf lifesaving. But they appreciated even more the fact that you were a just a down-to-earth Aussie. To our Treasurer: our Stirling Business Association are already booking you back in, and I know you're keen to get back there again.

To Senator Reynolds, our Defence Minister: thank you for helping me navigate the strategic complexity of campaigning in local shopping centres, an important battleground of social connection. Thank you to Senators Cormann, Smith, Brockman and O'Sullivan for your advice and support. To WA Liberal HQ, state president Fay Duda and director Sam Calabrese: you and the team nailed it.

I now look forward to working with my amazing new office team, Claire Bradley, Scott Stirling, Anton Smit and Lachy Parish. Like my colleagues, I am still learning the ropes, but I'm bringing the values I've grown up with to meet this challenge. I bring my experience in teamwork and in selfless service from the family home, through Defence operations and into business and community volunteering. And I offer my service again.

This moment feels a little bit like a wedding. I'm talking about the love that I have and the commitment that I'll make. So, without in any way diluting the first and most important vows, that I made to my beautiful wife, Peta, let me nonetheless end with another vow. And so, in the presence of friends, family, colleagues and the national media I commit to contributing to the ever-unfinished business of democracy; I commit to the intergenerational imperative to leave for our children a better world than was left for us; and I commit now and for every day ahead of me to do as I have always done—to provide selfless service as part of a team and to give my full measure of devotion to my fellow Australians, to doing the most good that I can do.

I thank the House.

Debate adjourned.
to which the following amendment was moved:

That all words after "That" be omitted with a view to substituting the following words:
"the House:
(1) declines to give the bill a second reading; and
(2) notes that:
(a) this Government has not proposed legislation to deal with important workplace relations matters, such as wage theft, flat lining wages growth, or deaths in the workplace;
(b) this bill and the Act it seeks to amend represent an inconsistent approach by the Government to responding to Royal Commissions; and
(c) the Government's entire approach to workplace relations laws is to attack workers' organisations with the specific intention of weakening the capacity of those organisations to combat wage theft, achieve wage growth, and ensure that workplaces are safe".

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Vasta) (17:32): 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 amendment be agreed to.

Mrs WICKS (Robertson) (17:33): I rise to support the Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Amendment (Ensuring Integrity) Bill 2019 because our government has a strong belief not only that the rule of law should be respected but that those who choose to break the law should be held to account. The reintroduction of this bill demonstrates our commitment to upholding the rule of law in this country, and I make no apology for supporting a bill that requires registered organisations to operate within the law for the benefit of their members and not themselves.

This bill contains measures that were called for by the trade union royal commission, and there have been some important changes made since its first iteration in 2017. I think it's also important to note that this bill has been amended from earlier versions to reflect many of the concerns that were raised by members opposite. The measures in this bill are designed to ensure registered organisations in this country are working in the members' interests and always within the bounds of the law. The bill is also specifically designed to zero in on any organisations or individuals that are not doing the right thing by their members. The fact is that unions, employer organisations and their appointed officers have a privileged position, with many members placing a great deal of trust in them. Members expect them to act in their interests and to treat their positions with the respect they deserve. It's important to note that there are many registered organisations that are doing the right thing. There are many that are treating their members fairly, contributing in a positive way and abiding by the law. But this bill is not going to impact organisations that are already doing the right thing. It is only the organisations or officials that are doing the wrong thing, and that continue to do so, that will be affected. The bill applies equally to unions and employer organisations, and only to conduct occurring after the commencement of this bill.

I'd like to focus for a moment on schedule 1 of the bill, which will amend the act by expanding the circumstances in which an official of a registered organisation may be automatically disqualified from office. In addition, this schedule makes it a criminal offence for a person disqualified from holding office in a registered organisation from continuing to hold that office. The Federal Court will also be given further discretionary powers, to disqualify an official from holding office in certain circumstances. These amendments are important for improving public confidence in the integrity of registered organisations and to hold to account repeated law-breakers who are currently holding or significantly influencing the office of a registered organisation.

It's really unfortunate that this action is required but we know that some unions just do not take the rule of law seriously. We've heard in this place about how John Setka's militant mega union, the CFMMEU, has been fined more than $16 million—and counting—for breaking the law. The CFMMEU also has more than 2,000 breaches and 74 representatives currently before the courts. It's really not surprising then that a Federal Court judge described the CFMMEU as the most recidivist corporate offender in Australian history.

It makes me sad to say to the House that in my electorate on the Central Coast I have seen some of the behaviour we've come to expect from some of these militant unions and unionists. I've seen some of this behaviour first-hand, during campaigns on prepoll and on polling day. And I know I'm not alone. I note that the
member for Boothby has publicly spoken about her experience. I commend her for speaking out and sharing her story. I think it needs to be said, I think we need to call this behaviour out and I think we need to take action. This is part of the reason that I’m speaking in support of this bill. I’m proud to be part of this government, which is taking this issue seriously and making sure that registered organisations, union and employer organisations and their officials operate within the law.

My volunteers and I have been subject to some appalling behaviour during the recent campaign, including when one of my volunteers was allegedly physically assaulted outside a polling booth by a person in a union-branded T-shirt. Others were incredibly subjected to verbal abuse that in some cases was not only downright offensive but also wildly inappropriate and defamatory. Members of the union and elected union officials who were working on polling booths and prepoll regularly cast aspersions about my volunteers, me and other local elected representatives, making highly offensive and derogatory comments on a number of occasions. When we called out this inappropriate behaviour—which, of course, if it was done or said in the school yard, or on the floor of an office, would be called out for what it is, bullying—the most common reaction that we got was for them to defend their actions and say, 'It was perfectly fine,' because we were Liberals. Therefore, it was okay.

When it got particularly bad—so bad that many members who were not campaigning for me, cringed as well—on more than one occasion, members of even the Labor Party, union representatives and their volunteers indicated that they didn't feel they were able to call out or to stand up to this inappropriate behaviour of union officials, because of their position. We had other members in union campaign T-shirts urinating in front of a young female member, who was on my campaign team. A number of my campaign posters were defaced, slashed and dumped outside our electorate office, which, of course, is almost par for the course these days. Union members in 'Change the rules' T-shirts were part of what appeared to be a planned attempt to shame me in public, chanting what were quite frankly disgusting comments about my character, in front of my two children, who, I might say, are eight and 10 years of age. Some of these comments were also part of a paid social media campaign on the Facebook and Instagram pages of New South Wales Labor.

Why did this happen? Well, it's because I dared to have a different view and I dared to speak up about it. Sadly, I know that the member for Boothby and I are not unique in our experiences. Many of our colleagues have had similar ones. I note, though, that it seems that in recent years this behaviour and this standard has gotten worse, not better.

I raise these experiences because I am committed to calling out this behaviour whenever it occurs. There is neither a need nor a defence for thuggery and intimidation, no matter where it occurs, and I make no apology for standing up to this behaviour in my electorate, at polling places and in this place. It is not enough for unions like the CFMMEU to say they have progressive policies and ideas, they have a policy about bullying in the workplace or equality. It is just not true. Their actions have to match what they say they support and believe. We know that some do, and some are doing the right thing. But some are not. Some are part of militant unions that show blatant disregard for their members and the law.

The standard you accept is the standard you walk by. Right now, by opposing this bill, members opposite are effectively saying they think that what is going on right now because the country is somehow acceptable. How can the Leader of the Opposition say publicly that he does not support the actions of John Setka? How can he call for his expulsion from the Labor Party but somehow not support legislation that would see someone such as John Setka, if he continued his unlawful behaviour, be expelled from his position as a union official?

On this side, we believe that the thuggish behaviour of militant unionists should be banned and there should be consequences for those who continue to act unlawfully. That is what this bill does—and members opposite are opposing it. On this side of the House, we are taking action on the militant unions in this country and those who act unlawfully and time and again. This behaviour is a danger to some employees and to our economy. Lawbreaking unions can, for example, increase the cost of roads, hospitals and schools by up to 30 per cent.

Members opposite, in opposing this, have some serious questions to answer. Why do they see the systematic lawbreaking that we have seen from unions like the CFMMEU as acceptable? Why is it appropriate for the Labor Party to continue to take $1 million a year from a union that seems to have a budget built in for fines? Are they on the side of Australians working hard to get ahead—or are they on the side of militant unions and big union money? The bill will help unions and employer groups to work for their members and not for themselves. That is what we on this side of the House are about. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr BANDT (Melbourne) (17:42): It is not unusual to find this government in breach of international laws that it has signed up to. We see it all the time when it comes to the treatment of people who come here seeking our help as refugees or asylum seekers. And we find it repeatedly in respect of industrial law as well. This government steps in and regulates the affairs of workers and their unions in a way that most other countries don’t. And this
government does not do that with companies either. We know why this government would want to do that. It is very obvious. It has been clear from the beginning that the government is engaged in a political battle with the opposition. And the government sees that the opposition gets a bit of a leg up from unions, so it uses its power to step in and say: 'We're going to see what we can do to fix that, to change the outcome of future elections by nobbying unions and stopping them from doing their job.' The government is pretty explicit about all that. But it then has the gall to come in here and say, 'We want to ensure integrity, and we're going to dress up our attack on the unions as being part of that.'

If the government really wanted to ensure integrity in Australia, we would have a federal anticorruption watchdog by now. People want it. The Greens have been pushing for it in this place for years. We don't have one because the government is not concerned about ensuring integrity across the board. If it were, we would have rules in place that mean politicians and other elected officials such as judges, and high-ranking public servants, would all know that there was a watchdog looking over their behaviour. We could then keep a bit of a straight face when the government says it is concerned about ensuring integrity because the government would have ensured that, at least within the patch that it controlled directly, there was integrity. But we don't have that. Instead, we have allegations of taxpayers' money being misspent on water that wasn't there or billions of dollars being spent as we watch our rivers dry up or ministers seeking meetings and getting briefings about properties that they have an interest in. All of that happens time after time and the government does nothing about it. But, when it comes to working people coming together and organising, then the government jumps on that. It then says: 'No, it's okay; all we're trying to do is level the playing field. All we're trying to do is make sure that we treat unions in the same way that we treat corporations.'

There's a very big difference which the government doesn't seem to understand. For the government, everything is about being run for profit. Companies are run for profit and their directors are obliged by law to act in the best interests of their companies and maximise the amount of money that they make and comply with the law. That is what the Corporations Act requires them to do. Unions are run largely by volunteers because they are about workers coming together to advance their interests. If it were the case that there were somehow some equivalence between corporations and unions, corporations would be run on a not-for-profit basis largely by volunteers, right? That's point 1. Point 1 is to recognise that, when we talk about unions in this country, we are talking about organisations that are largely run—and should be run—by people who work in the industry affected, who've stuck their hands up and said, 'I want to spend my time looking after the people that I work alongside and to do things to advance their common interests, and we want to come together to do that.' That's who sits on union committees of management or boards around the country. Those are the people in the workplace who are sticking up their hands to say, 'Yes, I'll be a delegate,' or 'I'll be a shop steward.' Those are the people who are going to be targeted by this bill.

Again, if there were some equivalence between corporations and unions—which there's not, but let's say there were because that's the government's argument—then the government would be introducing legislation that mirrors this bill. The government would be introducing legislation that would give me, or any other citizen who doesn't like what a particular director is doing, the right to go and take them to court and apply to disqualify them because we have a sufficient interest in doing that, because we think that they are somehow in breach of the law. I tell you what: I look forward to the day when the government says, 'Corporations now have to be run in a way that allows every interested member of the public the right to start taking directors to court and seeking that they lose their jobs.' I'm not sure that the Business Council of Australia has twigged to that yet, if that's what the government has in mind.

But, of course, the government's not going to do that, because this isn't about equivalence. This is about a particular set of laws that are targeted at one side, not the other. If the government is serious about equivalence between corporations and unions, it may come as a shock to all of those proprietary limited companies around Australia that now they are going to be required to open their books and start publishing their accounts on the website in the way that unions have to and that all of that's now going to have to be made publicly available in a way it hasn't been before. But, best of all, if there is going to be equivalence, as the government has said, then all corporations are now going to be governed by committees of management where everyone can just go and join a corporation and then decide to run and vote for who gets to be in charge and who gets to be the managing director. Apparently, I can go and stand as the managing director of BHP. If the government is right that there's going to be an equivalence between corporations and unions, every interested member of the public can now go out and join a company, if it's in their area, start running for positions and be the director or the vice-president. It is going to be a very interesting world when the government legislates for unions and corporations to be exactly the same.

But, of course, that's not going to happen, because they are very different organisations. It's like saying a football club is the same as a company. It is not. They are groups of people who come together for very different
purposes. One is about making a profit—because that's what the law says—and the other is about coming together to look after their interests. That's why there have been separate systems of regulation.

What will this new law mean for those people, for those largely volunteers, who come together to form unions to act in their own interests? It will mean that—unlike with corporations—a minister or, as I said, a person with sufficient interest, can now say, 'I don't think you're complying with the law; I'm going to go to court to make you prove that you're entitled to be there.' This, as the previous speaker said, is something that can now be incredibly easily weaponised. It means that, if someone comes into a workplace and says, 'I think you're underpaying; I want to come in and check whether or not you are paying people properly', there's nothing stopping that employer from saying: 'That person is being a bit too pesky and is asking to see my wage records. I reckon they might have fallen foul of this legislation, so I'm going to bring a case that they're no longer entitled to be a union official and I'll tie them up in court. I have more resources than them so I'll take them to court.' That's how this could be weaponised.

For people who choose to be union officials or union employees, the threshold as to whether they can keep their job is now going to be very different to what it is for company directors. One of the provisions, for example, relates to people who've fallen foul of offences where is there is a penalty of five years or more. They don't have to have spent five years in jail; that's just what has to be what goes along with the offence. So if you've driven without a licence or been involved in a car accident or infringed some part of some rule that means that you are now exposed to that—it could have absolutely nothing to do with your ability to be a good union official, and it may be that the magistrate or the judge in that case didn't impose a custodial sentence on you—you'd still find yourself falling foul of this law. That doesn't happen for company directors. That's just going to happen for people who are in unions.

It's also been said, 'This is going to ensure compliance with our industrial laws; it's going to ensure that people comply with them.' At the start, I mentioned international law. Australia has been routinely singled out by the UN's International Labour Organization for having laws about industrial action and about bargaining that do not comply with international laws. What does that mean? It means that, if you are a worker in this country and you want to take action to increase your wages, you have to jump through a series of hoops here and fill out forms and potentially go to the Fair Work Commission in a way that you don't have to in other countries. If you are a worker in this country and you want to take action to increase your wages, you have to jump through a series of hoops here and fill out forms and potentially go to the Fair Work Commission in a way that you don't have to in other places; in a way that has been described by the UN's body as being unduly restrictive and impinging on international conventions—and it does. We do things that other countries don't ask people to do.

If there's an issue that arises at work—like someone's just got sacked because they spoke up and asked for higher wages or there's an issue where you think, 'Something's just not right and I'm not coming back into the workplace until it's fixed'—and you walk out or half-a-dozen nurses say, 'I'm sorry; we're walking off the job until this problem is fixed,' that is potentially unlawful industrial action. If you've taken industrial action and you've filed the paperwork and it turns out that there is an error in your paperwork, that is potentially unlawful industrial action. Also, under this legislation, all of that could now be the grounds for getting rid of the union itself, for cancelling the registration of the union itself.

The legislation has words in it that, on some reading, might—if you're not familiar with this area—seem to be reasonable. On page 19 of the bill, proposed section 28G subsection (ii) says—and I am paraphrasing: 'This subsection covers industrial action other than protected industrial action that had or is likely to have a substantial adverse effect on the welfare of the community or part of the community.' You might think, 'Well, what could be objectionable about that?' If you go back and read the decisions of how words like this have been interpreted by the Fair Work Commission, a bunch of bus drivers went on strike and it was found that their action impacted on the welfare of the community because people couldn't catch buses. That is how low the threshold is now for this kind of provision.

You could have a situation where people are just taking legitimate industrial action that in most other countries would be protected in their law and that is protected in international law just because they're after a pay rise or because they're wanting to improve a condition at work. That is now, under this, potential grounds not just for making sure that someone, an official, can't be there anymore but for deregistering the union.

These are massive, broad powers being given not just to the Fair Work Commission but to the minister and interested parties to be able to bring cases to jump over a very low bar that has massive consequences, and that is why there is a great deal of concern about this legislation. The government dresses it up by using Orwellsian language about ensuring integrity. They ignore underpayments, they ignore wage theft when it happens elsewhere and they ignore a lack of integrity amongst their own ministers; they ignore all of that. They're interested in only one particular side of the political fence and they're interested only in coming after workers. They're not going to touch employers or politicians who do all of those things, so they leave all of that alone.
But when you delve into the detail of this bill, behind this name, which sounds like it might be alright 'ensuring integrity', if you know a little about this area of the law, this bill will mean that people who are doing nothing more than going about their job will now be at risk of having cases brought against them. Whole unions could face deregistration for actions that in most other countries would be legal and that should be legal under Australian law except that this government has made them illegal. For that reason this bill cannot be supported.

Mr WALLACE (Fisher) (17:57): Members opposite have occasionally accused those of us on this side of the House, and sometimes me, as being anti union. I doubt many would blame us if we were. I was in the building industry for 30 years. In a past life I was a carpenter and joiner, a builder and a building construction barrister. I've seen the best and the worst of what goes on in the building industry, but the truth is that we are not against unions. What we are against is unions that break the law—nothing more, nothing less. What we're saying, with the bills before the House this week and the Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Amendment (Ensuring Integrity) Bill 2019 today is that we will no longer tolerate a situation which says that it's okay to have one rule for some and a different rule for everybody else. That's what members want. It is what the unions want: one rule for them and a different rule for everybody else. We have seen this time and time again.

When two corporations want to merge, members opposite are the first to scrutinise the merger and ask whether it is in the public interest that these companies be allowed to act as their shareholders direct. When two unions want to merge, even if one of those unions is arguably the most lawless this country has ever seen, members opposite reject scrutiny and insist the union must be allowed to do whatever it chooses. When a corporation or an individual business leader breaks the law, members opposite are the first to call for severe and harsh penalties. They are the first to condemn any political party that may have taken donations from that corporation or that individual. Yet when the CFMMEU topped a record-breaking $16 million in fines for contraventions of the law, when they accumulated more than 2,000 separate incidents of law-breaking all over Australia, what did those opposite say? What did they do? All we hear from members opposite is excuses while they continue to bank the CFMMEU's seven-figure cheques.

In my state of Queensland we have seen a particularly sinister example of this special treatment. Under the Palaszczuk state Labor government, any individual or corporation with the remotest connection to a developer is banned by law from expressing their political beliefs by making a donation to a political party, no matter how modest. If a union, whether in the construction industry or otherwise, whether a constant and recidivist lawbreaker or not, wants to take its members' money and hand over millions to the Labor Party, that's absolutely fine. Not a problem! Nothing to see here. Is it any wonder that, after years of this special treatment from Labor governments, the unions no longer believe that even the law of the land applies to them. We've all heard, of course, the ACTU secretary, Sally McManus, say as much on national television. Ms McManus believes that if a union doesn't like a law they should be entitled to break it. Did members opposite condemn this outrageous suggestion? Of course they didn't. For members opposite and their friends in the CFMMEU and the ACTU it's one rule for the unions and one rule for every other person and entity in this country. Enough is enough. For too long some unions in this country have considered themselves above the law. For too long they have been encouraged and enabled in that belief by Labor parties at a state and federal level, who have been owned, lock, stock and barrel, by the CFMMEU.

This legislation, in combination with the raft of other measures that the coalition has introduced in this area, will help to end that perception and curb the illegal behaviour in workplaces all over Australia that is threatening the very integrity of our rule of law. Firstly, the bill permits the Federal Court to cancel the registration of an organisation on a wider and more streamlined set of grounds. Despite one infamous union accruing more than $4 million in fines in just the last financial year, the existing deregistration provisions in the Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act have never been utilised. Under the new bill, it will be easier for the Federal Court to make such a cancellation on the grounds of unlawful conduct, serious criminal offences, repeated breaches of industrial laws or illegal industrial action.

We all know how necessary this amendment is and why. The CFMMEU remind us, it seems, almost every week. With more than 2,000 separate incidents of law-breaking to choose from, it is difficult to select just a few examples of the CFMMEU's illegality. But one in particular stands out in illustrating exactly the kind of entrenched belief in their immunity to the law that this bill will help to stamp out. At the Barangaroo site in Sydney, union delegate Peter Genovese was suspended from his job for throwing a punch at a site manager and threatening to kill him. Anywhere but at the CFMMEU would these actions have resulted in that delegate's immediate termination. But the CFMMEU did not condemn Mr Genovese or launch an internal investigation into his conduct. They doubled down on it in the most dramatic fashion. Then New South Wales secretary Brian Parker and his senior colleagues responded by leading 1,000 workers in illegal industrial action, which shut down
the site. They shouted abuse at innocent workers who tried to do their work, calling them scum, dogs and far worse.

A policewoman at the site told the Federal Court that Mr Parker had, 'made sure that I was feeling either intimidated or scared'. She wasn't the only one. Union organiser Luke Collier described a government inspector at the site as, 'lower than a paedophile', and he proceeded to provide a crowd of workers with the inspector's mobile telephone number. I pose this question to those opposite: how can the Labor Party, which prides itself on standing against domestic violence and, particularly, violence against women and children, support a trade union regime that donates it millions of dollars yet which not only condones physical violence and intimidation against people on building sites but actually carries it out? Or do they threaten to carry it out. How can that be?

Where is the consistency of the Labor Party on this issue? Those opposite and their party machinery continue to take offending union money—millions and millions of dollars in donations—when the same union thugs are committing acts of violence in the workplace. Do those opposite suggest that unless you're a card-carrying union member that you do not have a right to enjoy a safe workplace, free of the threat of physical injury by virtue of such basic things as scaffolding, but then in the next breath suggest that those who do not toe the union line should die and that their children should be raped? What about the mental health of those people whose lives and livelihoods are threatened every single day on building sites around this country? What about that of their families? Where is Labor's sanctimonious chest beating about workplace health and safety for those people who dare not to toe the union line?

When the dust had settled and the CFMMEU had received a record single fine of $1.7 million, was the union's current leadership contrite? Are they any more fit to lead a registered organisation than their colleagues? I think we all know the answer to that now. Dave Noonan, the national secretary of the CFMMEU's construction division said that the laws are rotten and they need to be changed. In Queensland, disgraced former state CFMMEU president Dave Hanna demonstrated the union's attitude perfectly, when he illegally entered a worksite in Fortitude Valley. Having given the finger to one site manager and threatened to bury the mobile phone of another down his throat, Mr Hannah stated, 'I can do what I like'. As Justice John Logan said in his judgement in that case the CFMMEU, 'cannot expect to remain registered in its existing form'. How right Justice Logan is.

This bill would not only provide the court with greater discretion to deregister the CFMMEU and others, if it sees fit, but also to make alternative orders for remedial action or to appoint an administrator where it believes these actions are necessary. These powers bring the law as it applies to unions much closer to the law as it applies to corporations in this country. No longer will it be one rule for unions and another for everyone else. I hope what we do today will force the CFMMEU to change their ways. If they do not, personally, I hope that the court will see fit to use its new powers to stand up for workers and to deregister this rogue organisation.

Secondly, the bill makes it easier to disqualify people who are unfit to hold office in a registered organisation. If you are a criminal convicted of a serious offence you cannot be a company director. This bill ensures that union officials must abide by the same rules by introducing an automatic disqualification for those who have been convicted of serious criminal offences punishable by five years or more imprisonment.

However, during the Heydon royal commission and in many court cases since, we have heard countless examples of union officials who don't commit serious criminal offences but breach their duties, abuse their privileges, act in contempt of court and engage in repeated acts of blackmail, extortion and coercion. We cannot permit that behaviour to continue. This bill would help to control unlawful, thuggish behaviour by allowing the Federal Court to disqualify officials from holding office where they have contravened industrial laws, repeatedly failed to take reasonable steps to stop their organisation from breaking the law or where they are otherwise not a fit and proper person to hold office in a registered organisation.

All in all, I imagine there are a great many CFMMEU officials around Australia following the progress of this legislation closely and reflecting very carefully on what they have done. They know that, after we pass this bill, no longer will it be one rule for unions and another for everyone else. They know that they are going to have to clean up their acts or face real consequences for their actions. They know that today there is a federal government in this place which stands up for workers and which, on their behalf, will not tolerate these lawless bands of thugs any longer.

As I said at the start of this speech, I have been involved in the building industry for 30 years. I saw the worst of union thuggery on building sites when I was a young apprentice. It's time for those opposite to take heed of the warnings and to stop the thuggish behaviour that occurs on building sites whilst they take millions and millions of dollars from organisations like the CFMMEU. We have no quarrel with unions. I have no quarrel with unions. I was a union member myself. I had to belong. I had to join the CFMMEU—as I'm sure my friend did as well—
because I needed to get a job. In those days, if you wanted a job in the building industry, you had to join a union. We have no quarrel with unions — only those unions who continue to break the law.

Mr DICK (Oxley) (18:12): One could be forgiven for thinking that we are living in some sort of time travel, because the bill before the House, the Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Amendment (Ensuring Integrity) Bill 2019, has been debated here before. The 45th Parliament rejected it on the grounds that it had no place in Australian law, and saw the bill exactly for what it was — an attack on the trade union movement by a government who are obsessed, as we have just heard, and who will stop at nothing in their senseless pursuit to rid Australians of the opportunity to become members of unions and to have their voices heard.

We have seen this bill introduced before, and it was rejected because it was excessive and it was dangerous. It was dangerous because it aimed to strike at every Australian's right to belong to a union and to be represented by a union. I always have to say: the same people who bang on about freedom of voice, freedom of speech and freedom of association don't want people to be members of trade unions. This bill, whilst slightly amended by the government from the 2017 version that we originally saw in the 45th Parliament, remains a blatant political attack on unions. It is designed to crush the power of working people in this country and, as we know, as those opposite never ever discuss, continue the wage suppression and stagnation that this government seems to be completely proud of. Without Australia's great history of the trade union movement, that is exactly what we would have seen.

For decades, unions have provided a voice for working Australians and have led the way in fighting for introducing initiatives that we simply take for granted today. They are things like maternity leave, penalty rates — before this government got their hands on them — and safety protections for workers in high-risk situations in industries, and standing up to ensure Australians are paid what is rightly theirs. We're not hearing anything tonight about wage theft. We're not hearing anything about penalty rates being cut. We're not hearing anything tonight about wages flattening — they're all the things you would think a modern Liberal government would want to be talking about — but we know why. It's because they have an appalling record on industrial relations.

This bill goes even further than what was originally applied and impinging on every Australian's right for freedom of association and will only lead to a greater suppression of workers' rights and, more than that, basic human rights. You don't need to listen to me or anyone on this side. It's stated in the explanatory memorandum of the bill itself. Under the section titled 'Human rights implication' it goes so far as to say how this bill will impact different sections of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, including the right to freedom of association, the right to form and join trade unions, and the right of trade unions to function freely.

The International Centre for Trade Union Rights has described this bill as harmful to workers, undemocratic and inconsistent with international law. When it needs to explain itself on such serious matters, the explanatory memorandum goes further to discuss the implications this bill will have on the right to take part in public affairs and elections, the right to the presumption of innocence, the right to privacy and the right not to be subject to unlawful attacks on a person's reputation. This is an extraordinary attack by this government on unions and workers, perhaps like we've never seen before.

The fact that this legislation in its analysis, the explanatory memorandum, has to address these very significant human rights is just an indicator of how potentially dangerous this piece of legislation is. We know the government is following a long line of conservative governments who are absolutely obsessed about crushing the unions in this country and will stop at nothing to see unions and workers' rights eroded. We know that. We know on this side of the chamber the disdain they have for working people in this country. We see it in the way they treat workers. We see it in the way they deride people. Who could ever forget the former Prime Minister of this country saying that aged care workers needed to get a better job, time and time again?

A research paper released by the International Centre for Trade Union Rights says, 'There is no other precedent for the degree of punitive government interference in union activity in comparable democracies,' and that the proposed ensuring integrity bill is 'incompatible with Australia's commitments under the ILO's Freedom of Association and Protection of the Rights to Organise Convention, and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention.' This is a bill that appears to be on the cusp of breaking international law. There are, no doubt, some very serious flaws in this bill, so much so that it's already been referred to a Senate committee, for further investigation, which is due to report in October this year.

This bill goes as far as to place a two-tier playing field for registered organisations and the corporate world. Currently, the Corporations Act empowers the Australian Securities and Investment Commission, not a minister, to disqualify company directors. However, under this bill, the Registered Organisations Commissioner, the minister and any person with a 'sufficient interest' would have the power to apply to the Federal Court for the disqualification of a union official.
So my question to the government, through you, Mr Deputy Speaker Vasta, is: why the double standards? If we have laws that are sufficient laws for company directors and people in the private sector, we should have some equity in the terms of what is being applied to this sector. Because of this government's utter obsession with destroying the union sector, they tell us that there is a different standard. In addition to that, the penalty in this bill for an offence of a disqualified person holding their office through a union, as such, is double that of equivalent provision in a corporation act. In terms of the public interest test for union mergers, that's not even equivalent to the competition test for company mergers.

The government will tell you that you should support this legislation, because they want to have union officials apply the same standards that are there for company directors. But the legislation being put forward doesn't even do that. There are a series of examples where the benchmark they are setting for union officials is way beyond what they would ever dare apply to a company director, and that's before you even get to the rules of amalgamations.

The rules on amalgamations that they're putting forward are simply gobsmacking. Here you have a process where two unions, two voluntary associations, have a ballot of their members on whether they want to join together as one organisation. The ballot is conducted by the Australian Electoral Commission. Even if a majority in both unions voted yes to the amalgamation, there is a pathway there for a national interest test to apply as to whether or not they are objectively allowed to form a single organisation. This bill goes even further than that. Employer groups would be able to apply for unions to be deregistered. Let's just walk through that for a sec. Unions democratically having the freedom to amalgamate, going through the Electoral Commission in this country, could have that ballot overturned.

Some of these examples of what would make unions liable for deregistration are extraordinary. For example, if a group of nurses in the nurses union wanted to campaign on better staff ratios and their campaign was not registered lawful industrial action—they were simply concerned about the issues of the patients and they had unprotected industrial action—the entire nurses union could be deregistered for an action like that. That action could be brought by anyone deemed to have a sufficient interest. I just heard the government say that that's their intent. That's their direct intent. Why would the government introduce a bill like this? I've got my suspicions. I suspect they're doing this because at every level they are pathologically driven by their hatred of unions and they want to make it more difficult to organise.

If we look at the key challenges in Australia at the moment, which were referred to in the second reading amendment which the shadow minister moved—wage theft, flatlining wages growth and deaths in unsafe workplaces—for the response to be, 'Well, we need to give the workers' organisations less power,' is unbelievable in its transparency and doesn't reflect well on the government. This government isn't interested, as we know, in standing up for workers' rights, but I will tell you what it is interested in: cutting and suppressing wages. You only need to look at today's wage growth figures, which show workers' share of income is at a 50-year low.

What's worse, as another sign of this government's attacks on unions and workers, is that we know that this is the direct result they are seeking to achieve. Ultra-low wage growth isn't accidental. As we know, it's the intended outcome of government policies. That's what Senator Cormann said when he was interviewed just a few short months ago. He said that it was a deliberate design feature of the government's economic architecture. That's right: low wage growth and suppression is what this government is actually trying to achieve. Who can forget that wonderful interview by Senator Linda Reynolds, who said that that wasn't the intent but, when it was pointed out that that was Minister Cormann's intent, said, 'Oh, well, I actually agree with him now; live on television?' You couldn't make this stuff up. That's right; low wage growth and suppression is what this government is actually trying to achieve. No wonder the national economy is struggling.

In fact, as the Treasurer and now Prime Minister, the Prime Minister has presided over the lowest wages growth since records began. Let's just put that in context: the lowest wages growth in our history, not to mention, as the shadow minister indicated in his second reading amendment, the issue of cutting penalty rates, the largest pay cut since the Great Depression. I heard the Treasurer say today, 'Well, that's not our plan; that's not what we want to do.' Is he in some alternative universe? Is he not walking around the streets, listening to people who understand that when you cut penalty rates you give people a pay cut?

That is not to mention all of the mystical jobs that were going to be created by cutting penalty rates—a big fat zero. If I am wrong, and if the government have some advice or information to say that by cutting penalty rates we see a dramatic increase in employment in this country, the statistics don't bear that out. I know that from speaking to my own local businesses in the community. I know that from speaking to some of the cleaners, some of the pharmacists and some of the retail workers who had a cut of $51 for one shift on a Sunday. Now, 200 bucks for those opposite mightn't be a lot of money, but tell that to a retail worker who is trying to put food on the table, who's trying to make ends meet with spiralling electricity prices—the highest that our country has ever seen under
this government watch—and rising costs in living. And this government thinks it's okay to give some of the lowest-paid workers, or the sum of 12,500 people in my electorate alone, a pay cut because their penalty rates have been cut. How is that good for the economy? How is that actually growing employment? I tell you what: it's not; it's absolutely not. So the response by this government is not to deal with wage theft or cutting wages; it's actually to begin this assault on people organising in their workplace.

We know around 700,000 low-paid workers across the country have faced that axe in their take-home pay and some workers will be up to $26,000 worse off by the times these cuts are fully implemented by 1 July next year. So, all up, under this government's watch, workers will lose an estimated $2.9 billion. So, we know on this side of the chamber that penalty rates are not a luxury. They help people. They make ends meet. We know that the costs are rising for things like child care and education under this government, but the government told us these cuts would supposedly create jobs. But two years on with cuts to public holiday penalty rates fully implemented and Sundays still being cut back, how many jobs have been created? Research shows none—zero; absolutely none—as a result of their obsession with cutting wages, suppressing wages and now, in this bill tonight, they are denying workers having a real say in their future in their workplaces. Well, I say that's a sham by this government and now they want to go even further on the attack.

Some have suggested this bill has been put forward as a bit of a distraction because we are seeing problems in the national economy. But we know that, with debt doubling under this government, the national economy has gone from the eighth fastest growing economy to the 20th since 2013. Productivity has fallen for four consecutive quarters. Household spending is weak and living standards are growing slower under the Liberals than the previous Labor government. We know that we are only a very few short months into this government. They are failing the national economy. They are failing people on low incomes, and tonight they are failing workers.

The truth is that this bill could leave workers without the representatives that protect them from wage theft, superannuation theft and dangerous workplaces, and it's something that neither I nor my colleagues on this side of the House support. We will continue to defend the rights of workers to organise. We will continue to defend the rights of workers to ensure that they get a fair day's pay for a fair day's work.

Mr PITT (Hinkler) (18:27): Firstly, can I say to those opposite: there is no intention to stop people from organising. That is just completely false, absolutely false. I want to congratulate the member for Fisher for his contribution because, unlike most of those opposite, he's actually someone who came through on the tools—a chippy who put himself through a law degree afterwards and then practised law. I'm a bit like him—I'm an electrician by trade. I came through heavy industry, working in union-organised workplaces for many years. Like the member for Fisher, I've had more than 30 years involvement in one form or another working in heavy construction, heavy industry and heavily unionised and organised workplaces. So, when we speak on this bill, we actually speak from experience. Unlike those on the opposite side—and I can't say that I know the new members well, but I certainly know the only tradesperson I can think of is the member for Hunter who I believe was an auto-electrician before he came into this place through the standard union path and other organisations. I congratulate the rising star, the member for Hunter. After 20 years, he's certainly on the front foot.

We are here talking about this bill now because of a very, very long history of the CFMMEU and other union organisations acting in the wrong way, inappropriately, towards their members' money and their members' benefits. In terms of that history—and I know this might be a surprise to you, Mr Deputy Speaker Vasta—I've actually been asked on a couple of occasions why I don't sit with the Labor Party. Having been through public schools, having completed an apprenticeship in heavy industry and having worked in the sugar industry and others, why am I not on that side? The answer is quite simple. It's history and what I've learnt over many years of being involved in those organisations and, in particular, their unions.

I will never forget when just 48 hours after I completed my apprenticeship the people who I'd worked with for four years demanded I join the ETU otherwise I'd be black-banned. It was quite astounding. I will never forget my father being black banned by the FEDFA and the AWU because his workers were not AWU members and the risk that that posed to our family, their business and paying our bills. Those are the reasons we have come to this point.

Quite simply: both the Labor Party and the unions no longer represent working people. They simply do not. Let's look at their actions in construction and what they have done to the construction industry. They continue to put up the price. That is no good for consumers. We on this side actually stand for something. We stand for the people who are paying those construction bills. We stand with them. They shouldn't have to pay over the numbers—they shouldn't have to pay over the odds—simply because it is an organised workforce that black bans anyone who doesn't contribute.

These are the facts of the modern construction industry. I and the member for Fisher have been involved with them for a very long period of time. We've seen some of the best of the unions. The unions in my view are a
necessary evil. They have done some good things over the years—they truly have—but currently their operation is quite simple: they take the money from their members and give it to the Labor Party. That is the process. I think that is just wrong.

That is the reason we have come to this point and are debating the Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Amendment (Ensuring Integrity) Bill 2019—because they simply cannot manage the members' funds and they do not act in their interests. This is a matter of public record. If we are talking about the members' money and if we are talking about looking after the interests of union members, I say to the Labor Party, 'Perhaps you should look at where your money comes from.' I publicly congratulate the Leader of the Opposition, Anthony Albanese, for going on the record and saying that John Setka should go. The man is a convicted thug and a criminal. He should not be in charge of anything to do with the money of his members and your members. You are all members of organisations—all of you. I have no issue with that at all, neither does the government. We do not have a problem with people who want to have organised labour. As I've said, the unions have done good things over a long period of time, but that time has come to an end, particularly in the construction industry.

It's good to see the member for Petrie in the chair. I know the member for Petrie has a local small business—an air conditioning business—that basically went bankrupt because it was blacklisted by the CFMMEU in his electorate. It put all of the people employed by him out of business. These are the operations of the modern union movement in the construction sector—comply or go broke. And it is not just them. If you look at the report from the royal commission, you will see it is also big business. There are big businesses named in the royal commission report for doing the wrong thing. This bill affects them as well. You must continue to act in the interests of your members.

There is an opportunity here for the Labor Party. Once again I congratulate the opposition leader for standing up to someone like Setka, an absolute thug and convicted criminal, who is doing the wrong thing. We firmly believe in enforcing the law and holding those law-breakers to account. It is the reason we have reintroduced this bill. It is not because of the proposition put forward by those opposite—it is not because we want to destroy unions. We think that they, like every other organisation in this country, should abide by the law. They should be run by people with integrity who are not criminals. I don't think there is any problem with that whatsoever. This bill will ensure those registered organisations work in their members' best interests and within the bounds of the law. It is specifically designed to target organisations and individuals who fail to take the privileges and responsibilities arising out of registration or appointment as an officer seriously.

We have all seen the reports from the royal commission. We have all seen the media reports about thuggery, assault and threats. I don't see how anyone on the opposite side can defend those types of individuals. There are some very good people in the union movement. I know a number of them. I wouldn't be so brave as to name them here, because I consider them my friends. Let's say that a former president of Young Labor in Queensland is a strong union man. He is strong for the Labor Party. He is there for the right reasons. It is people like that who you need to promote. Those are the sorts of people you need to promote. You should disassociate yourselves from the bikie gangs, the thugs and the standover merchants. Like the member for Fisher, we have seen this in the construction industry over many years. It ebbs and flows and it moves and changes. The purpose of this bill is to ensure that that type of activity stops.

The bill applies equally to unions and employer organisations, and only to the conduct occurring after the commencement of the bill; it is not retrospective. The bill will give the court more appropriate powers to disqualify officials of registered organisations that have breached their duties to act in the interests of members or who have a history of breaking the law or who are otherwise not a fit and proper person to hold office in a registered organisation. I ask you, what is wrong with that? What is wrong with requiring a fit and proper person to be in charge of tens of millions, if not hundreds of millions, of dollars of their members' money over a period of time? I think that is entirely appropriate.

The bill will allow the registration of an organisation to be cancelled or have rights and privileges removed from specific parts of an organisation where it or its officials have acted in their own interests rather than in the interests of their members, have not complied with court orders or injunctions, have committed serious offences or have a record of law breaking, none of which is possible under existing law. And I say again to those opposite: what is wrong with that? I think it is entirely appropriate.

The bill also gives the court more flexibility to act to reconstitute dysfunctional organisations and introduces a public interest test for mergers of registered organisations. We have made some amendments, and I won't go through all of those, but I think it is important to continue to note that this is a bill about integrity. This is a test for those opposite to stand up for their individual members who pay their money every single year as union members. In my view, if they do not, you will continue to find that those rusted-on dedicated union members walk away from those opposite in droves, just as they did at the last election.
This is an opportunity for those opposite to do the right thing, as is the government. We all act to ensure the integrity of those who are running unions in their organisations and looking after their members' money, and I commend the bill to the House.

Mr Giles (Scullin) (18:36): I rise to speak on the Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Amendment (Ensuring Integrity) Bill 2019 and to oppose it, alongside all my Labor colleagues. And can I say how pleased I was to be in the chamber for the contribution of the member for Oxley, which really nailed what's at stake with this bill, unlike the contribution of the member for Hinkler, which just demonstrated what is the central proposition in this debate, and that is that the Morrison government is utterly obsessed with unions and utterly obsessed with destroying unions in Australia. We see that in this debate, because all we see is the same litany of talking points repeated, most of which have absolutely nothing to do with the provisions of the bill before us. The examples they trot out again and again have the flavour of too many question time contributions. What they reveal is the attitude of this government and its members to working people and their organisations—nothing to do with the provisions they are putting before the House.

That was really summed up towards the end of the contribution by the member for Hinkler, when he described this bill as being another test for Labor. All this government—this opposition in exile—can do is throw up tests for Labor, because they have no positive vision for Australians and certainly no positive vision for the Australian economy or the workplaces that should drive that economy. The obsession that government members have with unions and with destroying unionism blinds them to the real issues in Australian workplaces, and we know all about them on this side—flatlining wages, the exploitation of too many workers and the rise of insecure forms of work. All this is adding up to a drift towards a labour market that simply isn't working for anyone who has to work for a living.

Simply put, too many people in Australia today have too little power at work. That's why unionism really matters now perhaps more than ever. What is so disappointing in this context is that this government doesn't even deign to show respect for the fact that working people, due to the nature of power imbalances in workplaces, join together to bargain with their employers as well as to advance other mutual interests. This dislike, this disdain, is so raw that it blinds them. And I should say that I am a very proud union member, and I want to put on the record that I'm also a firm believer in democratic and accountable trade unions. But one thing this bill is not is a driver that would undermine that aspiration, despite what government members allege.

And so, back to the context. At a time when we have declining real wages and declining living standards, which has been recognised by the Reserve Bank of Australia and, indeed, by the broad business community as a handbrake on economic growth in Australia, we have a Liberal government that is determined, it would seem, including through this bill, to drive down those wages and conditions further. Is it any wonder that this is the same mob that came up with WorkChoices? And now this reanimated bill from the last parliament. It again demonstrates not only that the government have no ideas for Australia or Australian workplaces but also that they fail to recognise that there are real issues at play that should be explored. That is why I'm so pleased that the shadow minister moved his second reading amendment, which brings the debate back to the issues that this place should be talking about. Hopefully it will invite members opposite to reflect on some of these considerations, the fact that so many families—not just in electorates like mine and the member for Dobell's but in government members', too—rely on penalty rates to make ends meet and to put food on the table. Labor does, and that's why we're putting these issues squarely into this debate as we do every day in this parliament.

Instead, we have this bill, the provisions in which represent just another example of this obsessive series of attacks on the trade union movement—indeed, on its very existence, which they seem unable to accept. They claim they want to see registered organisations and their officials afforded the same level of accountability that applies to company directors, but this bill doesn't do that; it goes much, much further. Indeed, this is tacitly acknowledged.

If we compare this bill and the provisions of the 2017 bill, we see that there aren't really any substantive differences which have been caused by the amendments. Every key feature of this bill reflects, in very similar terms, key features of the bill that was before the parliament in 2017. The changes across the board are minor. When we go to some of the automatic disqualification provisions, there are minor differences that go to the court process for disqualification, but that is only a slightly narrower fit-and-proper test on any more than a cursory examination. Similarly, there are no changes to the offence related to people continuing to act as an official once disqualified. There are differences on the issues on registration, but, again, when those changes are considered as a whole it may be that they widen rather than narrow the grounds of conduct that can justify deregistration. Similarly, the last substantive element of the bill, the amalgamation provisions, which are so profoundly
antidemocratic, have been changed in some respects but, again, broadly reflect those provisions previously before the parliament.

While there have been amendments, even as amended the bill goes way beyond those recommendations contained in the Heydon royal commission. The bill also clearly contravenes the International Labour Organization’s convention 87, the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention. If we look clearly through the provisions of the bill, that's just for starters when we look at the human rights implications. I hope that members opposite, in considering their contribution to the bill, have had a look at the statement of compatibility with human rights, which is a pretty unconvincing document, because this is a piece of legislation which raises a range of issues: the rights to work in article 22 of the ICCPR; articles 6 and 8 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the right to take part in public affairs and elections in article 25 of the ICCPR; the right to privacy and not to be subject to unlawful attacks on a person's reputation in article 17 of the ICCPR; and, of course, the right to freedom of association and the right to take part in public affairs and elections. The ILO Committee on Freedom of Association made the following observations:

Legislative provisions which regulate in detail the internal functioning of workers’ and employers' organizations pose a serious risk of interference by the public authorities. Where such provisions are deemed necessary by the public authorities, they should simply establish an overall framework in which the greatest possible autonomy is left to the organizations in their functioning and administration. Restrictions on this principle should have the sole objective of protecting the interests of members and guaranteeing the democratic functioning of organizations. Furthermore, there should be a procedure for appeal to an impartial and independent judicial body so as to avoid any risk of excessive or arbitrary interference in the free functioning of organizations.

This is not a standard that the provisions before the House meet. They are profoundly antidemocratic and very challenging, seen through this lens. I’m hopeful that the consideration of this bill by a Senate committee will further ventilate these concerns and perhaps persuade members opposite to reconsider, at the very least, some of these egregious assaults on not just rights at work but also fundamental human rights.

This legislation, in the broad, will fundamentally change the balance and the dynamic in workplace bargaining. It can prevent nurses, aged-care workers and retail workers from being able to stand up together and secure much-needed pay rises. It is also a law which can be weaponised at the expense of workers; a law that will attack people's fundamental rights to come together and organise collectively. Of course, we already have bodies that regulate what happens where unlawful action is taken. It’s already much harder in Australia to exercise your right to bargain than in many other developed countries. This is a situation that will only be exacerbated by the bill that is before the House should it be passed. Again, it is very difficult to see how this can do anything but further suppress wages—something which has been recognised by many economists as well as people in the union movement and this side of the House.

If the Morrison government were really serious about ensuring integrity, as it claims to be by bringing forward this bill again, we would of course, by now, already have a national independent anticorruption commission. All of us in this place over the last couple of weeks have reflected on the need for that, haven't we? A national anticorruption body would be able to look at wrongdoing and corruption by companies—including some of the biggest companies in Australia—by unions, by public servants and by politicians. But, of course, this government is not all that serious about ensuring integrity. Rather, it's all about fulfilling its ideological imperatives and always trying to find issues on which it can attempt to wedge Labor. The overwhelming objective of this government is to wedge this side of politics, which perhaps is the most depressing part of the government when we look at it. They are bereft of an agenda, other than to continue to talk about us many weeks after an election upon which they've formed government. They have no vision for Australia and have no concern for Australians. They are just looking to impose tests on this side of politics.

The original version of this bill was dangerous and extreme. That is why the 45th Parliament rejected this bill in that form. The government are now bringing it back, reanimating this zombie bill, solely because they have a friendlier Senate. They've dressed it up and they say that changes have been made, but these changes are largely cosmetic in nature. They've come back with this legislation because that is what the conservative side of politics does. Every time they get additional power they come after workers and unions. This is in the context of us seeing countless examples of employers ripping off workers in recent times. The papers are full of these examples across many industries but particularly those industries where the workers have particular vulnerabilities. We don't see the government going after those industries. We don't see legislation that would tackle stagnant wages or wage theft—although it is being talked about, we are yet to see anything—or worker exploitation, despite too many horrifying stories of the most awful exploitation. We don't see any recognition on the government's side that the labour share of the economy is shrinking. We don't see any recognition of that. Perhaps members opposite don't see this as a problem.
As the member for Oxley reminded me, wage growth in Australia is at a 50-year low. Something that members opposite sometimes claim as a virtue is this increasing inequality of income—that this is a design feature of institutional arrangements. When that was said by Minister Cormann, that was perhaps regarded by some as a gaffe. But, when we see this bill, it's clear that it is a design feature of the sort of workplace regulation model this government would like to see—to further deny the capacity of workers to bargain and to further suppress wages, with the flow-on consequences for society as well as individual households.

So the government may have rewritten parts of the bill to address some concerns but the bill, fundamentally, is not in a form that any fair-minded person can accept. Fundamentally, the bill mistakes unions for something analogous to for-profit corporations, and they are not; they are democratic and representative organisations. Of course—I should be clear—that's not to say that the bill provides for equal treatment between unions and companies. Despite what government members have said, it clearly does not.

Let me be clear: on this side of the House we will not support a bill that makes it harder for workers to get a pay rise. We will not support a bill that could leave workers without the representatives that protect them from wage theft, superannuation theft and dangerous workplaces. This bill, fundamentally, represents a politically motivated attack on workers' ability to organise and be represented, run their own unions and determine who leads them and also, when it comes to amalgamation provisions, how they come together with other workers to best reflect their interests. Workers should get to choose who represents them, not the Prime Minister or his lecturing Minister for Industrial Relations.

The government has claimed again that the bill has been revised to more closely align these reforms with their corporate equivalents, but this bill, as other speakers and I have attempted to demonstrate, is far more extensive and extreme in the regulation of unions than what exists for businesses. These laws would make it possible for government ministers or disgruntled employers to shut down unions and deny working people the right to choose their own representatives. It is fundamentally important in any decent and democratic society that people are free from government and employer interference so they can join unions and elect representatives who will fight for them and organise them. This is absolutely fundamental to a democratic society, whereas this bill is about silencing working people and making it harder for all workers to win pay rises, deliver decent conditions at work and be the bulwark of a decent society in which everyone gets a fair go, in work and in life.

Ms FLINT (Boothby—Government Whip) (18:51): It appears to me, just from listening to the last member's contribution, that those opposite were not listening during question time when the Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations outlined very clearly the type of dangerous and illegal behaviour that we are trying to address with this bill. The Morrison Liberal government firmly believes in enforcing the rule of law and holding lawbreakers to account. Our reintroduction of the Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Amendment (Ensuring Integrity) Bill 2019 demonstrates that very important commitment.

Union and employer associations have special and privileged positions in the industrial relations system and in the economy more broadly in terms of how business is conducted and how employer and employee relations unfold, and the members of those organisations place a great deal of trust in them. This bill will ensure registered organisations work in their members' best interests and within the bounds of the law. I don't think that's too much to ask. This bill is specifically designed to target organisations and individuals who fail to take the privileges and responsibilities arising out of registration or appointment as an officer seriously. This bill applies equally to unions and to employer organisations, and only to conduct occurring after the commencement of this bill.

The provisions deal with the consequences of breaking the law or mistreating members. Registered organisations that contribute positively to the industrial relations framework and abide by the law—and, thankfully, there are plenty of them—will not be impacted by this bill. To my mind, it's a pretty simple concept that if you do the right thing you won't have any problems with this bill. If you do the right thing by your members, if you do the right thing by the law, then this bill will not impact you or your organisation.

The bill will give the court more appropriate powers to disqualify officials of registered organisations that breach their duty to act in the interests of members, have a history of breaking the law or are otherwise not fit and proper to hold office in a registered organisation. It will also introduce new offences that currently don't exist in relation to registered organisations, like acting as an official when disqualified from doing so, which has been part of the corporate regime for some time now.

The bill will allow the registration of an organisation to be cancelled or to have rights or privileges removed from specific parts of an organisation where it or its officials have acted in their own interests rather than in the interests of their members; not complied with court orders and injunctions; or committed serious offences or have a record of lawbreaking, none of which is possible under the existing law. The bill also gives the court more
flexibility to act to reconstitute dysfunctional organisations and introduces a public-interest test for mergers of registered organisations.

The government has made some amendments to the bill compared with its last version in 2017 to ensure it is appropriately balanced in delivering the outcomes of accountability and integrity owed to an organisation's members while ensuring greater alignment of provisions with the standards that apply to corporate directors and other officers, wherever possible.

I want to take just a few moments to explain and outline why this bill is necessary. I am indebted to the Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations, who is also our Leader of the House, for giving some real-world, real-life examples during question time recently as to the sort of behaviour we are attempting to outlaw and rein in and that is currently occurring in workplaces around the nation, putting people at risk. It's making them feel unsafe and it really has to stop.

The Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations recently outlined the behaviour of the CFMMEU's John Setka. I was quite shocked when I heard about the charges that have been laid and successfully prosecuted against this individual. I'm going to repeat them because we need as many people in the community as possible to understand the exact behaviour that we are trying to deal with—that we will deal with by passing this legislation. As the Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations said, 'Unfortunately, the present laws have not provided sufficient deterrents to repeated unlawful behaviour of a small number of militant unionists.'

What sort of behaviour are we talking about here? The Leader of the Opposition says that John Setka is not a fit and proper person to be a member of the Labor Party. Why does he say that? Because of John Setka's record of lawbreaking. What is that record? John Setka has, to this point, amassed around 59 court convictions for a multitude of offences, including assault police, five times; assault by kicking, five times; wilful trespass, seven times; resisting arrest, five times; theft, attempted theft by deception and intent to coerce, nine times; and coercion, 10 times. These things, finally, have now formed the basis of a conclusion by the opposition leader that militant unionist John Setka is not a fit and proper person to be a member of the Labor Party.

Interestingly, the same remarkable record of offending has not also given rise to a view by the opposition leader that it is not fit and proper for Labor to accept the $1 million that John Setka sent to Labor as the Victorian branch secretary. Likewise, it is remarkable that the criminal record doesn't now appear to be the basis for review that it was not fit and proper for Labor to accept $13 million from the CFMMEU in total. What we have here now is a situation where the character of John Setka is rejected fulsomely by Labor but his cash is still warmly accepted, as much of it that can flow as possible. Who is actually standing up for workers here? Who is actually on the side of workers?

I think these are very good questions. The Attorney-General and the Minister for Industrial Relations has provided other practical, real-life, real-world examples of the sort of behaviour that unions and, in particular, the CFMMEU, have engaged in. As the Attorney-General said to the House recently, 'Unlawful conduct adds to the costs of infrastructure borne by the Australian taxpayer. One of the very important reasons that unlawful behaviour on worksites must be stopped is that it puts the safety of workers at risk.' These are really important issues. As the Attorney-General went on to say, 'We know that the CFMMEU has racked up $16 million in court fines for unlawful behaviour for over 2,000 breaches.' What is less well-known is that many of those breaches themselves relate to violations of occupational health and safety standards. Last year, the full Federal Court found that a CFMMEU official had acted in an improper manner to a Victorian government occupational health and safety officer. The grotesque behaviour of the CFMMEU to that official was behaviour directed not at another worker or an employer, but at a safety official.

When we look at Queensland, there are proceedings that were commenced in December last year against a CFMMEU organiser for his behaviour towards a Queensland government occupational health and safety inspector. The construction site was the Cairns Performing Arts Centre. The safety inspector was in the course of inspecting exit signage. He was confronted by the CFMMEU official, who, within centimetres of the face of the safety officer, said some terrible things and used some awful language, not once but three times. As the Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations has said: 'No-one should have to put up with that language in their workplace. No-one.' The Queensland Public Sector Union now has a list of 17 sites that they will not let their members—their safety inspectors—visit because they don't feel safe. This is just appalling behaviour. Nobody deserves to be treated like this. Nobody deserves to be subject to this sort of behaviour. People must feel safe in their workplaces. They mustn't feel that going to work is going to see them threatened or endangered or subject to vile abuse.

I feel that I had a tiny glimpse of what the unions are capable of during the recent election. There are several things I would like to briefly highlight today: (1), the sort of intimidation, bullying and lies that they like to...
spread, and (2) the waste of money this involves—and it's not their money; it's their members' money. That's what really infuriates me about so much of this behaviour by the unions. It's not just the violence and the intimidation and the thuggery, it's the waste of hardworking Australians' money—money that they have earned and that is now being wasted by people they thought were representing them and had their best interests at heart. In a sense, it's hard to know where to begin describing the union behaviour during my campaign because there were so many different unions involved: there was the CFMEU, the ACTU, the SDA, the Australian Education Union, and the Nurses and Midwifery Federation, and combinations of all of those unions coming together under different banners.

But let's just take the Australian Education Union as a quick example. Last year in June, well before the federal election—which was held, as we know, on 18 May this year—they advertised for a union organiser to coordinate the campaign against me and the coalition government in the seat of Boothby. Pretty quickly, they got their union operatives out and about into my local public schools to start spreading lies to my local families about education funding, and to start scaring parents, grandparents and carers with their campaign. I'd like to correct the record right here and right now, once again—as I did throughout the campaign, and during the last parliament: we have not cut funding to education. It's quite the opposite. Quality schools funding to South Australia is currently $1.5 billion in 2019-20 and it will rise to $2.3 billion by 2029. This means, in real terms, that all of my 33 public schools in Boothby will see increases to funding by about 60 per cent per student for the decade to 2029. That is clearly not a cut. This funding, unlike the wild promises we hear time and time again from those opposite, is fully budgeted. The funding is budgeted. It will be delivered. Schools in my electorate will continue to be very well-funded by the federal Liberal government.

The same unionists from the Australian Education Union also put out a range of print material—flyers, corflutes—and social media content repeating their claims. They sent a unionist out in a very large van to follow me around to my street corner listening posts. I can only assume it was to try to intimidate me and to try to stop me from speaking directly with my local community and from listening to my local community. One of the things I pride myself on is that I listen to my local community and make myself as accessible as I possibly can.

The combined union presence—all of the unions I've already named—more broadly did all of these sorts of things and more. They organised regular protests outside my electorate office and somehow managed to track me down to a range of Liberal Party and community events. They put out multiple fliers and flooded social media with attacks on me. And this is just the work that they did under their official banners. I have no doubt that some of the even more aggressive and threatening behaviour that I had to endure during the election campaign was linked to the unions. Why do I think this? Because I have just provided several really disturbing examples of what, as the Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations has outlined in this House, is going on every single day around the nation.

This is why we have reintroduced this bill. It has five key schedules covering disqualification, cancellation of registration, administration of dysfunctional organisations, a public interest test for amalgamations and some minor and technical amendments. At the end of the day, this bill is about making sure that union members' money is spent properly and is directed to supporting them—because it is their hard-earned money—and about making sure that people can and do feel safe in their workplaces every single day. I commend the bill to the House, and I look forward to the bill passing the House and workers and employers around Australia feeling safer in their day-to-day work and their day-to-day business.

Mr HAYES (Fowler—Chief Opposition Whip) (19:06): It will come as no surprise to you that we on this side oppose this bill, the Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Amendment (Ensuring Integrity) Bill 2019. To my friend the member for Boothby, who's just delivered her speech so eloquently: I think it's quite evident that unions got involved in election processes. Unions got involved in democracy—what a charge that is! In terms of the issues about the education, she maybe should have listed the Catholic Education Office as well, who had a very clear position on the policies of both parties in terms of the funding of education. But, leaving that aside, it does show that after this election—and, credit to those opposite, we were beaten; I understand that—they have so rapidly returned to type.

They talked a lot during the election campaign, as the member for Solomon will recall, about hardworking Australians as if it just flows off the tongue for them. They talked about, almost, the Howard battlers, to use the vernacular. But I'll tell you what they didn't talk about: they didn't talk about what they're going to do to address wage stagnation. They didn't talk about how they're going to address wage theft. And, as far as I can recall from articles in my local papers during the course of the election campaign, they never mentioned unsafe working conditions or unsafe working environments. These are things that just didn't seem to make it onto the political agenda.
This is about unions. It's clearly about that. And nobody on this side is in any way going to defend improper actions. That's just not the case. The other thing about trade unions—and I think you've got to appreciate this too—is that they don't exist because somewhere in the Constitution it says, 'Thou shalt have unions.' Unions exist to fill a need in society. If there were no need, they probably wouldn't exist at all. So, in other words, if the government were doing something about addressing unfair and unsafe work practices or to effect a proper determination of wages so that workers didn't have to band together, there probably wouldn't be involvement from trade unions. Trade unions started to fulfil a need. There's no doubt that we on this side of politics were spawned by the trade union movement. Our party was developed to be the political voice of working people in this country.

For those of us who have been around here for a little while will recall Work Choices. Whilst that may not be the current policy over there, Work Choices was a pretty big thing back in 2007. It was a thing, quite frankly, that repulsed the Australian people. When those on the other side had a majority in the House and the Senate, they decided to show their true colours when it came to Work Choices. They made it legal for the first time in our history for people to enter into agreements where they were paid below award rates. It wasn't those people necessarily who were directly being attacked, who revolted over that—although I am sure they had a view once they saw their wages being cut. In my electorate, it was the mums and dads and the grandparents who had a view about that—many of whom had already retired. This was about a generation coming up who were not going to have the benefit of proper wages and conditions in this country.

It should not be lost in the memories of those opposite that this is what happens when you attack those that have an impact on setting proper wages and conditions. I know those opposite are taking some advantage at the moment of the John Setka affair. The Leader of the Opposition has made his position pretty clear about Mr Setka. But this does not define the Australian trade union movement. The government spent $45 million not all that long ago on a royal commission into trade unions. Not much came out of it quite frankly. They thought they were going to get to hoist people on petards all over the place. It just didn't occur. It was $45 million to press a political point. It was an effort by the then Prime Minister to attack the Leader of the Opposition, and he was prepared to use public money to do that.

This piece of legislation is designed to do a number of things. Schedule 1 of the bill is to allow the minister, or anyone else with a sufficient interest in a matter—and that could include employers or employer groups, even a rival union leadership contender or a business lobby, amongst others—to apply to deregister an organisation, to disqualify a person from holding office, to exclude certain members or impose administrative schemes on them. You could actually put someone into administration, for instance. They also want to have a fit-and-proper-person test. Well, we don't have one of those in parliament; that might have ruled a few people out over time.

This would disqualify people from elected union positions simply by posing a test determined by unelected people in a court. One of the things that bind both sides of parliament is our belief in democratic processes. Sure, elections are robust, and I understand the member for Boothby's complaint about the democratic recourse that some organisations, including unions, might participate in, but we in this country are the beneficiaries of a solid democratic system. We want the same system to be maintained within our trade unions. We think the members of unions should be able to elect the people that they think are best suited, best able, to actually deliver them what they want. If it is better wages and conditions, so be it.

When I think about this particular address, I remember hearing a couple of years ago a speech by the member for Kennedy, Bob Katter. I know it's sometimes a little bit hard to listen to the member for Kennedy for too long; sometimes you've got to read him in the Hansard! What he was speaking about in this place—this was during the course of the Work Choices discussion, so this is going back a little while. He reminded this House that if anyone here thought that the wages and conditions that we enjoy in this country were not the product of an effective trade union movement, they were kidding themselves. That came from someone—let's face it; the member for Kennedy has a pretty conservative pedigree about him—who has voted with the government more times than he's ever thought about voting with the opposition. The member for Kennedy made a pretty significant point. Whether he had in mind what happened with the shearers or whether it translates to any other form of work in this country, he did say that we would not enjoy the working conditions that we have without the established and effective trade union movement.

There's currently a dispute taking place in New South Wales. It's a dispute being led by the Health Services Union. I know this one a little bit more intimately than others simply because my younger brother is the general secretary of that organisation. He's not threatening a strike for wages. It's arguable whether he is calling out public hospitals for their conditions. I'll tell you what he is doing: he is threatening industrial action because of the level of assaults, stabbings and abuse, and, indeed, a shooting, that has taken place in public hospitals in New South Wales. His actions are being supported not only by members of his organisation—low-paid hospital workers, cleaners and caterers, et cetera—but by nurses and doctors as well. This is a matter of protecting patients and their
visitors. I wouldn't have thought 2GB was a prominent radio station that broadcast many things in the interests of the trade union movement or Labor generally. I listened to Ray Hadley's program. Ordinarily he doesn't support industrial disputation, but he did on this occasion because here is a union standing up for the interests of a community.

Now, what's the case for my brother? The industrial commission will probably order him to withdraw his industrial dispute tomorrow. Do we allow these things to keep going? The bureaucrats in New South Wales have certainly made it very clear that they're not of the mind of bending on this. I would have thought that this is a genuine dispute that should be brought to a head for the safety of the community. Can I give a shout-out to my younger brother, Gerard—all power to him and his organisation. If you can make solid change for the better in a community, I think that's a good thing. That is a union showing some leadership. That is doing what governments should be doing.

Industrial relations is an issue, I understand, of supply and demand. I understand the enterprise of labour can be depressed. But it is being artificially driven down at the moment, on the basis that we have seen a succession of laws passed by successive Liberal governments affecting the unions' ability to negotiate. We have seen the power of the Industrial Relations Commission whittled away. If you take away those dynamics in industrial relations or weaken their bargaining positions, in terms of organisations, what are you really encouraging? It really is almost begging the law of the jungle out there. When people actually rise to the occasion and take the bait, then you think, 'Oh, well, it's time to actually get tough on unions.' I would have thought that we had the wherewithal to develop and maintain good industrial relations systems that look after and benefit workers—systems which secure workers in proper organisations with officers democratically elected in elections run by the Electoral Commission and responsive to the needs of their members.

I think this legislation shows that the government is dropping the ball on that because they want to make a target out of one organisation, the CFMMEU. They want to use the position of its secretary, John Setka, and they want to drive this to be the catalyst for getting into the whole trade union movement in this country.

I did want to say a number of things, which I don't have time to now. But I note that Michele O'Neil, the President of the ACTU, has made a number of statements about this legislation. She is certainly saying that this will harm ordinary people and also that it runs against the impact of international law as to freedom of association. I know you can discount Michele O'Neil because she's the President of the ACTU. Could I just say that, having known this woman for some time, I know that she has only recently become President of the ACTU; most of her working life was devoted to looking after people in the textile and footwear industries. She was looking after women who were working in sweatshops across the land. This is a person who actually really does know what you've got to do to look after people, to make a difference in their lives. So I wouldn't discount her out of hand. I think she's a very decent woman and someone who should be listened to.

Mr GORMAN (Perth) (19:22): If you've ever been robbed—had your house broken into; had your car window smashed—you know that it doesn't leave you feeling very good. You feel ashamed and anxious and like something is just out of your control. You feel violated. It's very similar for victims of wage theft: shame, anxiety, anger and feelings of violation. I know—I remember when my parents' house was broken into. I was staying with them at the time because they'd been kind enough to host my 29th birthday. We'd had a great party, and we woke up the next morning to find that MacBooks, iPhones and wallets had all disappeared.

Stealing something, we all know in this place, is wrong. Stealing someone's wages—something they have, in fact, worked for in your own business—is particularly wrong. The cases of companies ripping off workers through wage theft should be outraging us and should be a far higher order of priority for this government in the industrial relations legislative agenda than the bill that is currently before us.

Michael Hill is believed and estimated to have ripped off workers by some $25 million. The work practices of 7-Eleven and their franchisors are described as 'slavery-like' conditions by some of their workers. They have a system where new franchisors are trained up by existing owners on how to undermine the wage system and existing laws that govern that business. It's estimated that some 140 7-Eleven stores in Australia would be in the red if it weren't for historical underpayments. These are things I would like to see this parliament address. Instead, we're talking about this legislation. We have seen, in more recent times, the story of a celebrity chef—I wouldn't call him a businessperson; he's a celebrity chef—running a business based off the back of underpaying his workers. When so many workers are getting a raw deal, something is wrong. This is industrial-scale wage theft, and the government is, instead, going the organisations which stand up for the underpaid.

My electorate of Perth is home to many proud unions and a very proud union history. It was the home of the protests against what was known as the third-wave industrial legislation, brought in by the state Liberal government in the 1990s. Many in this place would know that that was then used as the model for what became
of the Work Choices legislation in 2005. Perth is the home of Solidarity Park, a monument to the struggle of working people in Western Australia who dared to stand up for fair pay and fair conditions. It's also the home, I should note, of many employer associations, including the Australian Hotels Association, who do much to train up new workers. It's also the home of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia, who I met with recently along with the Leader of the Opposition, the Hon. Anthony Albanese. It's important that we recognise that we should look for the things that can unite us in the debates around industrial matters rather than doing what the government is unfortunately doing, which is looking for the things that divide us.

Sadly, the electorate of Perth has also been the site of some terrible industrial accidents—industrial accidents that unions act day in, day out to prevent from occurring. There is something my colleague the member for Cowan often says, and it's a saying that has stuck with me. She's got two young adult boys now; I've got one young boy. She says, 'If my sons were on a worksite, of course I'd want the CFMEU there to look after their pay, their conditions and, most importantly, their workplace safety.' The case of Marianka Heumann is known to many. She was a 27-year-old backpacker who fell 35 metres to her death in the heart of the Perth CBD. That worksite was a worksite that the CFMEU had trouble accessing and, in the weeks after that horrible accident, again had trouble accessing just to make sure that the workers who were still there in a very horrible time were able to work safely as investigations continued.

This debate is also about the value of collective action, and this is not just a principle that applies to unions. The National Farmers' Federation believes in collective action. The Liberal Party itself, even though it might not like to admit it, is founded on the principle of collective action: people collect together, they form a political party and off they go. But the best defence of collective action is that, as Bandit says to his daughters, Bingo and Bluey, in that great ABC television show familiar to many of us, 'You do not climb Mount Mum and Dad trying to race ahead on your own or by competing with your comrades; you do it slowly and carefully by unselfish teamwork.' That principle is at the heart of unions: making sure that collectively you do something more than you can achieve on your own. They're membership-based organisations formed by working Australians and run by working Australians—ambos, cleaners and people in the textile industry, as we just heard. They are part of our Australian story. Of course, they must be democratic, but some of the regulations placed on unions require them to be far more democratic than even the political parties registered with the Australian Electoral Commission. Indeed, a union, I would be very comfortable saying in this place, is more democratic than the LNP or any of its branches.

This bill does nothing for working Australians. It does nothing to deal with wage theft. It does nothing to address stagnant wages. It does nothing to address worker exploitation. What it does do is put more regulation on the directors of the NUW than it does on the NAB. It puts more regulation on the SDA Western Australia than it does on the Liberal Party of Western Australia. It makes it harder to build a union, harder to stay in a union and therefore easier to exploit workers.

I think we all know that, if similar legislation had been suggested for businesses, it would be ridiculed. Indeed, the halls would be full of businesses pointing out just how unworkable such legislation is. We don't have laws in front of us trying to shut down multinational pizza chains, but we do have laws in front of us trying to make it harder for unions to put themselves together and join as larger unions by amalgamating.

I've proudly been a delegate of the SDA and the Community and Public Sector Union. I was with the SDA in my time working at Bicton McDonald's, which I think is in the member for Tangney's electorate. It's a great McDonald's, and I was very proud to not just make a burger or two there but also help my fellow workers in some industrial matters, often at their first job. I think it's important that people who start their working lives are able to have the benefit of a union at that first job. I might leave my comments there.

Debate interrupted.

ADJOURNMENT

The SPEAKER (19:30): It being 7.30 pm, I propose the question:

That the House do now adjourn.

Domestic and Family Violence

Ms CLAYDON (Newcastle) (19:30): At the start of this 46th Parliament, I want to put the diabolical issue of domestic and family violence front and centre of the national agenda. This must be a high priority for all of us in this place to address. It remains a despicable reality that one of the most dangerous places for a woman to be is in her own home with those closest to her. Violence against women remains deeply entrenched in Australian society, and it cannot continue.

Today I pay tribute to the 29 women who have died violently in 2019. So far, in this year alone, we have lost: Sabrina Lekaj, aged 20; Rita Camilleri, aged 57; Cait O'Brien, aged 31; Shuyu Zhou, aged 23; Jelagat Cheruiyot,
nce against women and their children. In 2019 Labor went to the election with a commitment to double the investment in the Fourth Action Plan, with record Commonwealth funding of over $660 million. While Labor wasn’t able to form government, I’m pleased that the Morrison government committed $328 million in an effort to combat domestic violence. But we also need a deeper commitment to changing the culture, to fundamentally reforming attitudes and demanding a focused strategy on prevention. If there is to be a measure of the success of the 46th Parliament, let it be our record in driving down the appalling incidence of domestic and family violence.

I’d like to acknowledge that this information has been compiled and is maintained in the Counting Dead Women register by the meticulous and committed researchers at Destroy the Joint. This is heartbreaking and difficult work, but it is so very important to hold us all to account and to remind us of the tragic human cost of violence and insist we do not turn a blind eye to it. There are almost certainly women who have been killed violently who have not been recognised on this list, as it is limited to those who have been publicly reported.

I am both heartbroken and disappointed that I stand here year on year with the news that yet again, despite all our efforts, nearly one woman a week is still being brutally murdered at the hands of someone she knows, but I will continue to do so until we stem this senseless carnage. While one-in-four women experience intimate partner violence and Australian police deal with a domestic violence incident every two minutes, there can be no greater issue on the parliamentary agenda. If there was any other issue that was killing Australians at such a terrifying rate, there would be calls for inquiries, community vigils, floral memorials appearing everywhere and demands for immediate action. I acknowledge that there remains goodwill and a genuine commitment on both sides of this House for change.

In 2010, the former Labor government launched the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children, with a vision that Australian women would live free from violence in safe communities. The measure of success was a significant and sustained reduction in violence against women and their children. In 2019, Labor went to the election with a commitment to double the investment in the Fourth Action Plan, with record Commonwealth funding of over $660 million. While Labor wasn’t able to form government, I’m pleased that the Morrison government committed $328 million in an effort to combat domestic violence. But we also need a deeper commitment to changing the culture, to fundamentally reforming attitudes and demanding a focused strategy on prevention. If there is to be a measure of the success of the 46th Parliament, let it be our record in driving down the appalling incidence of domestic and family violence.

I will end this speech as I ended the last speech I gave on this matter in the hope that I don’t have to give the same speech again next year. We simply must turn things around. There can be no more pressing priority for all of us in this place.

Mr SHARMA (Wentworth) (19:35): Last week I gave my first speech to this House. It was a humbling and moving experience and one I will always remember. So many people have helped me along this journey that it was not feasible to thank them all last week and, as such, I would like to take this opportunity to thank some of the many individuals who took the time to support and encourage me in my two campaigns over the past 10 months,

The Liberal Party is a grassroots movement that relies on the blood, sweat, toil and tears of thousands of volunteers—each of whom strives to make a real difference to our country. The Liberal Party in Wentworth is no different. Between last year’s by-election in October 2018 and the general election of May 2019, thousands of people gave their time and invested their effort to help return Wentworth to the Liberal column. I will always appreciate the trust placed in me by the Wentworth Electorate Conference, or FEC. I was not a born and bred local and had not been active in the party over a long period. I did not know many of them and they in turn did not know me. But I was welcomed with open arms by the FEC, and for that I will be internally grateful.

In particular, I would like to thank my campaign team: Harry Stutchbury, Sally Betts, Sam Fay, Darel Hughes, Natarsha Terreiro, Luke Barnes, Will Nemesh, Andrew Bragg and Yosi Tal. Without their efforts, I would not be here today. I’ll take with me many fond memories of countless campaign meetings, late nights and endless phone calls. A candidate could not wish for a more dynamic, hardworking, dedicated and selfless campaign team.

In addition to my campaign team many local Liberals committed themselves to my campaign, undertaking countless hours of letterboxing, doorknocking, street stalls and pre-poll voting. It would be impossible to name them all, but I would like to thank Toby Moore, Georgia de Mestre, Annabelle Young, Zac Scott, Sal Sefinidis, David Tson, Michael Hughes, Mark Coppleson, Kim and Yvonne Messenger, Skye Leckie, James Arduin, Shawn Carmichael, Jason Howe, Bill Maroukas, Phil Occhiuto, Kylie von Muenster, Leon Goltsman and Travis Russell. I would also like to extend my thanks to Fiona and Matthew Playfair, Daisy Turnbull and James Brown, Sue Cullen, Donald and Janet McDonald, Eitan Neishlos, Kellie and Adam Sloane, Andrew Low, Deanne and Steve Chapman, Andrew and Abbey McKinnon, Brendon and Jodie Lyons, James and Helen Stevens, Karen Jorrisima, Emily Smith and Ellie Atkin and Warwick Smith.

Monday, 29 July 2019

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

aged 34; Courtney Herron, aged 25; Gihan Kerollos, aged 47; Natalia Angok, aged 32; Syeda Hossain, aged 33; Vicki Ramadan, aged 77; Caris Dann, aged 30; Gabriella Thompson, aged 27; Preethi Reddy, aged 32; Qin Yang, aged 57; Marjorie Welsh, aged 92; Tamara Farrell, aged 31; Megan Kirly, aged 40; Darshika Withana, aged in her 40s; Julie Rush, aged 49; Aya Maasarwe, aged 21; Samara Baker, aged 30; and another eight, unnamed women aged between 27 and 87.

Would live free from violence in safe communities.

Mr SHARMA (Wentworth) (19:35):

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CHAMBER
From the Liberal Party headquarters, I would like to thank Chris Stone, Andrew Hirst, Simon Berger, Bonnie Marshall and Luke Nayner for their tireless efforts. Thank you also to my state parliamentary colleague Gabrielle Upton as well Bruce Notley-Smith, the former member for Coogee. I’d also like to thank some early supporters along this journey, including Matt Kean, James Wallace, Trent Zimmerman and Chris Rath. Their guidance and support has been invaluable in every step of this journey. To my new staff—Harry Stutchbury, Luke Barnes, Toby Moore, Jodie Lyons and Deyi Wu: thank you for joining me on this journey. I look forward to serving the people of Wentworth with you.

I’ve been lucky to have the friendship and support of many community members and groups across Wentworth: from Bronte Surf Lifesaving Club, Basil Scaffidi, David Finnimore and Harries Carroll; from North Bondi Surf Life Saving Club, Mark Cotter; from Easts Rugby, John Murray and Sam Fay; from some of the local pubs, Pete Tate and the Malouf brothers; from the Sydney Swans, Tom Harley, Andrew Pridham and Peter Ivany; from Netball NSW, Carolyn Campbell, the CEO; and from the Royal Motor Yacht Club at Point Piper, John Barbourtis. I would also like to thank Sydney Central Synagogue, St Matthias Anglican Church at Paddington, St George Greek Orthodox Church at Rose Bay, the Jewish Board Of Deputies, the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, Chabad Double Bay, Mizrachi Synagogue, South Head Synagogue, Dover Heights Shoah, Emanuel Synagogue, Moriah College and Emanuel School for welcoming me so warmly to the community.

One of the most rewarding parts of being a candidate has been delivering important outcomes for local organisations—commitments made to the Woollahra Men's Shed, Bondi Cottage, the Lokahi Foundation—(Time expired)

Economy

Ms KEARNEY (Cooper) (19:40): Our economy is about to take a dive, it seems—simply, as the RBA tells us, for want of higher wages, infrastructure spending and the delivery of secure, decent jobs. The answer to all of that and more, like a sustainable future that will protect our planet, is right before us—or even behind us if we look to Labor policy history. Right now, the fractures in our economy brought about by globalisation, deregulation, privatisation of essential services and cuts to the remaining public sector, through to automation and technical changes and the deliberate destabilisation of work, have profoundly undermined the job security of working people across the developed world, sending them on a trajectory of fearfulness and anxiety.

We in Labor had an ambitious social reform agenda to reverse that trajectory—so ambitious that some have argued it might have been too much all at once and might have played a role in our not winning the election. So maybe we need to start with the basics: securing livelihoods through decent jobs that people can rely on. There is a crisis in Australia right now—a crisis of unemployment and underemployment. And forty per cent of working people are in insecure work. Beyond the cities, youth unemployment gnaws at the edges of regional economies, where globalisation and the withdrawal of government enterprise and services has devastated the means of entry to reliable jobs. The so-called gig economy is driving a further destabilisation of minimum standards, pay and workplace expectations. And if anyone here has been on the dole, let alone recruited into Work for the Dole or Community Development Programs, they would understand the punitive and cruel nature of that experience.

We know that decent, steady jobs are what communities across the country demand, and rely upon governments to provide. The good news is that the framework for how we can make that project work exists in a powerful policy inheritance of Australia's Labor movement. The Curtin Labor government’s white paper on full employment in Australia was a policy framework for structural change. It was born in another crisis—that of the Second World War. Even as armies marched, bombs fell and entire cities were destroyed, the Curtin Labor generation realised an opportunity existed to build the structural order of a new economy—one unburdened by the unsustainable inequalities that had provoked the Great Depression and, with it, war and catastrophe. What it proposed was informed by the ideas of John Maynard Keynes in the General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money in 1936. To summarise: fluctuations in private demand and investment provoked recessions and depressions and, with them, unemployment. But if governments directly employ surplus labour to build public works, maintaining full employment, the effect is levelled out. The income generated by employment stimulates demand for the private sector to supply goods and services.

Curtin made the government responsible for jobs and job creation to meet the full employment target. At the same time, the nation was enriched and modernised by the construction of public infrastructure. Australian unemployment averaged two per cent for 30 years. The Liberals retained Curtin's framework for the subsequent 23 years of government lest they risk the wrath of a generation that was rather enjoying its effects. These were the days before the neoliberal orthodoxy that took hold in the seventies redefined full employment as 'five per cent of unemployed people at any time’—before government walked away from direct job creation so that business could encourage downward pressure on wages through forcing workers not to bargain for jobs but to compete for them.
The public works of the past are today's initiatives for the collective good—like sustainable jobs that will deal with climate change, or service industry jobs to address the looming workforce crisis in aged care.

I want to read out some of the statements from the white paper and think about them with our current economic status in mind: 'To prevent the waste of resources which results from unemployment is the first and greatest step to higher living standards. Full advantage must be taken of modern methods of production and training in branches of industry.' The paper goes on to say: 'Full employment has advantages to offer every section of the community.' To the worker, it means 'steady employment, the opportunity to change employment if one wishes, and a secure prospect'. To the business or professional person, the manufacturer, the shopkeeper, it means 'expanding scope for enterprise, free from periodic slumps'. To the people as a whole, it means 'a better opportunity to obtain all the goods and services which their labour is capable of producing'.

It's extraordinary to me to consider that what is demanded of us as a society is to meet the current economic challenges, insisting that somehow rates of unemployment or underemployment are in any way 'natural'. Australian governments can and should play a direct role intervening in job creation and industry support. The Curtin white paper shows us how this is done.

Energy

**Mr O'DOWD** (Flynn—Deputy Nationals Whip) (19:45): Australian households and industry are currently paying the highest prices for electricity in the world. I ask myself: 'Why?' We have all the natural resources that most countries don't have: we have thermal, high-quality, low-ash quality coal; we have gas; we have uranium; we have wind and sun; and, of course, we have hydro. The government's priority is to lower energy prices for all Australians, including households, small business and industry, and keep the lights on at the same time. The Australian energy portfolio is currently made up of approximately 65% coal, 20% gas and 15% renewables. Second-tier electricity retailers who do not generate one kilowatt of electricity are partly to blame for our high prices. That is why I support those who are calling for an inquiry into the feasibility of bringing nuclear power into the mix of the future energy supply chain.

**Ms Kearney interjecting**—

**Mr O'DOWD:** Yes, put it anywhere you like. My area would accept it. Not a problem.

**Ms Kearney interjecting**—

**Mr O'DOWD:** If you just listen, you might learn something. Study after study in scientific journals has proven that nuclear power plants are by far the best and safest way to make reliable electricity. The technology behind nuclear power plants is much safer and continues to improve as time goes on. The evidence over six decades shows that nuclear power is a safe means of generating electricity. The risk of accidents in nuclear power plants is low and declining. Nuclear power plants provide an effective base-load power at a fair cost. We have 40 per cent of the world's uranium and we sell that to the top 19 countries in the OECD. We are the only ones that don't use uranium for nuclear generation. We export uranium to many countries outside those OECD countries.

I have seen the effects in South Australia of coal-fired power stations being replaced by renewable energy sources. I'm certainly not convinced that this is the way to go. We worry about the storage of nuclear waste and that would be in the debate we would have about the pros and cons of nuclear power. It would be a mix, yes, but still a variable reliance on coal, gas and maybe nuclear.

I look at the prices of electricity for Australians across the states. Queensland has eight coal-fired power stations and has the lowest cost at $82.13 per kilowatt. New South Wales is second, at $85.94. Tasmania comes in third, with hydroelectricity bringing their price down to $84.37 per kilowatt. Victoria is $96.49, and South Australia is the highest in Australia at $96.42 per kilowatt.

My opinion is that nuclear has to be debated. It'll take 20 years to build a nuclear power station and so the debate must start sooner rather than later. All those deniers out there should think about just where we are going. Renewables have a place, and I admit that. However, nuclear has to be considered for future generation of cheap, reliable and affordable power in Australia.

Aged Care

**Ms COLLINS** (Franklin) (19:50): In around eight weeks time the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety interim report is set to be handed down. People in this place and, of course, people around Australia will not forget that essentially this royal commission is a government calling a commission into itself; it has been in charge of aged care in this country, solely responsible for it, for the last six years. There has been a lack of reform and a lack of drive from this government when it comes to fixing some of the issues in aged care. Whether we talk about residential aged care and the cuts that the current Prime Minister made to aged care in his first two budgets—the $1.5 billion ripped out from the highest care daily fees that were paid for
those in residential aged care or the half a billion dollars taken out in the budget before—or the dementia supplement that was taken in Abbott's first budget in 2014, this government needs to accept responsibility for where we are today in aged care.

We currently have more than 128,000 older Australians waiting for home care. There are more people on the waiting lists than there are home care packages available in Australia today. We have 1.3 million older Australians currently relying on the aged-care system. The government cannot afford to muck this up. When it receives the interim recommendations on or around 31 October, I call on the government to ensure that these interim recommendations, or the interim report, are made public. I also call on the government to ensure that it acts as soon as it has these recommendations. There have been many, many reports and reviews into aged care in Australia already, but this royal commission is of course a chance for older Australians, their families and their loved ones to tell their stories about what has happened to them when trying to access quality care in Australia today.

It's also a chance for the many workers—the 380,000 that it's estimated are aged-care workers in Australia—to talk about their stories and about how they feel, looking after older and vulnerable Australians and how they go home at night stressed and worried because they can't provide the care that they want to because they simply don't have enough workers or enough time to provide that care. It is a sad state of affairs in a country as wealthy as Australia when we talk about budget surpluses and we have older Australians who are not getting the services they need and they deserve. The government cannot continue to sit back and not invest in aged-care services in this country; not deal with the home care package crisis; not deal with the Commonwealth Home Support Program issues; and not deal with the issues in residential aged care.

The latest Stewart Brown report says that many not-for-profit operators, particularly in regional Australia, are operating at a loss. We know that it is difficult to retain quality staff in aged care because there simply aren't enough staff and they aren't paid enough. There are so many issues to deal with in aged care in the country at the moment. The government needs, when it gets these recommendations, to start to deal with some of these issues. It cannot wait until the final report, due in April 2020, to do something about it. We need to ensure, and older Australians are relying on it, that the government act as soon as possible. It is simply untenable to wait until April 2020 for the government to start to respond to some of the royal commission's issues. It would be several budget cycles going forward if we were to wait for that. Once it has the interim report and recommendations, the government should start to respond as quickly as possible.

We will continue to work with consumers, with older Australians, with providers and with the loved ones and relatives of those who are accessing care to ensure that the government is held to account and to ensure that the government responds quickly as it possibly can. We cannot afford any more months or any more years of inaction from this government. After six years, a lack of reform, four ministers and billions and billions of dollars ripped out of the aged-care system, it is not okay for this government to sit back and not act. I, like many Australians, expect that the government will act.

We have also had a situation recently in Queensland with Earle Haven. The government said it did not know what was happening at Earle Haven until the day it happened. After 22 complaints about the owner of Earle Haven and two visits from the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission this year, I ask: how is it possible that the government did not know that these elderly residents were left at risk? The government needs to do more and it needs to act.

**National Disability Insurance Scheme**

**Braddon Electorate: Mental Health**

*Mr PEARCE* (Braddon) (19:55): Throughout the federal election campaign, the Prime Minister was a regular visitor to my region of Braddon. He showed genuine interest in the good people of Braddon and the issues that were facing them. His interest in Braddon hasn't stopped now that the election has been run and won. Only recently, the Prime Minister visited Tasmania again. He attended an NDIS consultation session in the northern part of the state.

The NDIS is one of the largest and most important social institutional reforms that the government has undertaken in a generation. Like all reforms, it's an enormous task, but we're up for the job, and the progress to date has been significant. We have made sure that the NDIS is fully funded and the systems that are driving the program forward are in place. But, most importantly, right across Australia we're moving towards the target of having half a million participants in the scheme in the next five years. But what the government has recognised is that it's not just being on the scheme that's important; it's making sure that the scheme works for every one of those half a million participants, including those living in the more remote and regional areas like my electorate of Braddon.
So, true to their word, the Prime Minister and the NDIS minister, Stuart Robert, made it their priority to visit and conducted a consultation process. It was a great day. We gathered approximately 20 locals who were on the NDIS system. The Prime Minister, the minister and I listened to how the program was working for each of those participants, and they were free to tell us about what was good, what was concerning them and where the system was falling short. They also told stories about how the scheme was transforming their lives and those of their families. It was a candid, open, honest discussion.

Personally, I raised issues about the access to services in our more remote areas like Circular Head, the west coast and King Island. In these places, it's not always easy to access allied health professionals like occupational therapists and carers. At the moment, it seems that many of our participants are working around the availability in the system rather than the system working around them. But I'm confident that our Prime Minister and Minister Robert took all the points on board, and they have promised to provide feedback. That will be collated towards making the NDIS better for all participants, irrespective of where they live. It is my commitment to the participants within Braddon and their families that I'll be keeping in close contact with Minister Robert in order to make sure that this is the case.

After speaking with the NDIS participants, the Prime Minister and I travelled to Latrobe and visited the Psychology Caffe, a group practice specialising in the assessment and treatment of children and adolescents. The organisation employs a range of experienced psychologists, social workers and occupational therapists who work in the treatment of autism spectrum disorders and attention deficit hyperactivity disorders; assessments for developmental, intellectual and learning disorders; and cognitive behaviour therapy, acceptance commitment therapy and play therapy, just to name a few. At the Psychology Caffe, the Prime Minister again spoke with the psychologists, social workers and support staff about how our government can best support their efforts to improve mental health outcomes. He listened to the parents and the carers as they spoke about their experiences with the mental health system in our region. Our government's $503 million commitment to youth mental health and suicide prevention is the largest suicide prevention strategy in Australia's history. It will ensure that government activities are coordinated, services are delivered to young Australians at risk and support is available to their friends and families. This includes specific measures for rural and regional areas like in my electorate of Braddon, with the establishment of new headspace sites, and providing new mental health and telehealth services. Thank you to Tracey Martin-Cole, a psychologist and founder of Psychology Caffe; all of her team; and the families who allowed us into their lives.

My aim is to help the people of Braddon to be the very best that they can be, and that means doing my part to get rid of the barriers that might be stopping that from happening. That's why I'm committed to ensuring that our government plays its part to ensure that the NDIS and our mental health services function as well as they possibly can for all people in Braddon.

House adjourned at 20:00

NOTICES

The following notices were given:

Ms Owens to move:

That this House:

(1) notes:

(a) that western Sydney is home to two million people, which is nearly 10 per cent of Australia's population and Australia's third largest economy;

(b) that western Sydney's population is expected to grow by an additional one million people in the next 20 years while the population in the corridor between Parramatta and Sydney is expected to grow by 420,000;

(c) that more than 300,000 new jobs are expected to be created in the same period and that traffic congestion is expected to cost Sydney nearly $15 billion by 2031;

(d) that Parramatta is western Sydney's Central Business District (CBD) and is Sydney's second CBD;

(e) the benefit of the proposed Sydney Metro West project to connect Parramatta and Sydney via the Bays Precinct and Sydney Olympic Park; and

(f) that the project, when operational, is expected to slash travel times between the two CBDs to just 20 minutes (on trains running every two minutes) and reduce traffic congestion;

(2) recognises the NSW Government's commitment of $6.4 billion in funding to the project and additional commitment to fast-track the project to begin construction in 2020;

(3) further notes that Federal Labor committed to $3 billion funding to the project prior to the 2019 federal election; and
(4) calls on the Federal Government to urgently allocate the funding that will ensure the project can begin construction in the fast-tracked timeframe.
CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS
Canberra Electorate: Waterways

Ms PAYNE (Canberra) (10:30): In my first speech in parliament I talked of Canberra's immense natural beauty. Ours is a unique city planned to complement and sit within that beauty. Set within a ring of mountains, our community is a patchwork of parklands, reserves and lakes, all connected by our precious urban waterways. Canberraans love these spaces and are out enjoying them even on the coldest of days. Understanding the link between healthy waterways and a healthy city, federal Labor committed to work hand in hand with local community groups around the country to develop comprehensive plans to regenerate our nation's urban waterways. I was excited to be able to secure a commitment to fund these projects in Canberra had we won government.

Our plan in Canberra included funds to build new wetlands, revegetate and birdscape creek corridors with tree and shrub plantings, engineer new waste capture mechanisms to remove pollutants and turn concreted waterways back to their natural state. My team and I worked closely with shadow minister Tony Burke, Senator Katy Gallagher and local community groups working in the catchment and conservation space, including the Molonglo Conservation Group, ACT Woodland and Wetlands Conservation Trust, SEE-Change and the Ginninderra Catchment Group. Led largely by a dedicated group of Canberra women, I was so inspired by the commitment to Canberra's natural environment, their mission of raising community awareness of just how fragile it is and the human need to be connected to it. I would like to give a special mention to Karen Williams and the Molonglo Conservation Group, who spoke about the links between conservation and Indigenous cultural significance and the many significant sites in and around Canberra.

I was excited one of my first community events as the member for Canberra was helping to clean up one of our local waterways, Giralang Pond. I joined Suzanne Orr MLA, the hard-working volunteers of the Giralang Pond Landcare Group and many locals who wanted to get involved in caring for the waterway. This event with Suzanne is emblematic of the longstanding commitment that the ACT government has to these groups and Canberra's natural environment. I hope community events like this will become a regular feature of my first term.

Road Safety

Dr MARTIN (Reid) (10:32): As my first constituency statement, I would like to acknowledge the work of the Little Blue Dinosaur Foundation, an organisation I have built a strong relationship with over five years. Prior to entering politics I served as an expert advisor for Little Blue Dinosaur as an educational and developmental psychologist. Now, as the federal member for Reid in federal parliament, I have taken on the role of government ambassador to the Little Blue Dinosaur to continue my contributions to their work through the significant lens of government policy. I would like to acknowledge the Minister for Communications and the member for Robertson, who are also ambassadors for this organisation.

The Little Blue Dinosaur promotes child pedestrian safety awareness to the community, an issue that is especially important to those of us who are parents. Michelle and David McLaughlin started Little Blue Dinosaur in 2014 after their son, Thomas Maxwell Davis McLaughlin, was tragically killed at the age of four in a pedestrian accident. This unspeakable tragedy inspired Thomas's parents to start the Little Blue Dinosaur Foundation.

Data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare states the most common cause of death of children aged one to 14 is land transport accidents or road trauma. Australian road safety experts tell us children in this age group have proven limited cognitive physical and perceptual abilities, such as limited peripheral vision and poor judgement of risks. The foundation has become a strong voice for children's road safety, and Tom's legacy is realised through the campaigns and community education that the Little Blue Dinosaur undertakes. Currently there are over 60 council partners participating in campaigns across four Australian states.

The Little Blue Dinosaur's 'It's holiday time' campaign has been instrumental in reducing dangers to our smaller pedestrians and reminding drivers of Little Blue Dinosaur's message: 'Slow down, kids around.' The campaign also reminds parents and carers to hold hands with their children who are aged 10 years and under. Holding hands with our little ones near moving vehicles is just as important as placing a seatbelt on them in the car.
I will do my very best to make sure Tom's voice continues to be heard and thereby increase community awareness of the vital importance of child pedestrian safety. I commend the work that Michelle, David and the team of the Little Blue Dinosaur Foundation have done in Tom's memory.

National Disability Insurance Scheme

Ms OWENS (Parramatta) (10:35): The elected officers of members of parliament do a lot of individual work for people in our electorates—people struggling with Centrelink, the ATO or aged care. If things go wrong with the front line of services, our offices know—we all know; every MP in this parliament knows—what is happening at the front line, so there should be no claims of 'I didn't know' from MPs when it comes to the failure of this government to manage the rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme. The delays, the inaction, the understaffing and the stress on people with disabilities, their families and their carers are visible to us all.

Let's look at what's going on here. The federal government's much heralded 2019-20 budget surplus will be boosted by a $1.6 billion underspend on the NDIS. In the 2014 budget—way back then—the Abbott government introduced a 3,000 person cap on direct employees of the NDIA, although the original plan was to employ about 10,000. It has risen slightly since then, but, still, enormous amounts of money are going to outsourcing the skills that we need in this incredibly vital area. At the end of last year, 32,425 NDIS participants had lodged formal complaints about the NDIA. That's 6.5 per cent of all people who have sought access to the scheme. According to research from National Disability Services, the failure in implementation of the NDIS means one in 10 disability service providers have discussed closing, 28 per cent of service providers made a loss or deficit, and more than half, or 54 per cent, of Australian disability providers say they will have to reduce the quality of services under the current pricing model. And the NDIS is struggling even though it's only servicing about 244,000 Australians, when it was designed to support 460,000 Australians.

I want to move to one example in my electorate—one of many. One constituent in my electorate ran out of money in her plan in February. She has high needs and three carers, so she applied for a review of her plan. The review took until April. During that time, her three carers worked unpaid because they couldn't just leave her at home unable to get out of bed or eat. They took care of her for three months, building up back pay of $34,000 which the NDIS promised to pay. Now, in July, they still haven't been paid, in spite of several approaches to NDIA, and there is desperation on their part, as they are not exactly highly paid workers and are $34,000 out of pocket from February to April this year. My office made the first inquiry on 12 July. We've made two follow-ups since then and we haven't had a response either. That's not unusual at the moment because the responses have blown out—to 59 days in one case. Everyone on the government members' side knows what is happening in their electorate, and I urge you to talk to your colleagues about fixing this.

Lindsay Electorate: Cranebrook Breakfast Club

Mrs MCINTOSH (Lindsay) (10:38): I have long had a connection to the suburb of Cranebrook, having lived there. It's in the electorate of Lindsay. I am proud to say that now I'm their federal representative in parliament. I talk a lot about Lindsay's community spirit. In Lindsay, it's not just in our foundation; we are overflowing with it. A wonderful example of community spirit is Cranebrook Breakfast Club, run by Nepean Community & Neighbourhood Services, or NCNS.

I first met kids and families at the breakfast club earlier this year and they told me they needed a new van to help get kids to school. In May this year, I announced that the breakfast club would receive $40,000 to help with the purchase of a second van for the morning school run for local students because their first one was at maximum capacity. This extra vehicle means that the centre will be able to double the number of kids being picked up and dropped off at school. These are vulnerable kids who normally have a very low school attendance rate, and attending the breakfast club is having positive outcomes on school attendance as well.

A special mention goes to NCNS's Joy Impiombato for her tireless advocacy to get this funding over the line. We all play a role in the education and future of our children, and Joy is making sure that our local kids are nurtured and nourished to keep them at school.

Each day the Cranebrook Breakfast Club is held at the Cranebrook neighbourhood centre between 7.30 am and 8.45. Local volunteers provide free breakfast to students, parents and carers from Cranebrook High School and Braddock Public School. All students are welcome to attend, and over 500 breakfasts are served each week. I've mentioned cheese toasty Wednesdays in my maiden speech because they're the best, and I've also heard that there are Milo Thursdays and a wide range of food and healthy choices for the kids. Not only does the centre provide breakfast, but kids are also taught to make and prepare their own lunch to encourage healthy lifestyle choices.

In 2017 the centre asked local kids, 'What is Brekky Club for you?' Some of the responses were: 'because I don't eat breakfast at home', 'daily routine', 'friendly faces', 'you can see your friends from high school' and 'just in case you didn't get to have breakfast'. At one of my visits to the breakfast club I met a young indigenous student.
from Cranebrook High School named Rhys. His mother works at NCNS, and he told me that he would like to study law. Many people who work at the centre believe Rhys has a bright future, and I look forward to seeing him succeed.

breakfast club is only one of the many programs run by NCNS, who are also helping people experiencing homelessness, distress, helplessness and misfortune. An important part of the breakfast club is that kids have healthy meals before school and their attendance is increased.

Pensions and Benefits

Ms O'NEIL (Hotham) (10:41): I want to make a statement today about Newstart and I do so on the basis of a number of people who have recently come into contact with my electorate office but also three organisations in my community that are doing extraordinary work in helping people who are doing it toughest at the moment. They are Monash Oakleigh Community Support And Information Service, Monash-Waverley Community Information and Support and South East Community Links. Those organisations have asked me to speak about this incredibly important topic today.

I know all of us in this chamber agree that Australia is a great country. We're one of the wealthiest countries in the world and we're one that actually has one of the fairest and most efficient safety nets in the world. During most of our lifetime as Australians, we will rely on welfare. When we fall on hard times as human beings in this country, we access the safety net and welfare state, and most of us are lucky to come back out and get back on our feet. So it's a system that generally works well, but there is a problem, and that is that the rate of Newstart is just too low. In fact, it's the lowest unemployment payment in all of the OECD and I think that, as a country, we can do better.

In the last day or two, ACOSS has released some research that talks about the impact that the low rate of Newstart has on the people who depend on this payment. They talked about people who don't have enough food to eat who are going to organisations like those to which I've referred just to seek tins of food to help them get through. We heard there are people who are not buying refrigeratable foods so they can save on energy costs. There are people who are not heating their homes in winter. The low rate of Newstart has real consequences, and one of those is that most people who are on that payment live in poverty.

When you have the Business Council of Australia, the Australian Council of Trade Unions and just about every other major business industry and welfare group on the same page, telling us that this rate is too low, we know that something is wrong. Newstart is $40 a day. It has not increased in real terms since the Keating government, and in that time the aged pension has, I believe, in real terms more than doubled. It's a paltry amount that is inadequate not only for those people on Newstart to live; indeed, the evidence tells us that, for those people who are relying on Newstart, the low rate is actually preventing them from getting a job. Basic things like grooming, having food to eat and transport to go to job interviews are being prohibited.

We want government to raise the rate. The government has said they want people to get a job. Of course employment is the best way out of poverty that we know, but the idea that the people on Newstart don't want to work is ridiculous. Unemployment is unfair. It is demeaning, and we need to do everything we can as a parliament to help those people get back on their feet and into work.

Groom Electorate: O'Callaghan Cup

Dr McVEIGH (Groom) (10:44): Certainly it was an exciting weekend in Toowoomba, with the O'Callaghan Cup rugby game played between Downlands and Toowoomba Grammar School before a crowd of about 6,000 this year at the Grammar rugby fields. Led by the Grammar captain Dougal Grealy and Downlands captain Mac Grealy, these fine young men from these schools did this 70-year-old competition proud. Named after the five O'Callaghan brothers and Downlands students Jim, Jack, Mick, Frank and Bryan, who donated the cup in 1950, it has now been won by Downlands 36 times, Grammar 31, and it has been drawn three times. This year was a Downlands victory after a five-year winning streak for Grammar. With the score at 21 to 20, the dying minutes of the game saw Mac Grealy beat multiple defenders to score the match-winning try, resulting in a 27 to 21 win. These boys should be proud. Downlands coach Garrick Morgan certainly would be. It was fitting that Dougal Grey and Mac Grealy were named players of the match. Mac's naming in the Australian Schools Barbarians team is another example of the rugby nursery in these two schools in the tradition of the Tim Horans and Jason Littles of generations past. We certainly have an exciting future.

On a personal level, as a Downlands graduate myself—I note that my neighbour, the member for Maranoa, David Littleproud, is a Grammar graduate—I was never much of a footy player. I did note that Mac's sister Frances represented our school in netball along with my daughter Marita. It was great to see young Wil Jauncey, whom I have known since he was a baby, having a run for Grammar.
I have watched this competition since I was a child. It is a good-natured contest yet a fierce rivalry. It's a tourism and economic boon for our city each year. It's a real opportunity for past students of both schools to gather and relive old memories—to remember the good times and, of course, to reminisce over the tougher times. It has been particularly as a parent that I've appreciated the true spirit of the contest during my son Kevin's playing years. These are magnificent schools and over the years the O'Callaghan Cup has seen them both congratulate one another, support each other in times of tragedy and adversity during the school year, and make their families proud. I say to both Downlands College and Toowoomba Grammar School, it was another magnificent contest this year, and you should both take a bow.

**Gorton Electorate: Infrastructure**

**Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR** (Gorton) (10:47): The Morrison government is failing the good residents of my electorate of Gorton in many ways. The lack of investment locally by this government is destructive, insulting and unacceptable. At the May election Labor made a number of local commitments that would help build our community as well as deliver local jobs. The Liberals made not one commitment for Gorton. Disappointed as I am at the election result, I am devastated for all the people who will now miss out on Labor's commitments. For Gorton sporting clubs Labor promised a $1.8 million spend to the 100-year-old Rockbank Football Sporting Club, $1 million to resurface the playing surface for the Westside Strikers Football Club, and $60,000 to Diggers Rest football club for upgrades, including a new scoreboard.

I would like the sports minister to explain to Gavin Sporle of Rockbank why his footy club rooms don't deserve an upgrade; and explain to Maria Ekladious why the Westside Strikers, whose club is in such great demand, have to turn away kids because they can't get new facilities; and explain why the Diggers Rest Burras still struggle to make out how many goals they are piling on because their old scoreboard desperately needs replacing.

The government must now also match Labor's commitment to providing 40 full-time Department of Human Services jobs in Melton. This would inject around $3 million into our local community and provide the families, carers, students and pensioners of Gorton with better Medicare and Centrelink service delivery.

With the economy struggling and anaemic, there is an urgent need for the government to bring forward big infrastructure spending. The government allocated $50 million to upgrade the Calder Highway, but it is not working with the Victorian state government to use this money efficiently. The Western Highway and the Calder Highway both need more investment. They are very important transport links not only to Ballarat and Bendigo but of course, in the case of the Western Highway, to South Australia as well. It is a very important road. It is also critical that the federal government now commit to funding improvements for the Western Highway to ease the ever-growing congestion. The required upgrade to the Western Highway includes extra lanes and new interchanges to serve the Melton West and Rockbank areas. It is genuinely needed to serve not just the community but also the 60,000 vehicles that travel in each direction every day. The federal government needs to stop ignoring and neglecting the residents of Gorton. The Prime Minister likes to say that he wants to provide good infrastructure for the nation. He likes to call himself 'the infrastructure Prime Minister'. We see no evidence of that in my electorate. More needs to be done.

**Ridgley Saints Football Club**

**Motor Neurone Disease**

**Mr PEARCE** (Braddon) (10:50): Deep in the heart of my electorate of Braddon is the town of Ridgley. It's a gem of a town about 15 minutes drive south of Burnie. It's a place where you can count the population in the hundreds rather than the thousands. But being small doesn't stop the great people of Ridgley doing magnificent things with their community and making sure that they bring communities in the region along with them. It's the home of the mighty Saints Football Club. They play in the Darwin Football Association against other great teams from Somerset, Natone, Queenstown, Cuprona, Yolla, South Burnie and Yeoman, which draws players from the greater Burnie area.

The senior and reserves teams from Ridgley Saints Football Club have had a cracking year this year. They've got new blood on the player list, and they're attracting fresh and passionate supporters to the game. The vibe around the club is fantastic. But it's not all about winning premierships at Ridgley—the Saints also spend a lot of time giving back to their community. This was demonstrated recently when they held their second Big Freeze fundraiser for motor neurone disease, supporting club stalwart Michele McCulloch, who has MND, and her family. It gets pretty cold down home and the back of Burnie is no stranger to this, so you might say that every day is a big freeze, but this didn't stop representatives from every club in the Darwin Football Association, administrators and umpires from putting up their hand and sliding down into the icy waters to help the Ridgley footy club raise funds for this great cause.

**FEDERATION CHAMBER**
The federal government is doing its part for MND. Recently we announced a further $5 million in funding, which will be invested into world's best practice research, including more technical and clinical trials, drug development and other research projects. That's on top of our rock solid commitment to list drugs on the PBS, including recent editions for MND. Since 2013 the Morrison government has listed over 2,000 new or amended items to the PBS. It should be called the 'PB-yes'. This represents an average of around 31 listings per month or one each day at an overall cost of around $10.6 billion. So next time you're in Tassie, why not drop into Ridgley one Saturday afternoon during the footy season? Say 'g'day' to the president, Glenn Waters, Michele and Graeme McCulloch, and Shelley and Paul Russell; get a sav from the helpful hands at the canteen; and honk your horn for the volunteers and supporters who keep this great club and this great community rocking.

Barty, Ms Ashleigh (Ash)
Somerset Art Society

Mr NEUMANN (Blair) (10:53): I talk today of an individual from Ipswich excelling in her endeavours and an organisation from the Somerset region making a difference. Iconic sporting individuals such as Allan Langer, Kevin Walters, Craig McDermott and Shane Watson all hail from the Ipswich region, and so does Ash Barty. It would be remiss of me if I didn't take this opportunity to highlight the achievements of Ipswich local Ash Barty, who recently won the French Open and rose to the top of world tennis rankings. With this victory, she became the first Australian to win the French Open since Margaret Court in 1973 and the second Australian to hold the women's world No. 1 ranking after Evonne Goolagong-Cawley. Ash has made Ipswich residents very proud with her success, and the humility she displays is a true example of a great role model for young girls and young boys who want to take up the game of tennis.

Unfortunately, a major hurdle for young athletes progressing in their sporting journeys is the cost associated with competing at state and national championships, and families are often forced to make difficult choices between children participating in sporting trips critical to their development and household expenses. This was recognised by the Rudd Labor government, and a grants program for young athletes in 2008, known as the Local Sporting Champions grant, was subsequently introduced. Individuals between 12 years and 18 years can get assistance of up to $750. This Labor initiative has assisted many, and I congratulate the government for continuing this particular grants program. I encourage all eligible young athletes in Blair to apply for this grant. You never know: we might see the next Ash Barty come from Ipswich.

An organisation making such a huge difference in the Somerset region is the Somerset Art Society. Last Friday night, at the Somerset Civic Centre in Esk, I was privileged to open the Somerset Bendigo Bank Art Awards. There were 337 entrants in the categories of photography, textiles, painting and sculpture. This is a record number, and I want to congratulate all the sponsors and individuals. There were 50 volunteers, and, to make this happen, they worked for eight months. I particularly want to congratulate the president, Betty Williams; the vice president, Ron Orr; the secretary, Kim Thompson; the treasurer, Nelle Smith; the awards convener, Jan Godfrey; and the art awards curator, LeAnne Vincent, who tells me she recorded 55,000 steps on her Fitbit on the day that they finally hung all the categories. I want to congratulate Bendigo Bank for their continued sponsorship. I'm proud to be a sponsor of the Somerset Art Society, particularly this exhibition. I thank the many community organisations, including the Somerset Regional Council, who got behind this particular exhibition.

Sunshine Coast: Small Business

Mr TED O'BRIEN (Fairfax) (10:56): Everybody knows the Australian economy is going strong. We know that we're back in surplus. We know that we've maintained our AAA credit rating. We know that we have recorded the largest growth in jobs in our history, and we know that we're growing faster than any other OECD country, bar the United States, with our $100 billion infrastructure plan and the largest recapitalisation of our defence forces in our history. But we can't forget the importance of small and medium businesses on driving that growth.

In my region of the Sunshine Coast there are about 46,000 small and medium businesses. If you believe the likes of one of Australia's leading demographers, Bernard Salt, the Sunshine Coast is arguably the most entrepreneurial region in Australia. If you then believe the findings of one of Australia's most renowned sociologist, Hugh Mackay, few places in Australia have such a high level of human capital as the Sunshine Coast. These two go hand in hand. We know, as small and medium businesses get off the ground, there is a great need for them to build a network that is supported within the local community. It was a delight, therefore, last Friday, to attend the Facebook Community Boost program at Surfair in Marooela. And it was no surprise at all when the organisers told me that they had not received such a crowd elsewhere. Again, this goes to the entrepreneurial importance of the Sunshine Coast and the fact that small and medium businesses continue to go out and embrace new ideas, innovations and technologies.

FEDERATION CHAMBER
Amidst the crowd was one of the founders of the Sunshine Coast theatre company, a start-up that came through the not-for-profit organisation called Generation Innovation, which I founded five years ago and which every single year sees people between the ages of 15 and 25 start their own businesses in the community. Organisations like Generation Innovation, which was born on the Sunshine Coast, are very technology savvy. The head office is, in fact, the website. That's where people go to register and get information. That's where a platform is run for crowdfunding and for voting on peoples' favourites. And, of course, Facebook is the meeting rooms for the small entrepreneurial groups as they move forward.

I want to take this opportunity to make the point that not only is the Australian economy going well and not only is the Sunshine Coast the most entrepreneurial region in the country but local businesses are embracing technology like never before.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Zimmerman): In accordance with standing order 193, the time for members' constituency statements has expired.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS
Australian Defence Force Cadets

Mr HASTIE (Canning) (10:59): I move:

That this House:

(1) notes the valuable contribution the Australian Defence Force (ADF) cadets make to youth development in our communities;

(2) recognises cadet leaders and staff who give up their time to mentor and shape Australia's youth; and

(3) acknowledges that ADF cadets, in cooperation with the community, benefit the nation by developing an individual's capacity to contribute to society.

Today I rise to speak in support of our very significant and historical Australian Defence Force cadet movement, which goes a long way to developing youth in our communities. I want to pay tribute to the cadet leaders and staff, and the parents particularly, who give up their time to mentor and shape the character of the next generation of Australians.

I also want to acknowledge the role that the ADF cadet movement, in cooperation with the wider Australian community and volunteer movement, play in benefitting the nation by building character, resilience and the skills required so that the cadets can make a valuable contribution to society when they grow to full adulthood.

I was once a cadet myself. I didn't enjoy it all the time. But certainly as I look back on my own past, I acknowledge the significance that it played in my own formation as a person and the character that it built in me.

I particularly want to acknowledge in this parliament my local cadet units: the 504th Army cadet unit Mandurah, the 52nd Army cadet unit Armadale, the Australian Airforce cadets unit 707 squadron and, never to be forgotten, the naval cadets—they are the senior service—Training Ship Mandurah. I see all those cadet units regularly throughout the year; whether it be at Anzac Day services, where they perform the role of honour guard; or at Remembrance Day, where they do the same; and then out on the streets where they have been raising money for the Red Cross, for example, or just lending a hand across the community. I have come to know quite a few of the cadets. I admire what they do.

I am also very proud to say that it's been an opportunity for me to encourage some of them to pursue careers in the Australian Defence Force. We've had several young cadets join the Navy, some have gone to the Australian Defence Force Academy, and are studying not far from this House right now, and others have enlisted. The cadets have been a really good pathway for young Australians in my electorate to take on a career in the Australian Defence Force.

Importantly, the Australian cadet movement encourages volunteerism. I think this is something that on both sides of the House we can agree needs greater work in Australia at the moment. We talk a lot about the increasing selfishness of people. I think we like to beat up on the younger generation, but to see all those young Australians serving their community and serving their country in uniform as cadets is very heartening indeed. It encourages and grows a love of country. This is really important. We are all Australians. The cadet movement is one organisation, which, across all six states and territories, unites us all in the service of our flag, our history and the traditions that have been passed down through the Australian Defence Force.

There are approximately 26,000 cadets currently enrolled across the three service cadet programs. There are 3,200 officers and instructors of cadets and approved helpers who supervise and support the young Australians engaged in these programs. There are actually 508 ADF cadets units in all states and territories.
Very quickly, I want to talk a little bit about my own experience. I learnt self-discipline through the cadet program. Every Anzac Day I was required to perform the role of an honour guard at Hyde Park in Sydney, at the Anzac remembrance hall. We used to take pride in being able to stand still the longest. Sometimes a few of us would fall over and faint but, nonetheless, we'd earn kudos by standing as still as we possibly could. I always liked to pride myself in doing that. I was a fairly fidgety kid—I wasn't a great student—but, hey, I could stand still for a long period of time! To do that on Anzac Day, where we honoured our veterans, was very, very important.

I learnt failure. I did a course up in Singleton called the adventure training award. I thought I would be a walk in but I actually failed. It was a week of navigation and of small team leadership. I failed and I was absolutely shattered but it built in me resilience. I never forgot that you need to prepare for these sorts of things if you want to pass them successfully.

And, finally, I overcame fear. I remember abseiling off the cliffs out near the heads. I was very scared, but I managed to get down there—there's great exposure over near The Gap. I credit the cadet movement for a lot of my development. Thank you.

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

**Mr Andrews:** I second motion.

### Solomon Electorate: Cadets

**Mr GOSLING (Solomon) (11:04):** I want to thank the member for Canning (1) for his service and (2) for giving honourable members the opportunity to note the valuable contribution of cadets. Australian Defence Force cadets, I think, have played and continue to play a marvellous role in developing young people with all those attributes you just heard of from the member of Canning. I wasn’t a cadet myself but my advice is that, if you do want to a career in the Australian Defence Force, be a cadet. I noticed, when I joined the Army and went to the Australian Defence Force Academy, it was the young men and women, my colleagues, who had been cadets before who just blitzed everything. They knew how to strip down an SLR and they knew how to shoot and had an idea about navigation and all those things, so it was a great advantage to them. They often spoke about their experiences in cadets and there was no doubt it prepared them well for the challenges of service life, so I would encourage young people to look at cadets.

Being in a defence town, as I am, my electorate of Darwin and Palmerston has Army, Navy and Airforce cadets. ADF cadets provide the opportunity for a great deal of personal development in a sort of quasi-military environment that does extend the cadets beyond their self-imposed limits. It helps them develop an understanding of the balance between personal freedoms and choice and the responsibilities that they bring; promotes self-reliance, self-esteem and self-discipline; and develops and recognises a broad range of skills, including leadership and teamwork.

In my electorate of Solomon, young Territorians are lucky to have the option of participating in the Army, Navy or Air Force cadets, as I’ve mentioned. We have a Navy cadet unit at Berrima. The Australian Navy cadets have a training ship, which is like the base. The unit was fortunate to recently receive a brand new power boat from the Department of Defence, so they are very stoked about that. This will allow the cadets there to get their boating qualifications. In fact, prior to the delivery of that boat, the training ship, Darwin, hadn’t conducted water activities for three years. The boat is going to be named Phoenix, after the symbolic bird, adopted by HMAS Darwin that was recently been decommissioned. The unit's second boat, which has been repaired, will also feature in the naming ceremony and will be named Arrow, after HMAS Arrow, which sunk at Stokes Hill Wharf during Cyclone Tracy, back in 1974.

We have two Air Force cadet squadrons, No. 801 Squadron in Winnellie and No. 802 Squadron in Driver in Palmerston, which both form part of 8 Wing squadron. Over the weekend at the Darwin Show, I donated two show tickets to the 801 Squadron Australian Air Force cadets, who recently completed their first semester with the cadet program. I hope cadet Beaton and cadet Schiller enjoyed their time at the Darwin Show—I certainly did; it was a great weekend.

Last but not least we have the two Army cadet units, the 70 ACU Larrakeyah, and the 71 Army Cadet Unit Palmerston. Both units recently conducted a joint recruit course and bivouac for 34 recruits at Robertson Barracks, where they were taught various skills about living in the bush, wearing their field gear, personal camouflage and team-building activities. It is a great credit to all of the staff. On any given day, army cadet units in my electorate can have 120 cadets, so it's a great credit to the parents, volunteers and personnel, who take their time to make the ADF cadet programs in Darwin so successful. Cadets are great, and I commend young people to get involved.

**Mr ANDREWS (Menzies) (11:09):** I'm delighted to join with the member for Canning and, indeed, the member for Solomon to praise the work of the ADF cadets right around this country. In numerous places throughout Australia, cadet units offer a wonderful opportunity for young people not only to learn more about the
military—the defence forces—but to learn important skills which will stand them in good stead in many walks of life which they might follow up in the future. Having seen cadet units on numerous occasions and the enthusiasm of young people for these activities, I know they are something we can all commend and that we can indicate our support for the leaders of these units and for the ongoing work they do for young people in our community.

May I take the opportunity on this occasion to commend also the work of the Australian Air League's Doncaster squadron, in my electorate of Menzies. It has been led by Ian Walkeden for many years and is a very vibrant group of young people who are engaged in the Air League's activities. The squadron at Doncaster is entirely self-funded, and local volunteers give their time generously to achieve their goals. Along with the cadets more generally, the goals of the Australian Air League are:

- To promote and encourage the development of Aviation in the Youth of Australia
- To promote good citizenship
- To promote ingenuity and resourcefulness of its members
- To develop the physical and mental abilities of its members

These are very wholesome, fully rounded activities which are good for young people generally.

Members of the Australian Air League's Doncaster squadron attend parade nights once a week, when they take part in a variety of activities, including ceremonial drill, model-aircraft building and aviation theory classes. Together with active community participation, they undertake training in first aid, in lifesaving and in camp craft, which prepares these young people for a lifetime of service within our local community. It is great to see the air cadets participate in the regular citizenship awards in Manningham, in Menzies. They also participate in Anzac Day services and in other commemorative-day services, including Armistice Day, and they help to raise funds for many good causes, so much so that on a number of occasions in my annual Menzies Australia Day awards I have been able to acknowledge amongst other people some of the members of the Doncaster Australian Air League squadron. This year Calan McLeod and Kevin Huang, two young members of the Doncaster squadron, were acknowledged among 50 or so people on Australia Day. In the previous year, 2018, Tiffany Huang was acknowledged, and the year before that, in 2017, Kenneth Ting, Hanson Wong and the head of the Doncaster air league squadron, Ian Walkeden, were acknowledged.

One thing that members in the chamber and others listening may have noted is the ethnic background of those young people who have been acknowledged as part of the Air League. Calan McLeod, Kevin Huang, Tiffany Huang, Kenneth Ting and Hanson Wong are all of Asian background. It's just amazing to see in my electorate, a very multicultural electorate, young people from an Asian background amongst others being engaged in the activities of the air squadron. It brings people together in these activities, regardless of their background, of their ethnicity and of whatever other characteristics they may bring to their involvement. One of the things which I do regularly on Australia Day is award the Australian flag which is flown in the Australian House of Representatives chamber, which the Speaker generously makes available. On Australia Day I award that flag to one of the community groups in my electorate as an indication and a recognition of the service which they provide to the greater community in Menzies. In 2018, as well as giving an individual award to Tiffany Huang, I presented the very special Australian flag which had flown in the House of Representatives chamber to the Doncaster Air League as an indication and in appreciation of the activities which they undertake, of the contribution they make to the local community and as an encouragement to their ongoing work. Once again, I commend the member for Canning for bringing forward this motion to the House and commend the ongoing work of everybody involved in the ADF cadets.

Mr NEUMANN (Blair) (11:14): I rise to support this motion, and I thank the member for Canning for this motion. The Australian Defence Force Cadets is arguably Australia's best youth personal development program. It's supported by the ADF, in cooperation with local communities across the country. The program benefits the nation by developing the capacity of Australian youth to contribute to society, while fostering, I think, an interest and a potential career for many of them in the Australian Defence Force. It's quite clear that they develop ongoing communitarian spirit from their time in the ADF Cadets.

As has been said, it compromises three cadet organisations, administered by the fairly newly established ADF Cadets headquarters—Navy, Army and Air Force—and they're responsible, of course, for these cadets in the headquarters across the country. There are currently—and the numbers go up, as with any organisation—about 24½ thousand cadets and 4½ thousand officers, instructors and approved helpers in more than 500 ADF cadet units across the country, including several in the electorate of Blair. As well as developing critical life skills, like leadership, teamwork, respect, unity and discipline, ADF Cadets programs engender a spirit of service, civics and Australian values in participants. I think it clearly improves the diversity of the ADF, and you can see that from the number of people from ethnic backgrounds in the cadets that I have seen across my electorate.
While the ADF Cadets program enjoys very strong bipartisan support, Labor has also been a very big believer in the program. When last in government, my colleague Dr Mike Kelly, the member for Eden-Monaro, commissioned a major review of the ADF Cadets scheme back in 2008. It led to a stronger focus on ADF Cadets and better funding, allowing new units to form. It also identified a number of challenges, as you would expect, and I'm sure the member for Eden-Monaro, when he is speaking, will have more to say about that review. I also want to thank the former Parliamentary Secretary for Defence, former senator David Feeney, who did much to champion cadets across the country and came to Ipswich to meet with local cadets when Labor was last in government.

As the shadow minister for Veterans' Affairs and Defence Personnel, with responsibility for cadets on our side of the chamber, I intend to build on Labor's strong record in this space. There have been a number of significant changes to the ADF Cadets program in recent years. Defence, for example, is trying to improve its safety and child protection regime in response to findings of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse around abuse within ADF cadet organisations. A number of initiatives have been rolled out to improve cadet programs and provide a better experience for participants. The Australian Army Cadets transformation program has contributed to improvements in governance, accountability and training, with new resources and electives like robotics being added, and a growth in volunteer numbers. Under the Australian Air Force Cadets program in recent years, the RAAF is purchasing gliders and leasing aircraft to provide flight training, which has been exciting for young cadets involved.

I've had the privilege of engaging with a number of cadet units in and around the electorate of Blair. There's the Army cadet unit, for example, 127 ACU based near Queens Park in Ipswich Central. The Navy cadet unit, TS Ipswich, is based in Ipswich Central at the same location. There's an Army cadet unit in Springfield, and there are Air Force cadet units at RAAF Base Amberley, Australia's largest Air Force base. I'm pleased to have recently participated in the ADF Parliamentary Program at Amberley with the Joint Logistics Unit. The Air Force cadet unit there is called 225 Squadron. I see these cadets around the country and particularly in my electorate participating in country shows on Anzac Day, Remembrance Day and other days of important memory to this country, particularly at the RAAF base around Ipswich and the Somerset region, as well as being involved in honour guards and catafalque parties. There is a whole range of involvement they engage in.

Cadet units have told me they want to contribute and be involved in these types of programs. I think we can do more to assist ADF cadet units that are struggling for resources in this country. We made great strides in integrating cadet units into the broader ADF in recent years, and we should encourage the three services to take a greater interest in cadet programs. Like scouts and the Girls & Boys Brigade, this is an important youth program. It teaches discipline, commitment, respect and contribution. I thank the cadets for the contribution they make.

Mr TIM WILSON (Goldstein) (11:19): It's wonderful to be here to speak on this motion. I would like to begin by congratulating the member for Canning for moving it. I'd also like to congratulate the members that preceded me—the members for Solomon, Menzies and Blair—not only for their support for their local cadet corps, but also, more critically, for using this opportunity to give those cadets a voice and recognition today. That is certainly the basis that I bring to the spirit of this debate.

Sir John Monash once told an audience:

… you equip yourself for life not solely for your own benefit but for the benefit of the whole community.

That's the spirit that the cadets live by every day. It's important to reflect on this ethos, articulated by one of Australia's most distinguished military leaders—and, I'm privileged to say, a perpetual Goldstein citizen and resident, as he is deceased in Brighton cemetery. When discussing the value of cadetship with the Australian Defence Force, Sir John Monash's words come alive. Honour, honesty, courage, integrity, loyalty, teamwork and citizenship: together they comprise the enduring values of the Australian Air Force Cadets. They help underpin the rich social fabric of communities nationwide.

In the great Goldstein electorate, these values are embodied by the young men and women who participate in the 417 Squadron. Originally formed in 1956 as the 17 Flight Air Training Corps, the 417 Squadron is based on Royal Avenue in Sandringham, at the Labuan Barracks. There are regular participants there on Tuesday nights, doing drills, and sometimes running up and down the street—I see them as I drive home at night. Their motto—dare to fly higher—demonstrates the scale of growth opportunities that young cadets are afforded: to live out the values of the Australian Air Force Cadets, and to develop many of the skills that those speakers before me discussed such as leadership, strength, teamwork, integrity and resilience. Some of these include opportunities to develop qualities of leadership, self-reliance and initiative; the ability to foster an interest in aviation and the Royal Australian Air Force; the chance to develop a strong sense of self, and good citizenship; and the creation of an environment to learn about Australia's aviation history. Fundamentally, cadetship is about enabling young
adults to individually reach their full potential, and to go on to make valuable contributions to their community and, as a consequence, to our great nation.

Cadetships help young people become, as Sir Robert Menzies would put it, people who have a sense of the community in them, rather than a sense of their own individual advantage. Those are the values and those are the aspirations that bring out the best not just in cadets, but in all of us. Menzies understood that great nations aren't built from capitals, in our case Canberra; they're built from the strength of communities, families and individuals in pursuit of the strength of the bonds that unite us in common cause. This is particularly best reflected in those who do it in pursuit of our national defence. And, yes, the member for Canning correctly outlined that it's also in pursuit of love of country, and we recognise the extent to which the cadets work towards encouraging participation through that pursuit of common citizenship.

So thank you to the 417 Squadron cadet leaders and staff who give up their time to mentor and shape Australia's youth, and their future. If you would like to join the Australian Air Force Cadets in Goldstein, you can always visit the 417 Squadron on Royal Avenue in Sandringham on Mondays between 6.30 and 9.30 pm, or you can call them on (03) 9251 6018. I'm sure they will welcome your participation, and, Mr Deputy Speaker Zimmerman, maybe even you could come along and participate as well.

Mr DICK (Oxley) (11:25): I thank the member for Canning for his motion today to place on record the valuable contribution that the Australian Defence Force Cadets make to youth development in our communities and, of course, the contribution of those cadets who go on to serve in our Defence Forces—as the members for Canning and Eden-Monaro, who are speaking on this debate today, did. ADF cadets provide an important pillar of support to many communities across Australia. Not only do they offer a means for young Australians to get involved in the Defence Force and give back to local communities; they also teach our young people invaluable lessons of self-reliance, discipline, leadership and teamwork. This not only improves the lives of young Australians by developing their capacity to contribute to society but ultimately benefits the nation as a whole.

The cadets have a proud history stretching back to 1866, when Australian schools began offering cadet programs for their students. Since then, the cadets have grown from strength to strength, transforming from the youth wing of the defence forces to a program of social and personal development for young men and women who wish to push themselves to become better citizens and acquire important life skills. They pass on the ethos and values that the ADF espouses to its servicemen and servicewomen—loyalty, integrity, professionalism, courage, innovation and teamwork. The three organisations of ADF cadets—Army, Navy and Air Force—have 25,000 enrolled cadets across 520 ADF locations in Australia. Cadets offer young Australians the ability to build their personal skills to give themselves the best shot at life and to help out the community in different ways.

I've had the pleasure to see firsthand how the cadets help out at local community events in my electorate and across the south-west of Brisbane. You can see the cadets proudly raising and lowering the flags on Anzac Day ceremonies, marching in parades and providing volunteering services at many, many local events. They help out at these occasions, sometimes for hours, standing in the hot sun to make sure that we as a nation can reflect on the sacrifices and commemorate the service of our defence forces in the past. Without the assistance of these young men and women, these ceremonies would not run as smoothly and, in some cases, would not be possible at all.

I'm lucky to have a number of groups in my electorate who contribute to these events, including the Springfield-Flinders View Air Force Cadets and the Forest Lake Squadron of the Australian Air League. I've attended many events these groups have held, including various parades celebrating women in aviation and acknowledging the sacrifices of our servicemen and servicewomen. I see how these cadets display the values of the ADF and the cadet program. Most recently, I was proud to support the Forest Lake air squadron through the stronger communities grants to establish an aviation drone flight training facility for their students. While drone technology is expanding, it is still somewhat cost prohibitive for families, especially with drones that require a higher level of training. The project has allowed the Forest Lake Squadron of the Australian Air League to provide drone experience and training to their cadets, all of whom come from our local community. This project can provide the opportunity for the cadets to learn the practical skills necessary to effectively employ this technology, and also provides them with additional skills to contribute to our national STEM capabilities.

The Forest Lake air squadron are passionate about celebrating women in aviation and do so every year on International Women's Day. Today in the Royal Australian Air Force there are almost 3,000 women serving our country in many different and varied roles. I'm sure that with the support of groups like the Forest Lake air squadron there will be many more to come.

It's important to recognise the cadet leaders and staff, who give up their personal time to run these groups and squadrons and mentor and shape the future generations of Australians. They are another perfect example of Australians working tirelessly to make sure the Australia we leave to our children is better than what we received.
I look forward to other events that these group also organise and will continue to offer my support to make sure that they continue to assist our community and represent the ADF in our community. Any Australian who has seen the service cadets provide the help they give in the community knows the value of this organisation. I’d like to thank all those who’ve been through the programs and all those who are currently enrolled. Your service to the community is extremely valuable, and I know that the community in my electorate and across the whole south-west of Brisbane is very grateful for all you do. I know the parliament will concur when I say that the work the cadets do is vital, and we will always offer our full support to the ADF to continue this program for the benefit of the youth today and the Australia of tomorrow.

Mr LEESER (Berowra) (11:30): I’d like to thank my friend the member for Canning for his motion, which gives me the opportunity to speak about the cadet units in my area as well as highlight the success of one of my constituents. Cadets do a range of activities, from drill training for discipline and team work to field craft, including knots, camouflage and survival radio communications; navigation; firearms training, including proper cleaning, handling and firing of machine guns; first aid; physical training; and overnight bivouacs to test and refine field craft skills and use specialist equipment such as personal radios, night vision goggles and first aid equipment. We see them most on ceremonial occasions for dawn services, marches and remembrance events.

I want to acknowledge the work of two local cadet units in my area that provide such great service on those ceremonial occasions across all the different locations in my electorate, including at Hornsby, Brooklyn, Berowra, Galston, Glenorie, Kenthurst and at the Anzac Jawan Cenotaph. I want to acknowledge 226 Army Cadet Unit based at Normanhurst Boys High School, now led by Captain Geoffrey King, formerly led by Captain Stan Hinsby. I also want to acknowledge the Barker College Cadet Unit, whose commanding officer is Captain Justin Langely. These cadet units bring something special to the remembrance commemorations in my area. I want to thank them for their service and acknowledge the support they give all of our local RSL sub-branches—in particular, the Hornsby sub-branch, with local hero Terry James as its president.

Recently I was told the success of one of my constituents, Francine Jepsen, in the Australian Air Force Cadets. I think her success and her feelings about cadets illustrate the benefits of cadets which other speakers have outlined today. Francine lives in Cherrybrook. She attended Cherrybrook Technology High School, is currently studying security studies at Macquarie University and hopes to serve in the RAAF. Francine is a member of 322 (City of Ryde) Squadron, which is based in Dundas and is part of 3 Wing. She joined the Air Force Cadets three years ago.

The Australian Air Force Cadets were founded as the Air Training Corps in 1941. Since then, thousands of young men and women have played a part in the organisation, exemplifying its core focus on youth development. 3 Wing is one of nine wings in the AAFC and comprises over 2,200 cadets and 300 volunteer staff, all of whom are spread throughout New South Wales and the ACT. 322 Squadron was formed in 1951, and the unit has over 150 cadets and is the largest unit in the country. 322 Squadron has a comprehensive training program which offers a variety of activities, such as bivouacs, air experience days, ceremonial parades, firearms safety training and social events through the years.

A few weeks ago, Francine was selected to attend the cadet warrant officer promotion course at RAAF Base Wagga, amongst a detachment of 164 cadets and 31 staff members from across 3 Wing. The course went for two weeks, with long days from 6 am to 10 pm, containing intensive lessons on both practical and theoretical leadership, instructional technique, field craft, service knowledge skill and ceremony. Francine topped the course and was awarded the Gilbertson Award for the Dux of the Course and the Derek Wynn Leadership Award, and was promoted to cadet warrant officer. This is the third promotion she's attained. She was parade commander for the final march out parade. She told me:

It was nothing short of emotional to graduate alongside my peers in front of our supportive friends and families, having come so far together in such a short period of time.

Francine was called to serve in AAFC while watching the Anzac Day march in 2015. She said:

I remember seeing veterans, ADF members and all services of cadets marching together, and feeling pride and respect for each individual which passed my line of sight. I told my mum that one day I'd like to be marching there too.

Francine credits the mentoring of great staff at both squadron and wing level for her enjoyment of cadets and for the leadership skills they've taught her—in particular, commanding officer Squadron Leader Merridy Thompson and Warrant Officer Chris Gibson, who supported her and taught her 'the true meaning of accountability and respect for followership'. As she writes:

I have been lucky enough to be mentored by staff members at both squadron and wing level, who volunteer their time to enhance cadet careers and create life-changing experiences.
Today Francine herself enjoys marching in the Anzac Day parades, where she feels 'an even deeper sense of pride from within the organisation and for the Australian Defence Force'. Last year, when Their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Sussex visited Australia, Francine's squadron was chosen to meet them. None of this has diminished the humility that Francine brings to her leadership. She's acknowledged the tenacity and endurance of her friendship with the 20 other cadets who graduated with her. Francine intends to leave her mark on the AAFC as her career comes to an end at the conclusion of the year and looks forward to giving back in positions of staff. In her words, cadets has allowed her to grow and develop in a safe environment, presenting her with opportunities she couldn't have found elsewhere. I want to thank Francine and all the cadets for their service.

Dr MIKE KELLY (Eden-Monaro) (11:35): I commend the member for Canning on raising this motion in tribute to the 26,000-odd cadets in Australia. It is a subject close to my heart. When we were in government I had responsibility for the cadets in my role as Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Support. Unfortunately, we had some tragic circumstances during that time with the death of a young cadet, Nathan Francis, and the circumstances around that and what was revealed did highlight a number of issues and deficiencies around administrative aspects through Comcare inquiries and whatnot. It was an opportunity to go back and do bit of a root-and-branch assessment of what we wanted out of the cadets and what the cadets should be. I was very proud to have been able to institute in August 2008 an overarching inquiry into the cadets, headed up by an outstanding former officer of the Australian army, Lieutenant General Frank Hickling, who I had been fortunate enough to work with while I was in the Army.

He did a tremendous job in doing that review. They took over 200 submissions from community organisations and produced that report on 24 November 2008. It was a very useful submission indeed. One of the things we were looking at, of course, was not only these technical issues around command and control, legal liability and accountability but also what should have been the overall purpose of this organisation. Is it just a vehicle for training people to move into the ADF or is it a personal development mechanism? I think the answer to that in the examination that took place highlighted that we should be focusing on the development of these kids in particular and that it's a wonderful opportunity to do that. We had about 27 different reviews and studies of cadets in the lead-up to this review by General Hickling, and they had all gathered dust on the shelves. Nothing had ever been done about them. So I was pleased to say that we collaborated with the coalition in 2011 to produce an amendment to the defence legislation to address some of those issues and to follow through on what General Hickling had done.

In particular, there was an anomaly in the way that cadets were being managed in that the CDF actually had no ultimate command responsibility for the cadets. It was obviously a legacy thing that hadn't been picked up in the overall reform of the joint organisation of the ADF that had taken place in other areas. That was all about accountability and command and control, and an amendment that was produced in 2011 addressed that. Apart from making sure that that would happen from a practical point of view, we then moved forward to connect the cadets with the reserve command structure as well. That was quite appropriate because, as you'll find, nationally a lot of these cadet units are attached to or associated with reserve units, which helps to embed them within the community, often supported by RSLs and the like. So there is a wonderful synergy there in relation to their involvement with the community, and the support, as members have flagged, that they provide to commemorative events and the like is important. It's important for them to learn our history and our values and what those before them have stood up to defend.

So that serves that purpose, but more to my thinking is the positive benefit we get out of teaching these kids that, yes, the nation should provide you with certain things, but you all owe something back to the nation. This is a way of encouraging that mindset. I think we still greatly need that and ways of revisiting that concept today. It also teaches them the concepts of leadership and teamwork, which are so important across several aspects of life—all aspects of life, in reality. It was also a wonderful mechanism for introducing kids to the concept of an ADF career. We have certainly had an amazing success rate of translating cadets into defence careers. In 2011, about 57 per cent of officers in the Air Force had come through the air cadets. That's an important contribution that it has also made. I would hope we can work on that model. The Young Endeavour program is another example of these sorts of activities.

But I really do think we need a broader scheme. When we look at the issues we're having around the nation on disengagement of youth, apathy, youth suicide and these issues, we need to look at these kinds of frameworks and make them more ubiquitous and more national. We need to give our kids the opportunity to self-discipline themselves, make the most of themselves, look outside themselves and see how they can contribute to the broader society. I salute the cadet movement and those who have children in their care and as mentors doing a great job.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bird): The time allotted for the debate has expired. The debate is adjourned and the resumption of debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.
Aged Care

Ms OWENS (Parramatta) (11:40): I move:

That this House:

(1) notes that:

(a) the latest Government report indicates more than 129,000 older Australians are waiting for their approved home care package;
(b) more than 75,000 older Australians on the waiting list have no home care package at all; and
(c) since 2017 the wait list for home care has grown from 88,000 to more than 129,000 older Australians;

(2) recognises:

(a) the majority of older Australians are waiting for level three and level four packages, who have high care needs;
(b) some older Australians have been waiting more than two years for their approved package; and
(c) older Australians are entering residential aged care or even emergency departments instead of receiving their approved home care package;

(3) condemns the Government for failing to stop the wait list growing; and

(4) calls on the Government to immediately fix the home care packages waiting list and properly address this growing crisis.

There is a crisis in home care for older Australians. It is caused by government's neglect or incompetence or indifference. Mary in my electorate was a victim of the current government's failure. Mary suffered Parkinson's disease for about 20 years. In early 2017 she had a fall and was hospitalised. In order for Mary to be able to go home, she needed assistance at home. She was approved for a level 4 home care package and put on the waiting list. What should have been a solution became a nightmare for Mary and her family. There are four levels of home care, with level 1 being the lightest and level 4 being for people in the greatest need. Mary needed real care at home. There was a lack of service availability for level 4 packages around her area, so she couldn't get one straightaway. One of her daughters gave up full-time work to become Mary's carer. They waited and waited and waited. Her two daughters pleaded and argued with anyone who would listen. Finally, Mary was granted an interim level 2 package in early 2019, two years after she was put on the waiting list for level 4. It took two years for Mary to receive an interim level 2 package. In recent months she has been granted an interim level 3 package, there is but still no sign of a level 4, which was promised over two years ago. My office made representations to My Aged Care about service availability for Mary and I was told there was a nine to12 month waiting period for level 4 packages, which stems from a lack of funding. That's bad enough, but the reality for Mary was much worse—more than twice that.

Mary passed away last week, still without receiving her level 4 package. Her story is not unique, far from it. Mary is one of nearly 130,000 older Australians on the waiting list. Older Australians without any home care package total over 75,000. Those with an interim package, like Mary, waiting for the appropriate level of care, are just over 53,000 people. In the latest available figures, in the first quarter of this year in Western Sydney the Morrison government released 757 home care packages. In an environment of growing need and unacceptable delays, that is 20 per cent less than in the same quarter last year. In Western Sydney there are still 1,591 people waiting for their home care packages and 243 people, real people with real need, waiting for level 4. If you look at the potential demand in my electorate of Parramatta alone, there are 12,600 people over the age of 70. That demand will only grow as our community gets older and really needs to be able to age at home. The aged care system that we have, the aged care reforms, were meant to give older Australians the choice to age at home, something incredibly important for so many of my diverse communities who, culturally, see their parents going into aged care facilities. The need to keep their parents at home is absolutely central.

Once again, in spite of an ageing population and growing crisis, aged care is locked out of the cabinet. There have now been four different ministers responsible for aged care since the Liberals were elected. In January the Productivity Commission released the median wait time for home care packages. It has blown out in the last year by more than two months. As that list grows longer, we hear fresh stories every day of older Australians waiting for care. Since 2017 the wait list for home care packages has grown from 88,000 to more than 129,000 older Australians. During that period of time when Mary was on the waiting list it grew from 88,000 to 129,000. One can assume she was never going to get to front of the queue on that basis.

Older Australians are waiting for level 3 and 4 packages in great numbers. In fact, the majority of people waiting for packages are waiting for level 3 and 4; they are in great need. Many of them have been waiting for more than two years for their approved packages. Older Australians are entering residential aged care or even emergency departments instead of receiving their approved home care package. Again, imagine Mary's
circumstances if her daughter hadn't been able to give up full-time work and care for her? Mary would have been in an aged care facility or an emergency department.

I condemn the government for failing to stop the waiting lists growing. I condemn the government for not acting as they should and solving what is a national crisis. I call on the government to immediately fix the home care packages waiting list and properly address this growing crisis.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bird): Is the motion seconded?

Ms THWAITES (Jagajaga) (11:45): I second the motion.

Dr McVEIGH (Groom) (11:45): It's a great pleasure to speak in support for older Australians, senior Australians, at any time in this House, and I'm sure every member of this House agrees that it's always a very significant topic to address. I rise to comment on the motion and the issues raised by the member for Parramatta and, like others, I draw on personal experience. I'm of a generation where I can recall as a child seeing my late grandmother, Kathleen McVeigh, remain in her own home right up until her passing, almost 30 years ago. She remained there with the great assistance of my aunty, Betty Peters, who lived not far down the road. The fact is that her remaining in her own home up until her passing was a significant part of the enjoyment of her latter years and that of the rest of the family.

I'm at the age where I look, as so many do, towards the future residential situation for my own parents and for my mother-in-law. These are important issues for all members in this House to consider. We all have personal experience. In my case, Toowoomba, my home city, being the biggest inland private sector city in this country, represents a centre that is quite popular for those of advancing years—retirees—either locals or others from across northern inland New South Wales and southern inland Queensland, so this is a very important topic.

I'm pleased the Morrison government is so focused on investments in home care that aim to reduce the time taken for people to receive the support that they are assessed for. There's a lot of work being done. We need to look at the record. The national prioritisation list, as part of the February 2017 reforms, reflected the true extent of the work that we as a government needed to focus upon. New home care packages increased from 60,308 in 2012-13 under Labor to 124,032 packages in 2018-19, with up to 157,154 predicted by 2022-23. That represents an increase of 161 per cent. That is certainly in line with the government's 2019-20 budget, which will deliver an additional 10,000 care packages to be released across all levels. That represents an investment of just over $282 million, part of a $7 billion funding program over the next five years which I will touch on in just a few moments. Those packages announced in February 2015 do certainly recognise the increasing demand for home care. Packages will be released until 30 June 2020, in line with the budget.

Home care packages are supporting senior Australians to remain in their own home, but they do not replace the primary care that Australians receive as part of the broader health system in particular and that remains part of the government's broader focus. It's interesting that those opposite provided no additional funding in their costings for home care packages during the election campaign and no additional funding for aged-care quality workforce or residential aged-care support either.

In contrast, our record is proof of a focus on all of those essential elements. I mentioned the $7 billion over the next five years, more home care places and developing a skilled workforce. Improving safety and quality in both home care and residential care is so very important. That's important to my city, as I mentioned, and it's important to regional Australia, where I'm from. I'm so very proud that our government is focused upon just that. The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, the January 2019 Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission announcement, and other efforts to look at aged-care quality standards and, of course, aged-care rights are further evidence of the government's focus on appropriate aged care in home and certainly in residential care as well.

Ms KEARNEY (Cooper) (11:50): I welcome the opportunity to support this motion on aged care because this government must be held to account for its handling of the issue of home care packages and aged care in general. As this motion outlines, the coalition government have let 129,000 older Australians languish whilst waiting for the approved level of home care package. This crisis is getting worse. It seems the government has no idea what it means to watch an elderly parent wait in vain for assistance at home. It has no idea what it means for a family to struggle to provide that care, juggling work, juggling rosters and juggling care for their children.

Families are taking risks, ultimately, because sometimes it just doesn't work out the way you want it to. And then you worry desperately because you can't get home on time, because an elderly loved one is home all alone just for that bit too long, because they didn't get a shower, because they missed their midday medications or because they didn't eat their lunch. You worry that the post—it notes you put out to remind them to take their pills, turn off the gas or to put the heating on might have fallen away, or been pulled down or missed.
New government figures show that almost 30,000 older Australians died or were forced into an aged-care home last year while waiting for their home care packages. I read a particularly harrowing account published in *The West Australian* by Gemma Tognini, who wrote:

After nearly two years of waiting, the funding for my dad’s Federally allocated home-care support package finally arrived, last week.

The letter came on Tuesday. The day after his funeral. Dad died waiting.

This is an experience shared by too many.

It’s not just home care that is failing. The royal commission and the sudden evacuation of the Earle Haven Retirement Village on the Gold Coast highlight the inadequacies of some residential aged-care facilities. In the case of Earle Haven, 70 elderly, frail people, in some cases with dementia, were left in the lurch when the nursing home that they live in and pay fees for, and that taxpayers contribute towards, was shutdown without any notice. There are many questions to be raised about the Earle Haven Retirement Village closure. Why were medical records and medical equipment removed? Why was it so badly managed that police had to step in and relocate the patients?

*The Courier-Mail* reported that the global owner of aged-care contractor HelpStreet Villages, which was running the Earle Haven Retirement Village for owner Peoplecare, had been banned from managing companies by Australia’s corporations watchdog because of unpaid debts. As Senator Watt has pointed out in the other chamber, Earle Haven has been repeatedly sanctioned by the government’s own aged-care regulators for failing to meet safety and care standards for its residents. I think you really do have to wonder what it has got to take before some sort of serious action is taken.

How does a system from which some make a healthy profit from billions in taxpayer subsidies often show no real responsibility or accountability for care of our elderly? As a nurse and as the shadow minister for aged care, I am committed to holding the government to account for this. I want to finish on a positive, though. If there was any silver lining to the Earle Haven closure, it was the behaviour of the staff. Most of them have lost their jobs, but they turned up to care for the residents when they were being evacuated.

Next Wednesday is Aged Care Employees Day. I want to say thank you to everyone working in aged care. Being in the caring industry makes you special people. You do one of the most important jobs in the world. Your experience with people at the most vulnerable time of their lives means that you are trusted, you are dedicated, you are hard-working and you are loved. You are relied on by so many for so much. I came to this job via your pathway, from the caring industry and union movement, and I’m so glad and proud that I did. The royal commission into aged care and subsequent media attention has been tough for you. I know that. We’ve seen too much blame placed on aged care staff for what are systemic, long-term issues, mainly caused by funding cuts, poor management, lack of transparency and accountability and a lack of willingness by the Liberal government to tackle real reform. Aged care nurses and their unions have been screaming out for reform and resources, a call that has been completely ignored by the Liberals. I know what funding cuts mean. I know what it’s like to be a carer or nurse and not to be able to deliver the care you want because there aren’t the resources allowing you to do your job, because there is limited access to training and skills, and because the workloads are impossible. Thank you for everything, for hanging in there and speaking up. I hope the government listens to your experiences and your calls for funding, reform and staffing.

**Mr THISTLETHWAITE** (Kingsford Smith) (11:56): Our elderly citizens are among society’s most vulnerable populations. They depend on others for care. Yet this government continues to leave too many older Australians waiting in vain. More than 129,000 seniors are now without an approved home care package. This includes more than 96,000 older Australians waiting with high needs, many with dementia. It’s a crisis that shows no signs of being contained by this coalition government. In December last year I spoke in this place about the dismal job that the Abbott-Turnbull-Morrison government had done in reducing waiting lists for home care packages. Since that time even more Australians are now on a waiting list. The numbers are increasing, when they should actually be going down. It’s part of a broader trend since 2017 that’s seen the waiting list for home care packages blow out from 88,000 to more than 129,000 older Australians waiting for packages. That’s too many waiting for what should be their right in modern-day Australia—the right to an adequate care package after a lifetime of hard work and service.

These really have been lost years for too many Australians waiting for care at home. As the list grows longer, fresh stories emerge daily of older Australians struggling because of this government’s neglect. Bad government translates into worse outcomes for our vulnerable older Australians, their families and their carers. Some older Australians have been waiting for more than two years for their approved package. Over 75,000 older Australians on the waiting list have no home care package at all. Recently I took a call from a member of our community that
was 92 years old and had been waiting two years to get some form of aged care package from this government. It's simply not good enough. The majority of older Australians are waiting for level 3 and 4 packages. They have high care needs. Older Australians are entering residential aged care or even emergency departments instead of receiving their approved home care packages.

How did it get to this, that some of our most vulnerable Australians are being treated in this way by the Australian government? Government is about priorities. We saw a couple of weeks ago what this government's priorities are when the entrepreneur Dick Smith, one of Australia's wealthiest Australians, uncovered that he's receiving half a million dollars each year in cash refunds from this government, simply for owning shares in Australian companies. That is his cash refunds from dividend imputation. He is getting half a million dollars worth. That's one individual, yet this government has 129,000 Australians waiting for aged care packages.

Reforms to aged care were meant to give older Australians the choice to age at home. But the latest figures confirm that the Liberals' policy chaos has failed older Australians. Aged care has again been locked out as a cabinet position since the federal election. It's had four different ministers since the Liberals were first elected in 2013. There's been no consistency in this portfolio from this government in terms of ministerial representation, but also no consistency of approach when it comes to policy.

The crisis in home aged care is unacceptable. Labor condemn this government for failing to stop the waiting list for aged-care packages growing. We call on the government to immediately fix the home care packages waiting list and properly address this escalating crisis. The coalition needs to act to find solutions, to pass legislation and to implement a plan to continue driving long-term reform. When we have some of the wealthiest Australians receiving half a million dollars in cash payments from the government for owning shares and we have 129,000 elderly Australians on a waiting list for home care packages, something is wrong in this country. What is wrong in this country is that we have a coalition government that does not care about the needs of elderly people in terms of providing home aged-care packages so that they can age with dignity and get the support and respect they deserve. The coalition needs to act. It needs to find solutions, pass legislation and implement a plan to continue driving long-term reform and to reduce the aged-care waiting list. Older Australians can't afford any more lost years and any more lost opportunities for their aged-care packages at home.

Ms McBRIDE (Dobell) (12:01): I rise today to speak on behalf of the 1,423 older Australians on the Central Coast of New South Wales waiting for home care and the estimated 2,846 people who care for them. In my electorate of Dobell, on the New South Wales Central Coast, and across Australia, the home care waiting list continues to climb. I have witnessed firsthand the impact of this government's failure to older Australians and those who care for them. In my community, over the last three quarters, this crisis has continued to grow. Of particular concern are those people how have been assessed and approved and who are waiting with no package and little or no support. Many have been told they can expect to wait a year or more before an appropriate service may become available. Most are waiting for level 3 or level 4 packages. These are people with high-care needs, many living with dementia. Some are offered a lower level home care package as a stopgap. Many are waiting without assistance.

In my community on the Central Coast of New South Wales, as at 30 September 2018, the number of people waiting for a home care package who had been given no assistance was 1,178. By December last year, the total number of people waiting for home care of any description on the Central Coast had increased to 1,286. By March this year, the number had climbed to 1,423. As I mentioned, in my community some people have waited over two years for an approved home care package. Sadly, they're not unique or alone as this crisis deepens across the country, demonstrating the failure of the Liberal government to properly recognise or respond to the crisis. People are entering residential care while waiting for their approved level of home care package. People are ending up in emergency departments while waiting for their approved level of home care package. And, sadly, people are dying while waiting for their home care package.

Labor has been calling for urgent action to reduce the waitlist for home care packages since data was first released, yet the government has failed to properly respond. This government sat on the January to March quarter data for over three months and only released the figures after the election. Reforms to aged care were meant to give older Australians support to stay at home and to live with dignity, but these figures confirm the Liberals are failing older Australians. Based on the most recent data, more than 129,000 older Australians are currently waiting for their approved home care package.

I want to turn to carers. What the government hasn't recognised or acknowledged is that, for every elderly Australian waiting for a home care package, there's least one, but usually two or more, carers under immense pressure. That means, when the impact on primary carers, partners, family members and friends is considered, an estimated 250,000 Australians are caught up in this crisis. Ara Creswell, CEO of Carers Australia, who I met with again today to discuss the crisis, said that long waiting times for home care packages which provide an adequate
level of support can seriously affect the capacity of older people to cope at home in both the short and longer term. While they are waiting:

… their level of health is likely to decline and their need for support increase, making it difficult to live at home unless they have family and friend carers who can provide the level of care they need. Working carers may have to give up their jobs, while partner carers may also be ageing and not able to provide the level of care needed, or can only do so at the risk of compromising their own health and wellbeing.

… … …

It needs to be remembered that 36 per cent of all carers are over the age of 65 and most are caring for a partner. Their ability to keep on providing high levels of care will frequently depend on additional support from the aged care system.

Lorraine from Gorokan in my electorate in New South Wales is one of the 129,000 older Australians waiting for a home care package. Her husband, Tom, is 73 and is one of the estimated 250,000 Australians caring for a loved one without proper support. Lorraine was diagnosed with motor neurone disease in 2017. She needs a wheelchair outside and uses a walking frame at home. Lorraine applied for and was approved for a home care level 3 package this month and has been told she may have to wait a year for the service to become available. She has organised some help in the meantime with household chores, but her husband, Tom, has, out of necessity, become her primary carer. Fortunately, right now his health is good. Lorraine says:

He is my primary carer, doing all the cooking, shopping and gardening and I do worry about the stress. I don't want to see my husband get worn out.

As Carers Australia rightly points out, aged care is a very complex space, and, while many things are being addressed, carers keep getting pushed to the bottom of the heap. This Liberal government has abandoned thousands of elderly Australians, their partners, family and friends. I speak from my firsthand experience as a carer helping to look after my late father, who lived with young-onset dementia. The government must act urgently to fix the home care crisis. (Time expired)

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bird): There being no further speakers, the debate is adjourned. The resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

Infrastructure

Ms FLINT (Boothby—Government Whip) (12:06): I move:

That this House:

(1) congratulates the Government on:

(a) the extensive urban and regional infrastructure investment of $100 billion announced in the 2019 Budget; and

(b) its focus on national freight challenges, congestion busting and road safety;

(2) recognises that every state of the Commonwealth is benefitting from the Government's infrastructure program; and

(3) commends the Government on providing the infrastructure that will build our future and generate growth for our economy.

Busting congestion is one of the main aims of the Morrison Liberal government, and it is particularly important for my electorate of Boothby that we bust congestion on our roads wherever we possibly can. I am incredibly proud of the work that we have underway and the work that, in some instances, is already concluding in my seat of Boothby, because this is about making people's lives easier. It's about getting people to work and to school more quickly and making it easier for everyone in my community to be where they need to be as quickly as possible.

Yesterday I was at the Oaklands crossing to celebrate the almost full completion of this fantastic congestion-busting project. This is one that I am particularly proud of because, when I became the candidate for Boothby in 2015, I managed to secure the first ever funding commitment to fix this 40-year-old problem for my community. We committed an initial $40 million to fix the Oaklands crossing, and I was very proud to be able to secure a further $55 million during my first term, which saw the project fully funded, because the state government jumped on board as well to provide some funding, as did the City of Marion, so that the, in total, $174.5 million project could be started and completed. I am still quite astounded that we managed to get the full funding and get the project fully completed within about 12 months. I want to congratulate the PTP Alliance for the incredible job they did on this project. The train has been running underneath the road for many months now, and the actual road infrastructure—Diagonal Road and Morphett Road—is in the process of being fully completed. It is a wonderful piece of road infrastructure, I must say, and it has made a huge difference to people's lives.

The Oaklands crossing sees about 41,000 vehicles cross it now every day. That's a lot of cars. When we had the boom gates there to let the trains through especially during peak hour, the boom gates would be down for a total of two hours a day. That was two hours a day when people were stuck in traffic trying to get to work and to
school. There are a number of primary schools in the area, so there were a lot of parents who were needing to get through this crossing every single day to get their kids to and from school, and they were getting stuck. Also right next to the Oaklands crossing is Westfield Marion, which is the biggest suburban shopping centre in Adelaide. It supports a huge number of jobs and is a very popular shopping destination. Before Oaklands crossing was fixed it was a lot harder for people in the community to get to Westfield Marion to do their shopping and to support local jobs.

Oaklands crossing is also right next door to the South Australian aquatics centre, which is an Olympic-standard facility. It is where we regularly hold national and international swimming meets. Before Oaklands crossing was fixed it was very difficult for people to get to the aquatics centre easily and in a timely manner. For people coming from the city there is a brand-new train station. They can get off the train in what is one of the best train stations in Adelaide and walk across to the aquatic centre.

There are so many reasons why I fought for this project to be done. I would like to pay tribute to my state colleague the member for Gibson and state minister Corey Wingard, who started the petition to fix Oaklands crossing years ago. I was really happy to get on board with Corey's petition when I became the candidate for Boothby and work hard with him to secure our initial $40 million federal funding commitment. Our colleague David Speirs has also worked very hard with us on this project, as has our new colleague Stephen Patterson, the member for Morphett, who has been more recently elected but worked very hard with us on this project when he was the mayor of Holdfast Bay.

That is just one of many fantastic infrastructure projects. Another, really important one is fixing the north-south corridor. To date, $2.7 billion has been committed to the corridor, which sees 78,000 vehicles pass down it each day. South Road, which is the main focus of the north-south corridor, runs straight through my electorate. This is not just about busting congestion for all residents of Adelaide and all South Australians who need to use the north-south corridor; it's really about busting congestion for my local residents, who have all of the traffic flowing through our electorate every single day. Again, it's about getting them to work and to school more quickly and safely.

I'm really pleased to report that the Darlington upgrade part of the project, which was a $496 million federal commitment, which commenced before I was elected to this place, is well and truly underway. We have cars now going through the lowered motorway, which is really exciting. What is particularly exciting about the Darlington upgrade part of the project is that the Flinders Link rail project is now well and truly underway. To my mind, this is the absolutely best example of how government infrastructure investment should work, because it is going to unlock over a billion dollars of private investment, simply because we're extending a railway line. I'm very proud to have championed this project and been involved with fighting for this project, which extends the Tonsley rail line, which finishes at Tonsley, up to Flinders Medical Centre and Flinders University. We're extending it about 650 metres. It's a $125 million project that is jointly funded by the Morrison and Marshall Liberal governments. It is going to give every single university student and staff member a brand-new public transport option. It will give patients at Flinders Medical Centre a brand-new public transport option. It will give staff at Flinders Medical Centre a brand-new public transport option. Both the university and the medical centre have had really big issues with parking, so this will take the pressure off parking on both sites. It will also connect both sites with the city. The train station in the city is in very close proximity to all of our brand-new medical infrastructure in Adelaide—the SAMRI, the new Royal Adelaide Hospital—and we will be contacting Flinders Medical Centre, which is now the biggest hospital in Adelaide with the city. We will connect all of those academic and medical researchers with their colleagues in the city so they can very easily walk out the door, get on the train and get into the city to meet and connect with their colleagues, which is really important.

It's also giving my local community a brand-new public transport option, so it's very exciting for my local community, as well. I know people will be very keen users of this, not just to get to work if they work in the city each day but also to get into Adelaide Oval to see our footballers and our cricket players, especially when we have international matches or a crows or a port game as well.

This project will unlock $1.5 billion of investment by Flinders University and create thousands of construction jobs, and then permanent jobs, on the site. Flinders are going to create an integrated health and education precinct. They are going to build new student accommodation, health accommodation, health research facilities and retail facilities, which is absolutely brilliant for the south and for my local community.

I'm going to run out of time unfortunately. I could talk about infrastructure all day, but I've only got another minute, so I will mention a few more congesting busting projects that the Morrison Liberal government has supported. We are going to fix the Cross Road and Fulton Road intersection, which is a $30.5 million federal investment. This is going to make life a lot easier for people who are coming from Blackwood and Belair down
the hill. It is a huge bottleneck. We have Urrbrae and Unley high schools right next door. We have The University of Adelaide right next door. We are going to make this easier for everyone in that area every single day.

We are fixing the long-term problem of the Springbank, Goodwood and Daws Road intersection, which is absolutely critical for my local community as well, especially to take pressure off of nearby roads as we upgrade those roads. We are also going to invest $20 million on fixing the James Road and Old Belair Road intersection, which is particularly fraught and quite dangerous, especially for our cyclists.

I'm incredibly proud of what the Morrison government is doing to bust congestion in Australia.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bird):** Is the motion seconded?

**Mr Van Manen:** I second the motion and reserve my right to speak.

**Ms CATHERINE KING** (Ballarat) (12:17): Just like the government's infrastructure record, and the contribution that we have just heard now, this motion is high on rhetoric and very low on delivery. It fails to mention the government's dismal record of spending $5.1 billion less on infrastructure than it promised in its first six years. That is $5.1 billion worth of road, rail, public transport, technology, aviation and port upgrades, promised by this government, that were delayed, postponed or cancelled, and that affects all of us. It affects commuters and frustrates all car and truck drivers. These delays hamper our freight and logistics sector and it hurts our construction workforce and those who want to get a job. This government's dismal infrastructure record is $5.1 billion of delay, frustration and roadblocks.

Instead of recognising this as an issue, instead of getting to work to get these projects going, what does the government do? It congratulates itself. That's what it does in this motion before us today.

Instead of using the Building Australia Fund to deliver projects through that $3.9 billion fund, the government hasn't withdrawn anything since 2014, because they didn't like the independent, transparent strategic process required of them. After four failed attempts, in what is their first week back here in this parliament, they abolished that fund. They failed to take inspiration from success stories, like the Queensland Labor government that last week reported a near zero per cent underspend for 2018-19. Rather than congratulate this government, I congratulate the Queensland Labor government for a strong year of delivering the projects that they committed to.

They reject the advice of the Reserve Bank governor, economists and state governments to bring forward critical infrastructure investment across the country. With the Deputy Prime Minister repeating time and time again the tired line, 'We can't build it all at once,' he deems his office and the experts who thoughtfully urged this government to fast-track investment to boost jobs and improve productivity.

The motion also fails to inform the Australian people that this government's 10 year infrastructure program does not, in fact, add up to $100 billion. It fails to mention that some of the projects do not match the priorities of state governments and even local communities, like Perth's Freight Link and Melbourne's East West Link, with money not allocated by this government—despite Labor governments in Western Australia and Victoria—on projects that are of joint priority, where planning and construction can actually commence now.

It also fails to disclose that projects like the Geelong rail, of which only $20 million is allocated in 2020 for 2021-22, and $30 million in 2022-23, are likely to require an even greater contribution than that allocated by the government. This motion fails to disclose that only $29.5 billion of this so-called $100 billion Infrastructure Investment Program is budgeted for the next four years; 70 per cent of allocated funding is on the never-never. I note that in the member for Boothby's contribution about his home state of South Australia, the signature electoral commitment by the Liberals was $1.5 billion for the North-South Corridor future priority road upgrades. But guess how much is committed in the forward estimates? How much of this $1.5 billion project do you think we're going to actually see in the next four years—even in the next three years of this government? Five hundred million? That wouldn't be bad, but no. Fifty million? No. Just $15 million of this $1.5 billion will be delivered over the next four years, in 2022-23. In contrast, Labor committed to fast-track work on the next stage of Adelaide's South Road upgrade by investing $95 million within our first few months in office.

In conclusion, it is pretty clear that the government's infrastructure program is nothing but a pipedream. Frankly, to not commence a signature congestion-busting project commitment like the North-South Corridor until after the next election says everything about the government's capacity to deliver. To continue to include projects that will not even commence because they're not supported by state governments, to not acknowledge a dismal $5.1 billion underspend, says everything about this government. All they do is congratulate themselves and deliver nothing. *(Time expired)*

**Mr VAN MANEN** (Forde—Chief Government Whip) (12:22): I'm going to please the previous speaker, the member for Ballarat, by again congratulating us on the terrific job we're doing on infrastructure across my electorate of Forde. The reason for this is that the people of Forde rely on these key pieces of infrastructure across
the city for their daily lives. They rely on the M1 and the Mount Lindesay Highway to go to school, to go to work, to see family and friends, and to run and operate their businesses. They also rely on our public transport system, but sometimes are limited by the lack of car parking at train and bus stations across the electorate of Forde.

Importantly, we recognise these challenges, which is why I'm proud to be part of a coalition government that is investing $100 billion towards extensive urban and regional infrastructure projects across Australia, and, importantly, across my electorate of Forde. I continue to remain focused on delivering road upgrades to ensure the commuters across Forde can get home sooner and safer. I'll seek to ensure that residents across Logan and the northern Gold Coast have access to the infrastructure facilities they need. In Logan, we're looking at the upgraded Mount Lindesay Highway, and the residents who rely on the M1 receiving their fair share of M1 funding from the state government.

On the Mount Lindesay Highway, we have already put $16 million towards the North McLean safety improvements, which will be completed later this year. And during the election, Prime Minister Scott Morrison and I announced a further $30 million in funding to upgrade the Mount Lindesay Highway. Prioritising funding for the Mount Lindesay Highway ensures the residents in Logan's west can get home safer and sooner.

We've also committed to improving bottlenecks along the M1 and on top of the current project from the Gateway merge to Springwood, an investment of some $115 million, we're seeing an additional $1 billion in congestion-busting infrastructure committed. We'll deliver another $347.5 million to upgrade the M1 northbound from Springwood to Eight Mile Plains, but also south to Daisy Hill; as well as another $500 million for the section from Daisy Hill to the Logan motorway. This will ensure the M1 is eight lanes from Nerang to the gateway, the way it should have been built in the first place.

This government also invests $50 million towards upgrades to exits 41, at Yatala, and 49, at Pimpama. We do this because we know the small businesses in the Yatala area rely on the M1 to run their businesses and the residents in Pimpama rely on exit 49 for their daily commute. It is for that reason that I'm proud to be delivering on these congestion-busting road upgrades, which will ensure the residents of Forde are home sooner and safer. I note that, in reference to the member for Ballarat's contribution about the Queensland state government, we have put this $50 million on the table for exits 41 and 49, but the state government are yet to match it, and it will not be until 2021-22 at a minimum.

We are also committed to improving the safety of our local roads, which is why the federal government has already delivered $3.4 million to Logan City Council through our Roads to Recovery Program to support the maintenance of local roads. I remain committed to delivering upgrades to local roads, including $1.4 million toward the gel Jellicoe Street-Station Road intersection in Loganlea in conjunction with Logan City Council, $5 million towards up dating Beaudesert Beenleigh Road between Milne Street and Tallagandra Street, $11.5 million for the Chambers Flat Road upgrade between Park Ridge Road and Derby Road and $2.4 million towards upgrading High Road and Easterly Street, a major bottleneck during school pickup times in Waterford.

Our urban infrastructure initiative will deliver $4 billion over 10 years to reduce congestion in urban areas, and this includes the $500 million Commuter Car Park Fund. In my electorate of Forde, $45 million will go towards new commuter car parks at Loganlea, Beenleigh and Coomera train stations. Residents have been telling me how difficult it is to get car parks at those stations and, therefore, to use public transport. This shows that the coalition government is committed to delivering infrastructure right across my electorate and across the country.

**Mr GILES (Scullin) (12:27)**: Three terms in, the coalition government can't lock at infrastructure through the prism of the national interest. Everything they say and everything they do about infrastructure is about the cheapest of politics. In fact, we have seen a little bit of that in the contributions of the two Opposition Whips today. The member for Boothby had 10 minutes but didn't articulate any vision of the role that infrastructure will really play in boosting productivity and liveability. It was a very narrow focus on issues affecting her electorate. Of course, that's important, but that's not the sole way in which this government or any decent national government should look at infrastructure. Similarly, it was very interesting to hear about the boosts that his marginal electorate has got courtesy of this government, but that doesn't tell us—well, in fact, it does tell us quite a bit about this government's attitude to nation-building infrastructure and its lack of any vision for boosting productivity and liveability, particularly in our big cities.

We on this side of the House know and have known for some time that the infrastructure cycle has to be separated from the electoral cycle, not driven by it, which is, in fact, the approach of members opposite. We saw that last week in the gutting of the Building Australia Fund, which could and should be a drive for doing just that: getting projects running that have been properly assessed which serve the national interest, not simply the passing concern of members of this government.
I do acknowledge, though, that there has been some progress in the three terms of this government from Tony Abbott, the former member for Warringah, who famously refused to fund urban public transport. Now, over the last six years, some very bad things have been done which have damaged Australians and damaged the Australian economy, but I think this refusal to fund projects like the Cross River Rail and Melbourne Metro have damaged productivity in Australia more than anything else and have set us back so far. I am pleased that the government under Prime Minister Morrison has moved away from this, but I remain disappointed that so much of this movement has been at a rhetorical level, as my friend the member for Ballarat made clear in her contribution.

As in so many other areas, when it comes to infrastructure, the rhetoric of this government is unmasked by the reality. Take again the $100 billion claim that the members opposite like spruiking. For one, it's not $100 billion, and in any event all of this investment is way out into the never-never, way beyond the forward estimates such that it's impossible to make any meaningful assessment of what it means or what it might mean for Australia's productivity or for our communities, be they in the cities or the regions.

Again, if we look at our record in government compared to the current government, we saw great progress under Minister Albanese, lifting infrastructure investment, particularly public infrastructure investment, right up the rankings and transforming peoples' quality of life, transforming the sustainability of our communities and boosting our economy, whereas we slide backwards with the underinvestment and politicised neglect of this government. Now, more than almost any time in our recent history since the GFC, we need productive infrastructure investment. It's not us that is saying it; it's the Governor of the Reserve Bank, and pretty much every reputable economist. Now is the time to be investing in projects which are ready to go, based on proper assessments and based on cooperative arrangements. These are the things the government isn't interested in. They talk about congestion-busting and, as you would be well aware, Deputy Speaker Vamvakinou, congestion happens in Melbourne too. Congestion even happens in Melbourne's north and west, where there has been a paltry investment by this government.

The member for Boothby is from South Australia. I did note that, in the lead-up to the last election, 17 of the 18 road projects committed to by the government were in coalition seats. In Adelaide, the picture was starker—seven of eight were in the electorates of Sturt and Boothby. This is a government which is only concerned to boost congestion when they think it will boost their electoral prospects and that simply is not good enough. It is not good enough for Australians, it is not good enough for my constituents or yours, Deputy Speaker Vamvakinou, and it's not good enough for any vision of how our economy should function. I could go on about the difference between my electorate and that of the member for Boothby in terms of investment but perhaps I've already made the point.

What I do want to say in the time available to me is that busting congestion is a critical piece of our productivity puzzle. It should deserve better treatment than that which it is being given by this government. We need a national urban policy framework within which to situate it. We need infrastructure to be supported based on need, based on business cases, not on political convenience. We need a government that is not simply interested in looking in the mirror and liking what it sees. We need a government that is prepared to always act in the national interest when it comes to infrastructure.

Mr TED O'BRIEN (Fairfax) (12:32): I'm delighted to speak on all topics, but it's infrastructure which I'm excited about. I'm sorry that the member for Scullin is hurrying back to his office to hear this speech on his television because I'll address some of his unkind comments as we go. We do know that this government has the economy right and that's where it starts—AAA credit rating, back in surplus, faster growth than any of the OECD bar the United States. The importance of an economy, as the Prime Minister often reminds us, is it is the enabler, the means by which we can provide vital public services and also build infrastructure, and a $100 billion infrastructure package is what this government is looking at.

The previous speaker, the member for Scullin, obviously is not aware that the government actually has put in the one portfolio responsibility for population growth, cities and urban infrastructure—a clear indication that this government gets it when it comes to where the pressure comes from on infrastructure, particularly in our major cities and our major regions. The challenge for all of us who serve the people in this place is to try to ensure that infrastructure keeps ahead of, if not at least catches up with, the population curve. You can only do that if you've got the money to do it. You can only do that with a strong economy, which is why we are so unashamedly proud of our performance when it comes to delivering a strong economy. The stronger the economy is, the more infrastructure you can build.

Unfortunately, the member for Scullin also mentioned the Cross River Rail project in Brisbane, almost as an example, he was saying, where the government has not looked at business cases. To the contrary, that business case was given to Infrastructure Australia by the Queensland Labor government. Infrastructure Australia agreed that it looked like a good project but said that it wasn't needed now. It had some question marks around the
timing—there was more scale required coming into that rail system in Brisbane before its time was there. Still to this day, despite years gone by, Infrastructure Australia is waiting for the Queensland Labor government to resubmit a business case. Yet you have Labor Party members in this House coming into this chamber suggesting the government isn't looking at business cases. Well, there is a business case for rail in South East Queensland and that is the Beerburrum to Nambour business case—$780 million. For the first time in our history a federal government has committed funds for that stretch of rail. $390 million—50 per cent of that $780 million spent—was committed by the coalition government. That was a project prioritised by Infrastructure Australia that had a business case submitted by the state government and accepted, and for the first time we fund 50 per cent. Has it started, though? No, it hasn't. Why? Because we still wait for the state Labor government in Queensland to start doing some work. Traditionally they pay 100 per cent. Now they pay 50 per cent. That's a 50 per cent discount, and they still will not start work.

We had $10 billion on the Bruce Highway throughout Queensland. That's not just about transport. It's not just about flood mitigation. It's not just about congestion. It's not just about safety measures. It is about getting people home. It's about you and I and other people in this House getting home safely to our families; spending less time in traffic and more with our loved ones. It's about ensuring that our small and medium businesses are more productive and their costs are kept low. These are the outcomes around the social fabric of our communities, around the strength and productivity of our economy, that good infrastructure investment delivers. I'm very proud to be part of a government that is delivering aptly in that regard.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Vamvakinou): The time allotted for this debate has expired. The debate is adjourned and resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for a later hour this day.

Tasmania: Housing Affordability

Ms COLLINS (Franklin) (12:37): I move:

That this House:
(1) notes that:
(a) after being neglected by successive State and Federal Liberal Governments, Tasmania is now in the depths of a housing crisis;
(b) under the Liberals, the Tasmanian housing market is failing renters, first-home buyers and people at risk of homelessness;
(c) the average middle-income Tasmanian household is in rental stress, paying about 30 per cent of their income just to put a roof over their head, and 20 per cent more Tasmanians are accessing homelessness and crisis housing services than two years ago;
(d) sadly, behind these statistics, Tasmanians are hurting;
(e) the new Federal Assistant Minister for Community Housing, Homelessness and Community Services wants to put a 'positive spin' on the housing crisis, which is disgraceful and shows an arrogant contempt for ordinary Tasmanians; and
(f) these unacceptable comments illustrate the failure and incompetence of the Liberals in Tasmania;
(2) calls on the Federal Government to outline a plan to address this crisis—if there is a deal with Senator Lambie, the Government should release the details; and
(3) recognises that:
(a) this continuing record of neglect is yet another example of the State and Federal Liberals failing to stand up for Tasmania; and
(b) only Labor can be trusted to take the housing crisis seriously.

The Tasmanian housing crisis is not just about low-income Tasmanians unable to afford accommodation. This is hitting middle-income Tasmanians. The housing crisis in Tasmania has become so bad that people on middle incomes cannot find anywhere to live in our state, particularly in Hobart. It has been an issue that was raised by the Speaker of the House of Assembly in Tasmania, a member of the Liberal Party, more than 15 months ago. Indeed, we've now seen two winters where Tasmanians have been left out in the cold by the federal and state Liberal governments. It got to point where the Liberal member for Clark has said, 'I will not stand by and watch what this government has done to innocent people through a lack of action. There is no leadership, and it must come from the state government.' When asked about what is happening in terms of the Liberal governments, state and federal, investing in Tasmania and one word to describe them, the term the Liberal member for Clark uses is 'incompetence'.

It is terrible what is happening in Tasmania today when it comes to housing. We saw the recently signed Hobart City Deal after three years of much fanfare. All that was in it for affordable housing was $30 million. This is not significant enough. We know that Tasmania needs millions of dollars of investment in housing from tiers of government but also from private investors. We know that what Labor did in federal government was working.
We saw over $450 million invested by federal Labor in six years in the different forms of housing in Tasmania, from affordable housing to social housing, to public housing, to family violence shelters. Right across the board we invested $450 million plus in six years. We've seen absolutely nothing like that from the current federal Liberal government. They need to work with the state government to do better on this issue.

When you get phone calls in your electorate office from people who are earning $45,000 or $50,000 a year who say they cannot find anywhere to live, we have a very real problem. It is a problem that neither government seems to have been able to grapple with. It is a problem that nobody seems to have an answer to. We need all three tiers of government in Tasmania, particularly in Hobart and greater Hobart, working together to get this resolved. I would have thought the recently signed Hobart City Deal would have been the main opportunity to do that. This is where the government talks about the three tiers of government working together, setting targets and having great aims. That's what they should have done with the Hobart City Deal. Instead of doing a dud deal that included money being spent on the Antarctic continent, they should have actually worked with the other tiers of government to come up with a proper solution for the current housing crisis in Tasmania. It is simply not good enough when you've got one of your own Liberal state members who is the Speaker of the House of Assembly in Tasmania calling governments incompetent when it comes to their action on housing, because basically they have done nothing in 15 months.

This housing crisis has gone on for 15 months. Tasmanians have been left in the cold for 15 months by the state and federal Liberal governments when it comes to the housing crisis in Tasmania. There is so much more that could be done. As I said, the Hobart City Deal was a missed opportunity. They've been talking to Jacqui Lambie, allegedly, about what can happen in terms of the Tasmanian housing crisis. She has some sort of agreement with the government about investing in housing. This is a secret deal. We don't know what's in this deal. The government hasn't come clean. We don't know what they're going to do about housing in southern Tasmania or in Hobart. There was some talk at one stage about perhaps wiping some of the public housing debt that Tasmania owes the Commonwealth because half of it gets chewed up in repayments of the state government's annual allocation.

This is a really serious issue here. The federal government needs to work better with state and local governments to get a real solution. They have sat on their hands for 15 months while Tasmanians have been doing it tough, and I've got people coming into my office, as I said earlier, on $40,000 and $50,000 saying, 'I cannot find anywhere to live.' We all need to strive to do better. After six years of Liberal governments state and federal, they need to be held accountable and they need to be held responsible for the terrible housing crisis in Tasmania at the moment. They need to act.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Vamvakinou): Is the motion seconded?

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

Mr VASTA (Bonner) (12:43): I rise today to speak about homelessness in our country and the commitment of the assistant minister, the Hon. Luke Howarth, and the federal government to address this problem. It is important to acknowledge any person sleeping rough, living in crowded housing or experiencing housing stress. It's a concerning issue. The federal government understands that housing is integral to the welfare of every person, and that's why we're contributing more than $6 billion a year to support the states and territories. The $6 billion investment includes approximately $4.6 billion annually through the Commonwealth Rent Assistance Program, more than $1.5 billion per year through the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement and $620 million over five years from 1 July 2018 in dedicated homelessness funding.

It is important to remember while the federal government is doing everything possible to address homelessness, this is a responsibility of the state and territory governments. It's in the Constitution that this is a state responsibility, so the states do need to do their share as well. That said, I think it's important for the member for Franklin to acknowledge that the state government in Tasmania has been taking steps in the right direction to tackle this problem. I wonder if the member knows about the work that has been done in her own state? It's disappointing that she seems intent on playing political games as opposed to acknowledging some of the good work being done in this space and working alongside the state government.

While this is a complex issue that affects people's everyday lives, it is vital to recognise that there are organisations and governments doing good things in this space. The Liberal Hodgman government in Tasmania is one of them. I would like members to know that this state government's first affordable action plan to tackle homelessness is already meeting and exceeding its targets. Under its first affordable action plan, the Tasmanian government has already assisted a total of 1,605 additional households into safe, secure accommodation and delivered a total of 984 affordable lots and homes to significantly boost the state's supply of housing.
Sadly, in my own state of Queensland it's not the same story. The Queensland state government has the second lowest number of public housing dwellings in the country, currently sitting at 10.3 per thousand people. The Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute predicts that 380,000 dwellings are required in Queensland by 2027 in order to keep up with the growing demand. As the federal member for Bonner, it is important that I'm speaking up for those who have no voice in this community. I want to see more people in my electorate who are not going to be experiencing this housing stress or having to live rough. I have built strong relationships with my local not-for-profit organisations and local community groups that are committed to working in this space. These include Rosies—Friends on the Street and the Mt Gravatt Community Centre. I am proud to not only recognise them but to work alongside them to make sure that my community is getting the support that it needs.

I'm honoured to have the assistant coming to my electorate of Bonner during National Homelessness Week to meet with these people and local organisations and to highlight the great work they are doing in the Bonner community. In the last few months, I have been collecting blankets for the inaugural Bonner blanket drive. I made the very first donation of three wool blankets, and my office has been overwhelmed by the generosity of our local community and the sheer number of people taking the time and effort to support the cause and donate blankets to help those who are doing it tough in the electorate. During National Homelessness Week the minister and I will be visiting Rosies to officially donate the blankets that have been collected in the past few months. I know it's just a drop in the ocean, but, as we all know, every little bit helps.

The other amazing organisation in my local community that deserves a mention is the Mt Gravatt Community Centre. I have been working with Deb and the team at the Mt Gravatt Community Centre for a number of years. They work within the community to support vulnerable groups of people, and they deserve more than just a mention in parliament. Earlier this year, I secured $213,631 for the community centre to fund its Ways to Wellness program to combat social isolation. In order to deliver this program, the centre needs experienced and specially trained link workers. This funding means the centre can now employ an additional link worker and administration worker to expand the program to support more people in the Mt Gravatt and wider Bonner community.

Mr CLARE (Blaxland) (12:48): I thank the member for Franklin for bringing forward this important motion. My old man always used to tell me when I was a kid, 'When you grow up, buy a house.' It was a message he repeated time after time after time. It wasn't about getting rich; it was about his worry about retiring poor, that buying a house gives you that certainty that when you retire you can afford to live a good and decent life. He wasn't unique. Mums and dads have told their kids that right around the country for generations. Wanting to own your own place is part of what we call the great Australian dream.

But, for a lot of people in Australia, it's becoming harder and harder. Back in the eighties, when I was at high school, the cost of the average house was three or four times average income. Now, in places like Sydney for example, it can be as high as 12 times average income. What that has meant is that more and more people are losing hope in that great Australian dream, or opting out of the system. The percentage of Aussies today who own their own home, or own a mortgage for that home, is at its lowest level since Robert Menzies was Prime Minister back in the 1960s. In particular, amongst young people—people in their 20s and 30s—the number who are buying their own home has just gone off a cliff.

For people who have a mortgage, who have made the choice to buy a home, it's tough as well. The RBA put out a report recently that showed that the number of people in Australia that are behind in their mortgage today is at its greatest level since the global financial crisis. If you're renting it's not much better either. The latest data shows that almost half of all Australians on low incomes that rent are in rental stress: in other words, more than 30 per cent of their income goes just to pay the rent. Then there's the sharpest and most difficult challenge of all. That's people who can't afford to get a mortgage, can't afford to rent and don't have a roof over their head. There are more people homeless today in Australia than ever before.

It's fair to say this is a crisis. It's a crisis right across the country. There are not many issues that are more important than this. There are not many places in Australia where this challenge is bigger or more acute than Tasmania. It might surprise people that are watching this debate or listening to it, but it's Tasmania where this challenge is most ferocious. There's been a population boom in Tasmania over the last few years, as well as more tourists coming to town and more students coming to study. Airbnb has created its own challenges, particularly in Hobart. Off the back of that you have seen housing prices go up rapidly, the cost of rent go up and the number of people that are homeless go through the roof. In some parts of Hobart at the moment you have house prices that have gone up by 75 per cent in the last few years. Rental affordability in Hobart is worse than Sydney. Think about that. As a Sydneysider I find that hard to believe, but it's true. The housing affordability index that came out last year showed that Tassie is the worst state in Australia for housing stress. Why? Rents have gone up dramatically. The cost of rent in places like Hobart is almost as expensive as Sydney or Melbourne. But average
incomes are much, much lower. It also means, as a result, that you have more people on the street or sleeping in cars. I heard a story when I was down in Tasmania recently about people having to put their kids in the car and sleep on the outskirts of town. They have got a job but they can't find affordable accommodation. It was a story told to me by Hobart City Mission and Shelter Tasmania. There is a big jump in the number of people in that situation. In fact, there has been a 20 per cent increase in the number of people that have been knocking on the door of crisis accommodation over the last few years. There's just not enough crisis accommodation to meet that need.

The state government really hasn't done enough. They built about 300 affordable accommodation houses in the last five years. The last state Labor government built 2,000. So that is 300 under the Libs in the last five years and 2,000 here. There is an opportunity for the federal government to do something. Jacqui Lambie has said she's got a deal with the government. Mathias Cormann has said he will deliver on that deal in the next six to eight weeks. We call on the government to make good on that. If you don't, the Tasmanian people will be very angry that they have been duded by this government.

Mr PITT (Hinkler) (12:53): It's a great pleasure for me to rise in support of my good friend and colleague, the assistant minister, Minister Howarth. I note the comments from the member for Blaxland about advice from his father. I would certainly like to relay some of my own. My father was a fairly quiet gentleman and still is. When he gave advice, it was always not that direct. As a kid, and as I grew up, every time I would ask him a question about something serious, like purchasing a property or a car or something else, he might say something like, 'You may be right.' As I got older I discovered that that meant, 'You were wrong—completely wrong—and in fact you should never have done that and it was the wrong thing to do.' It took a long time for me to establish exactly what that advice meant, but I am still very pleased that I was able to get it, because I know there are lots of people out there who don't have that opportunity.

When we talk about housing and affordability, we should look at the key drivers, particularly within the economy. One of the best things we can do as a government is ensure that the economy continues to maintain its strength—that there are opportunities for jobs, opportunities for all individuals to have a job and be employed and pay their own way. Whilst this private member's motion is about the elements in Tasmania—I will get to the motion in a moment—in my own electorate housing is much cheaper than it is in other places. It's genuinely is. You can buy a good house for under $300,000. You can live near the beach. There are great schools and great opportunities. Our biggest problem is jobs.

However, there is good news on the horizon. We have had a change. There is a positive trend right now. In fact, in the last 12 months the unemployment rate for the Wide Bay statistical region has dropped from 9.6 per cent a year ago to 7.3 per cent. I think anyone in this place would consider that that is a move in the right direction. Our youth unemployment has dropped from 28 per cent to around 18 per cent. That is a significant and substantial change, and I think that is because of a combination of reasons. The first one is that we are investing locally in job-driving parts of the economy. We have substantial and significant infrastructure investments right across the board. This government has committed $100 billion over the next 10 years.

When we look at that, what does that mean, and why does it have an effect on this PMB? Well, the reality is straightforward: every single individual who is there and employed has the opportunity to purchase their own house. If those houses are built, it will provide more rental opportunities for those who are looking for those rental opportunities locally.

Once again, in one of my former roles I actually used to have not a large cane farm but a reasonable-sized cane far, along with the rest of my family, and I clearly remember a gentleman and his dog who used to sleep rough in his car at the end of my road. Every morning I got into the habit of getting up, going out the front, looking to see if the gentleman was up and giving him a wave to make sure he was okay. He'd wave back, and we'd move on. As a little bit of an aside in the time I've got left, I did take up that opportunity for a different car at one stage, and unfortunately I found a young couple in an amorous embrace which I think I shouldn't have interrupted!

Let's go back to the elements of the PMB. Locally there is a very, very strong provision of regional housing from an organisation called Regional Housing Limited. I acknowledge the work that they are doing. They have more than 200 local houses that they provide for those people who find themselves in difficult circumstances. One of the reasons I am mentioning them is I want to support the fact that they were very supportive of the cashless debit card rollout. I know there are those opposite who speak frankly against it. They are entitled to their view, but I want to give one example of an individual's circumstances as justification for this rollout.

Regional Housing Limited have a client, who will remain unnamed. They have a disability, and Regional Housing Limited have struggled to keep them in housing for 10 years. The reason for it is very straightforward: every second Thursday someone would come down, wake that individual up early in the morning, take them...
down to the teller machine, make them take their money out of the teller machine and steal it. As a result, that individual couldn't pay their rent. Now the cashless debit card ensures that that will never happen again and that Regional Housing Limited will be able to keep that individual in housing for the remainder of their time, and I think that is a very, very positive change.

In Tasmania we know the Hodgman Liberal government announced, in July 2019, that they have set four-year targets to assist an additional 1,600 households with their housing needs. That includes a supply of 941 affordable land lots and homes, 372 of which would have been new social housing dwellings. These targets, having been met or exceeded, have assisted a total of 1,605 individual households into safe, secure accommodation that meets their needs; delivered a total of 985 affordable lots and homes; and significantly boosted supply of social housing, with 453 new dwellings being delivered. I think that is a very positive story. It is a positive message for the people of Tasmania. I congratulate the Hodgman Liberal government, and I congratulate, of course, the assistant minister, Mr Howarth, on the work that he is doing.

Mr BRIAN MITCHELL (Lyons) (12:58): I would like to thank the member for Franklin for bringing this motion on. It's my great pleasure to second it. To the previous speaker, Mr Pitt: you can try and put as much positive spin on this as you like, but you can't put lipstick on a pig!

Deputy Speaker Vamvakinou, I'd like to talk to you about Scott. Scott's in his mid-40s. He's articulate and polite. He's a good guy, and he's homeless. Scott's the new face of homelessness in Hobart. He's relatively young, employable and keen to work. Now, I note here that Tasmania's unemployment rate is now 6.9 per cent, and we lost 6,200 full-time jobs in the last 12 months. The jobs are not there.

Scott is just poor—cripplingly poor. He's one of more than two million Australians who would like to have a go but can't get a go. It's something that the Prime Minister seems blind to—that many people require assistance in order to have a go. It's easier to have a go when your parents support you, when you have a job already or when you have somewhere to live. It's not so easy to have a go when you're struggling to simply stay warm on the streets. Scott's not after a handout, just a hand up. He lives in a memorial park next to the Bridgewater Bridge near my office. Before that, he lived under the nearby Jordan River Bridge, where on some nights he was joined by up to 30 other homeless people desperate to take advantage of the modicum of shelter from the elements.

Scott is cold—bitterly cold. It has been below freezing overnight in recent weeks. He can't wash. He's isolated from the local community, and he's living with the shame, as unwarranted as it is, that comes with being homeless. Scott can't be housed by Housing Tasmania because he has a debt with the agency. It's a debt he accrued because he could not afford to balance the rent with the other growing cost-of-living demands. We all know that Newstart is impossible to live on. It's a whirlpool of poverty and despair that is all but impossible to escape. You can't get a job. You can't afford the rent, so you lose the accommodation. You can't wash or afford transport, so you can't get a job, so you can't get housing, so you get sick and you get dirty, and now you're unable to work, you lose hope and you get mentally unwell. At what point do we as a society acknowledge that we have a role to play other than providing bandaids in the form of op shops, soup kitchens and charity GP caravans? With the greatest respect for Mr Vasta, as well-intentioned as he is, blanket drives won't solve homelessness. Secure shelter short-circuits so much of the cycle.

My electorate statistically is not the worst when it comes to homelessness, but every homeless person in my electorate is a person, not a statistic. Every one of them, like Scott, needs and deserves a place to live. Who you have somewhere to live. It's not so easy to have a go when you're struggling to simply stay warm on the streets. Scott is cold—bitterly cold. It has been below freezing overnight in recent weeks. He can't wash. He's isolated from the local community, and he's living with the shame, as unwarranted as it is, that comes with being homeless. Scott can't be housed by Housing Tasmania because he has a debt with the agency. It's a debt he accrued because he could not afford to balance the rent with the other growing cost-of-living demands. We all know that Newstart is impossible to live on. It's a whirlpool of poverty and despair that is all but impossible to escape. You can't get a job. You can't afford the rent, so you lose the accommodation. You can't wash or afford transport, so you can't get a job, so you can't get housing, so you get sick and you get dirty, and now you're unable to work, you lose hope and you get mentally unwell. At what point do we as a society acknowledge that we have a role to play other than providing bandaids in the form of op shops, soup kitchens and charity GP caravans? With the greatest respect for Mr Vasta, as well-intentioned as he is, blanket drives won't solve homelessness. Secure shelter short-circuits so much of the cycle.

My electorate statistically is not the worst when it comes to homelessness, but every homeless person in my electorate is a person, not a statistic. Every one of them, like Scott, needs and deserves a place to live. Who decided that a place to live was a reward for doing well in life rather than being a simple human right, a necessary and fundamental part of the compact that comes with being a member of a democratic society? Tasmania's shelters are full. Tasmania's crisis accommodation is full. Tasmania's public housing waiting lists are overflowing. Private rentals are scarce and cruelly cruelly expensive. The housing crisis is the result of many factors. No doubt we can write about the causalities: the fractured nature of increasingly insecure and low-paid work, family breakdowns, mental illness, governments' failures over decades to build enough public housing, and the suffocation of funding for charities and support agencies. They are arguments for another time. Right now, today, we have hundreds of thousands of Australians without a roof over their head, and we have in Canberra and Hobart governments with the means to do something about it.

All it takes is money and determination—money that has a cash rate of nearly zero per cent interest—and governments with the ability to borrow and to repay borrowings over decades. Those opposite may raise their eyebrows when I say, 'All it takes is money,' as if money grows on trees, as if we can throw it about willy-nilly. We need to be tough with budgets; we need to show physical discipline; we need to cut our cloth—we've heard all the cliches. But where was the fiscal discipline in handing half a billion dollars to the Great Barrier Reef Foundation or to the bloke with the beach shack for the security on Manus or in the $180 million to open and close Christmas Island within a week? We have the money. It's how you choose to use it that is the difference. We
do not need more summits; we need land. We do not need more reviews; we need materials. We do not need more press conference; we needs homes built, and we need it done now.

Mrs ARCHER (Bass) (13:03): Homelessness and the risk of homelessness are issues that have long affected Tasmanians and, indeed, Australians under state and federal governments of all political persuasions. This is because, as the member for Lyons pointed out, the causes of homelessness and disadvantage generally are many and varied and do not only relate to the housing market. As mayor of Georgetown, I spent a considerable amount of time in the past few years engaging with service providers in this space, particularly with Vinnies, and I've participated in their sleep-out for the past four years to raise both funds and awareness of the challenges faced by homeless Tasmanians. I would like to take this opportunity to commend Vinnies and the many other organisations and their volunteers—especially Michael Doherty and his team in my home town—who work tirelessly every day to help vulnerable Tasmanians.

It's an important issue for me personally, as my own experiences have taught me that homelessness can happen to anyone and for a range of reasons: family violence, relationship breakdown, illness, mental health challenges, as well as the accessibility and availability of housing. It is disappointing that the member for Franklin seeks to attempt to politicise this issue rather than choosing to approach the issue in a non-partisan way. It is my view that this issue needs all stakeholders working together collaboratively, recognising the complexity of the challenges and formulating long-term solutions. I acknowledge that the member has some experience in regard to this portfolio area, and I would be interested in discussing her views.

The federal government is taking action. There are no silver bullets to make housing more affordable, but by adopting a comprehensive approach we can make a difference. Some of the measures the government is taking to create more housing supply include providing over $1.5 billion annually to support housing and homelessness services. The new National Housing and Homelessness Agreement took effect on 1 July 2018. It provides $7.8 billion in funding over the next five years. This includes $620 million in dedicated homelessness funding, which will be ongoing and indexed for the first time; establishing a $1 billion National Housing Infrastructure Facility to provide finance for infrastructure to unlock new housing supplies; creating an online Commonwealth land registry detailing sites that can be made available for residential development; and establishing a new National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation to provide long-term, low-cost finance to support more affordable housing.

There are measures to help first home buyers by providing a tax cut on their home deposit savings, and we are helping older Australians to downsize by enabling them to make a non-concessional contribution of up to $300,000 into their super fund from the proceeds of the sale of their principal home. That will free up housing for families. Representations to the government by the member for Clark have resulted in a $30 million commitment to the Hobart City Deal to help address pressures in Hobart. The Tasmanian Liberal government are also working hard to address this issue, with one of the most integrated housing and homelessness systems in the country. The system is designed to provide tailored solutions to meet individual needs. The state government's affordable housing strategy for the next four years has a focus on construction of affordable homes, more land released in key areas and supported accommodation for target groups. In the four years to 2019, 1,605 households have been assisted into safe, secure accommodation, including 453 new social housing dwellings. In the north of the state a new youth-at-risk centre will provide short-term accommodation and a range of therapeutic and social supports to assist young people at risk of homelessness. The state government will also work with Anglicare to complete an extension of Thyne House, which also supports and empowers young Tasmanians. In addition, the state government is committed to working with Magnolia Place to expand their women's shelter, supporting women out of crisis and into stable accommodation.

These are just some of the ways that state and federal governments are working together with other key stakeholders to address these important challenges. I'm advised that the member for Franklin has not raised these issues directly with the assistant minister to date. He has indicated to me that he would certainly welcome the opportunity to discuss the issue directly with the member for Franklin, should she wish to pursue this in a constructive way. I also extend an invitation to the member for Franklin and any other Tasmanian members or senators who may be interested in meeting with me to work through this together with a view to creating some more solutions.

Dr FREELANDER (Macarthur) (13:07): I would like to thank very much the member for Franklin for bringing this private member's motion to the House. The fact that those on the other side cannot see that this is a crisis demonstrates their complete lack of understanding of the issues. If I can lift a line from Sir Humphrey Appleby, housing is an area where this government's preferred policy position is not to have one.

That wasn't always the case. The Menzies government in particular and the Liberal governments that followed borrowed Labor's policy and did quite well with housing. As an example, when I was first buying a house at the age of 25, the cost of that house was approximately twice my income that year. One of my children recently...
bought a house in Sydney for 14 times his annual income. By the 1970s Australia had record rates of home ownership and one of the highest home ownership rates in the developed world. Levels have now fallen to the lowest level since the 1950s, with the most dramatic declines in recent times being among those 25 to 34 years of age and 35 to 45 years of age. Those rates of decline are accelerating for many groups, including for Australians nearing retirement age. A simple indicator of the pressing need for action is that the number of older Australians living in lower-income rental households is expected to grow by 115 per cent from 195,000 in 2001 to 419,000 in 2026. That is only one of a number of growing and worrying trends.

Commonwealth rent assistance to low-income renters has not kept pace with rising rents. Anglicare once again reported this year that only a tiny fraction—less than five per cent—of properties listed for private rental across Australia are within the reach of welfare recipients. There's a growing mismatch nationally between the sort of housing available and the demands of an increasing diverse and ageing Australian population. Families have being getting smaller just as our houses have been getting larger, and social housing is falling as a proportion of our national housing stock.

In Tasmania, it's worse than on the mainland. As at 30 June 2018, about 140,000 Australians were on waiting lists for public housing. In Tasmania, the figure is at record highs and still growing despite feeble and belated action by the state government. In June this year, the chief executive of TasCOSS, Kym Goodes, categorised Tasmania as losing ground when it comes to housing the homeless. The number of people on the waiting lists has increased, and this is the largest in any reported period they've seen. The number of people being housed has also decreased. You'd think the Hodgman's government's federal coalition mates might have helped them out but apparently not. It takes a deal with Jacqui Lambie to get some action happening, we're told.

An honourable member: Allegedly.

Dr FREELANDER: Allegedly. Different scripts, same unhappy ending I suspect. How can it be that, after 27 years of uninterrupted economic growth, the more than doubling of national wealth and increases to real income since the 1970s, a smaller share of Australians are able to afford a home than 40 years ago? Housing is one of the primary social determinates of health and also educational attainment. The government turns its back and ignores this. Why does it take, again, a Jacqui Lambie supposed motion to get some action?

For the past six years, the federal coalition has sat on its hands, sat on the sidelines and, like some delusional Australian rugby fan, hoped for a miracle. The only miracle we've seen is that things are not a lot worse, as they could have been. We're not praying for deliverance. The government's been leaning on the rather tired and overegged mantra that it's a supply problem. It's definitely not. In my electorate, developers have been given ample time and room to develop housing lots but they don't release them, aiming to keep the prices high and unaffordable. And this is happening around Australia. The federal government is happy for their developer mates to make record profits but not to house those on low incomes or the very poor.

It's impossible to rent a place in my electorate on Newstart Allowance even with rental assistance, yet the government turns a blind eye and does nothing. The situation in Tasmania is identical: there is land but they're not releasing it, while the unemployed, the poor, the disadvantaged and the sick are made to live on the streets thanks to this government. It's a disgraceful action. It is a crisis. And this government is turning its back on the most vulnerable. It has largely wasted the good fortune of the last few years, and we're heading for a crisis of unbelievable proportions.

Mr PEARCE (Braddon) (13:13): The July 2019 CommSec State of the States report released today confirms the Tasmanian economy is one of the strongest performing in the nation. According to this report, Tasmania ranks third out of all states and territories, our best result in 10 years, as we continue to close the gap on the top spot. The CommSec report shows that Tasmania is leading the nation in relative population growth, the fastest in 27 year; housing finance and starts; vehicle sales; construction work; and business investment. Business investment is vital because the investment demonstrates confidence in our economy, creates jobs for Tasmanians and contributes to our economy and our growth. The CommSec report said:

Tasmania is now solely in third position. In fact the strength on relative population growth, home purchase and construction could see the Apple Isle battling with NSW and Victoria for top position in the year ahead.

The report confirms Tasmanian's economic recovery as a strong Liberal government leads its way forward, making it better for Tasmanians. But we must remember where we were under the last Tasmanian Labor Greens government. We were dead last under Labor. The report released today follows the Deloitte Access Economics Business Outlook and the NAB Monthly Business Survey, which both reported Tasmania as having the best business conditions in the nation.

The Hodgman Liberal government is working through its Affordable Housing Strategy to reduce homelessness and provide more homes to Tasmanians in need. The only way to address the demand issue in our state is to
increase supply. Last month the state government announced that a further 36 new secure dwellings had come online, thanks to almost $9 million in funding through the Tasmanian government's Affordable Housing Strategy. A further 26 are currently under construction. A total of 62 units will be supplied to Tasmanians in need, such as families escaping family violence, the elderly and people living with disability. Half of these are being delivered through the regional supply program with support from Latrobe Council in my electorate of Braddon. All units meet the silver standard of livable housing design guidelines and are eligible for registration under the NDIS improved liveability specialist disability accommodation payment.

That's not where the good news ends. In the same month, the Hodgman government met its Affordable Housing Strategy stage 1 target to build 372 new social-housing dwellings by 30 June 2019. The targets have been set, and the Tasmanian government is meeting those targets. At both the federal and the state level, we are delivering for Tasmanians. But we know that there is still more to do. That's why we're investing $125 million into stage 2 of our Affordable Housing Strategy, taking the total investment to almost $200 million over eight years. It is the largest ever investment into affordable housing in Tasmania's history.

The word is out that Tasmania is the go-ahead state. This is leading to more people choosing to call Tasmania home. Interstate migration has now reached its highest level in nearly 15 years. This is in stark contrast to the last year of the Labor-Greens government, during which droves of Tasmanians fled the state to seek opportunities elsewhere. The government is also supporting more young Tasmanians in purchasing their own home with the extension of the First Home Owner Grant of $20,000 for eligible first-home owners. We are committed to further cutting red tape and streamlining processes to make it easier, faster and cheaper to build, so that more Tasmanians can own a home.

What's Tasmanian Labor doing to help to increase our affordable housing stock? It is aiming to slow it down to a crawl. Quite rightly, Labor supported the state government's housing land supply legislation in parliament last year, but when it comes to action and to delivering, it's the same old Labor. All it does is delay and play petty political games. This legislation, which was unanimously supported in both houses of parliament, allows for the efficient rezoning of government-owned land to provide more affordable housing, sooner. When it comes to the important Huntingfield development, it's nothing but negativity. This development has the possibility of providing over 450 dwellings, infrastructure, open space and local businesses for people in Tasmania. (Time expired)

Mr HOWARTH (Petrie—Assistant Minister for Community Housing, Homelessness and Community Services) (13:18): I thank the member for Franklin and all four Tasmanian members who have spoken today on this important issue. As the new Assistant Minister for Community Housing, Homelessness and Community Services, I do take the issue very seriously, and I want to work in a bipartisan way to ensure that we can do better for people not just in Tasmania but right across the country. I've had the chance to get out into my own electorate and have a much better look at this space not just in my seat of Petrie in Queensland but in neighbouring seats. Last week, I was down in New South Wales looking at some of the good projects around community housing that City West Housing Trust have been doing and at Bridge Housing, who have now taken up a new NHHFIC loan. Next week, for the start of Homelessness Week, I will be in Tasmania. I will be keen to engage with stakeholders down there—

Ms Collins interjecting—

Mr HOWARTH: Including the member for Franklin. I'm very happy, as I say, to work in a bipartisan way and see whether we can get better results over this next term of parliament.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Vamvakínou): 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.

Sitting suspended from 13:20 to 16:00

STATMENTS BY MEMBERS

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Claydon) (16:00): Are there any statements by honourable members?

Infrastructure: Indigenous Culture

Mr BANDT (Melbourne) (16:00): Traditional owners and their supporters continue to gather, protest and protect country on traditional Djab Wurrung land in western Victoria. Distressingly, the Victorian government's plan to destroy thousands of sacred trees has now been approved by federal environment minister Susan Ley. The loss of land is part of a road-widening project along the Western Highway which will save motorists an average of just two to three minutes of travel time. The land is sacred. This land features in a songline, or Dreaming track, of the Djab Wurrung people, including a 300-year-old 'directions' tree. The destruction of this landscape represents the destruction of culture. The construction works will threaten the natural environment of endangered species,
including the stumpy tailed lizard and the mitji kangaroo. Traditional owners and their supporters have been campaigning for over 13 months to protect this site.

In February this year, the Victorian Andrews government announced plans to change the proposed route to save 13 of the most sacred Djab Wurrung trees, but this isn't enough. Justice for Australia's First Nations people must mean more than slogans. It has to involve deep respect for connection to country and recognition of the Djab Wurrung as the traditional owners of this country. In April, as the 800-year-old Notre Dame cathedral in Paris burned, Australians joined many around the world in mourning the destruction of such a sacred and celebrated site. Members from both Labor and Liberal entertained the idea of a government fund to rebuild the popular cathedral, yet when traditional owners demand protection for their own sacred sites Labor and Liberal go silent. It's time to respect and protect country and cancel this plant destruction.

Cowper Electorate: Youth Employment

Mr CONAGHAN (Cowper) (16:01): Those of you who were in the chamber when I delivered my maiden speech will know that I am committed to delivering on jobs in my electorate and addressing our high youth suicide rate, particularly in Coffs Harbour, which has an unemployment rate of 20.3 per cent, a rate not seen outside outback Queensland. I'm working with local youth leaders and employers to put together a youth employment summit to brainstorm ideas and generate jobs for Coffs Harbour. Right now, Mission Australia is calling on 15- to 19-year-olds to participate in the national youth survey before it closes on 9 August. The youth survey attracted 28,000 responses last year. This year they aim for 30,000 responses. Once complete, the survey will tell us more about the issues that are important to the health, mental health and wellbeing of our nation's youth. This year, they're asking questions about bullying, disability and whether young people feel their voices are being heard on issues affecting them. Young people in New South Wales also said the biggest issues were alcohol, drugs, equity and discrimination. Almost half of them last year, 45.3 per cent, in New South Wales identified mental health as the top issue facing Australia. That was double the number who reported that in 2016. If we're going to make a difference in the young lives of our youth we need to know what matters to them. I urge members to encourage youth in their electorates to participate in the Mission Australia survey.

Macquarie Electorate: Environment

Ms TEMPLEMAN (Macquarie) (16:03): There are 96 species of eucalyptus in the Blue Mountains World Heritage area in my electorate—just the eucalypts. Compare that to the entire British Isles, which has only 32 tree species in total. That number of eucalyptus species give you an inkling of our biodiversity and the importance of this wilderness for those cute, furry things that live in the trees, like koalas. I know this because Sunday was National Tree Day, and along with a couple of hundred other people I attended Science at the Local in Springwood and had the benefit of hearing from Professor Belinda Medlyn. She researches at the EucFACE experiment shows us that older trees do not have the same capacity to absorb carbon as young trees, and it just ends up coming out in the soil. They've also looked at how native trees cope with heat. The next project for these researchers is to track where trees are dying, because no-one's collecting that data. It's a citizen-science project called Dead Tree Detective. If you've seen a dead native tree or a patch of them that have died they need to know. Just google it, upload your photos and they'll do the rest, and you'll know you've helped science understand more about trees and climate.

Sydney Youth Musical Theatre

Mr LEESER (Berowra) (16:04): It gives me great joy that my electorate is home to the Sydney Youth Musical Theatre, founded 40 years ago by Jan Thomas OAM. Recently, I had the opportunity to attend their production of Mel Brooks' The Producers. The Producers is a brilliant piece of satirical theatre which causes the audience to laugh while dealing with some serious themes. It did this famously after September 11 2001 in New York, defying those horrific attacks by showing on Broadway only 48 hours after the terrorists sought to silence and destroy the American spirit.

The SYMT production was directed by the talented Kaleigh Wilkie-Smith and produced by the inimitable Chrissy Stimson. The musical director was Matt Herne and the choreographer was Belinda Escott. This was a superb and funny production, with a great cast of 38 performers. The lead roles were performed by Alec Green, Josh Brown, Brianna Sykes-Spencer, Rob Hartley, Eamon Moses and Dominic Lee-Lindsay.

Sydney Youth Musical Theatre draws in young people from right across the Sydney region, from Hornsby to Camden. Auditions are always competitive, and half the cast of any given show will be performing for the first
time. Performers see their skills advance and their confidence grow as they perform to big audiences. Many go on to work in professional theatre.

The company is steered by a hard-working committee of volunteers, led by Chrissy Stimson, Bruce Bartle, and Sarah Dolan, with Belinda Escott, Paul Harmon, Adam Haynes, Evan Jones, Grant Leslie, Craig Pinkerton, Karen Smith and Jeremy Zalewski. I wish the company every success, and commend them for the outstanding opportunities to participate in the performing arts that they offer young people right across Sydney.

**Centrelink**

Mr HILL (Bruce) (16:06): Anna from Noble Park holds a disability support pension. She has also worked part time for many years. She was advised by her employer that they were restructuring, and she was given two options: 'Do you want a new role or do you want the redundancy package?' In May she approached Centrelink to get advice on the impact on her DSP. She wanted to be fully informed before she made a decision. First, she was told she’d lose the DSP until September; then she was told she'd lose it until February 2020. Confused, she arranged for a meeting with the FIS officer. She needed clear advice to make an important decision.

Now, the FIS officer advised Anna that her payment would not be affected by the redundancy payment as, in total, it equalled 41 weeks pay, which was within the income maintenance specifications. Importantly, the FIS officer assured her several times that if she took the redundancy package, her DSP would not be affected. She was really stressed. I know this woman; I know her family; I believe her; she's smart. It was stressed to her that her DSP would not be affected, and she even got a fact sheet.

She took the redundancy payment, so she was shocked when, straight after, she received a call telling her that her DSP would be stopped until February 2020. She’d quit her job and was then left out in the cold by Centrelink. It’s clear that Centrelink is understaffed and that the staff there are stressed; we know from the union that they don’t have time for training. And yet this government's plan is to privatise more of them. We've now seen 3,000 jobs in the call centre privatised, with more to come. It is not a recipe for better public services, and you should be ashamed!

**Nuclear Energy**

Mr PITT (Hinkler) (16:07): Unless you've been living under a rock, you would have heard the discussions around nuclear energy once again being put forward in the media and other places. Once again I say to those opposite, to those who are here in the room: we are looking for an adult conversation on a difficult issue. However, in Queensland we know the state Labor government is unable to do that. In fact, Minister Dick came out last week and talked about three-headed turtles, about glowing animals and all sorts of things. I'd say to the minister: spend less time watching *The Simpsons* and more time informing yourself.

If you look at the social media feed, whether it's on Twitter or Facebook or anywhere else, you will see there is an overwhelming majority support for an investigation, for an inquiry. To those opposite: you shouldn't be scared of an inquiry—no-one is suggesting that we are building nuclear reactors tomorrow—but we need to be able to look at technologies as they change. We need to be able to do that in an adult way. We need to be able to have a conversation with the Australian people so that they are well informed.

What we know is that right around the world there are many reactors. In fact, there is any number of new types of technology, which we need to be able to investigate. As members and senators in this place, we should be adult enough to have that conversation. But not in Queensland! Minister Dick is straight-out talking about three-headed turtles and writing to mayors and running a scare campaign. The Labor Party, unfortunately, are all scare and no solution.

**Macarthur Electorate**

Dr FREELANDER (Macarthur) (16:09): I rise today to express my overwhelming gratitude to the people of Macarthur for placing their faith in me to represent them in this place for a second term.

An opposition member: It's well placed!

Dr FREELANDER: Thank you. As I said in my maiden speech in 2016, it was very humbling to be elected by the community—a community that I know and love—to be their voice on the national stage. Three years later, the weight of this is not lost on me, and I remain as determined as ever to serve my community well. However, this would not be possible without a loyal team of supporters behind me, and I wish to take the opportunity to thank them for their assistance throughout my election campaign. My supporters were the backbone of my positive grassroots campaign, and I wouldn't be here if it were not for their efforts knocking on doors at the weekend, phoning constituents and helping out at polling booths at prepoll and on election day. If I were to name every volunteer, supporter and branch member by name, I would be here all day. Instead, I seek leave to table and record in Hansard a list of some of my supporters' names to express my gratitude for their efforts and loyalty.
I also wish to express my gratitude to my staff and my family for their unwavering support. I look forward to working with all members of the House in a productive and respectful manner throughout the term of the 46th Parliament and thank the Macarthur community once again for the opportunity to represent them.

Leave granted.

The list read as follows—
Angelo Marangou
Con Marangou
Kim McCausland
Kellie Gale
Warren Harris
Greg West
Janet Frame
Emma Cutmore
Ashleigh Fiseris
Elsa Collardo
Greg Warren
Sukur Khan
Sharon Freelander
Rosie Freelander
Adam Abdul
Salim Kabir
Anisul Afsar
Brydan Toner
Shannon Toner
Garth Toner
Todd Steele
Soliette Maree Roa
Geoff Scott
Geoff Berry
Don Voegt
Greg Brasil
Jimmy Lopez
Vince Sellars
Rajkumar Verma
Lita Smith
Jenny O’Hehir
Sukur Khan
Anne Young
Susannah Combe
Bijendar Gautaum
William Freelander
Rudi Kollcman
Payton Rae Salta
Mark Smith
Simone Warren
Darcy Warren
Lourdes Kaiser
Kathy Sullivan
Susie Sullivan
Caroline Sullivan
Ashleigh Moss
Josephine Riley
Mitch Purser
George Breticivic
Haromi Jones
Cheryl Roberts
Dwayne Roberts
Suzie Seftian
Greg McCauley
Faird Payenda
Sylwia Wisniewska
Isabella Plust
Isabella Wisniewska
Ben Gilholme
Sharif Alam
Wayne Prior
Neil Murphy
Tom Gersback
James O'Neil
Ethan Stein
Jessica Cartwright
Antonio Parragalli
Cindy Cagney
Stuart Einfield
Patrick Duffy
Annette Duffy
Nazli Hocaoglu
Chelsea Barker
Charlie Roberts
Aidan O'Rourke
Mufazzal Bhuiya
Dempsey Bloom
Margaret Chivers
Graham Chivers
Beth Michie
David/Richard Bligh
Michelle Doan
Susie Weston
Muhammad Farooq
Madison Lord
Greg O'Keefe
Masood Chowdhury
Ramesh Niperty
Raunaq Miah
Meg Oates
Ross Oates
Danelie Lockyer
Alison Poole
Rey Manoto
Anoulack Chanthivong
Michael Manoto
Mon Calvelo
Lestor Rivero
Al Munn
Peter Brennan
Andrew Mcdonald
Jenny McDonald
Manuel Rodriguez
Tony Wagner
Beth Wagner
Warren Small
Jasaman Sethi
Darren Hixon
Mohammad Fedous Omi
Robert McGill
Jannene Kyytsonen
Damien Quinnell
Thomas Huang
Jason Kirkably
Gail Smith
Cliff Smith
Edward Freelander
Sally Quinnell
Tumpa Rahman
Rheuben Freelander
Lyn Santiago
Leigh Ninham
Mark Vine
Renee Estrella
Dianne Vidalla
Dennis Allsop
Merryn Allsop
Jennifer De Sousa
Hannah Miggins
David Ibric
Darcy Lound
George Stauffer
Garry Stanshell
John Browlee
Steve Goodwin
Matt Spalding
Edward Seulig
Mick O'Neil
Tilly O'Neil
Gary Cremming
Aaron Rule
Andrew Sekhar
Naoreen Chowdhury,
Kathryn Millar
Pikes Garcia
Ryan Electorate: Girl Guides

Mr SIMMONDS (Ryan) (16:11): I rise to acknowledge the 60th birthday of the Walton Bridge/The Gap Girl Guides. It was a pleasure to join them on Saturday night, 27 July 2019, to acknowledge and celebrate this significant milestone, which is significant in particular for a community group that relies on dedicated and longstanding volunteers. I've never been a Guide, obviously, but I have been a Scout and I know that the Guides are teaching strong, resilient and resourceful women of the future.

I want to acknowledge in particular a few of these wonderful volunteers as we did on Saturday night. Donna Milgate has 35 years worth of service. She is a leader of 1st Brownie guides and often volunteers for extra activities. Robyn West has been a volunteer for 40 years and continues as leader of the 1st Brownie guides. Sandra Voll has been a volunteer for 40 years. She is a leader of the 2nd Brownie guides and attended the Trailblazers stay camp to assist those staff. Faye Lawson has been a volunteer for 45 years and, in addition to her consistent leadership of 1st Brownies, has been a district leader for 20 years as well. And Katrina Arnold has been a volunteer for 55 years. What an achievement. Katrina is the leader of the 2nd Brownie Guides and continues to support the district more widely. Thank you very much to Elizabeth Wheeley, the district manager, and congratulations again to the Walton Bridge/The Gap Guides. I wish them 60 years more of success.

Oxley Electorate: Infrastructure

Mr DICK (Oxley) (16:12): Whilst the LNP federal government continues to neglect the Australian economy, it's been left to states to provide the leadership and critical infrastructure for projects to be delivered for jobs and to boost the economy's needs. This is in my home state of Queensland. That's exactly what the Palaszczuk Queensland government is doing. With planning and development now being completed, the machinery and construction work began this week on the Summers Road interchange upgrade for the benefit of 35,000 vehicles per day and the wider community. The crew of local construction and engineering staff will remove the existing bridge and replace it with two new bridges, totalling six lanes. Works will include a bike underpass along two of the city's busiest roads, linking up with the Centenary Bikeway, and the existing roundabouts will be replaced with new signalised intersections. The project will create 105 jobs during the construction and is one of many in a pipeline of infrastructure projects being delivered by the Palaszczuk government. In fact, the government is delivering a record $23 billion of roads and transport programs for the state, creating 21,000 jobs over the next four years. This only adds to the more than 207,000 jobs created under the government.

I also commend local state member for Mount Ommaney, Jess Pugh, for her hard work in seeing this project come to fruition after it was cut and neglected by the previous Newman LNP government. I look forward to seeing many more projects being delivered both locally in the Oxley electorate and throughout my home state of Queensland.

Matthews, Mr Jarrod

Mrs MCINTOSH (Lindsay) (16:14): On Saturday I had the great privilege of attending a special award ceremony in the electorate of Lindsay. That was a Queen's Scout award. It went to a very outstanding young
citizen, Jarrod Matthews, who is in our electorate. The 1st South Penrith Scout Group hosted that very special occasion. I had the opportunity to speak with his mum, Chrissie, after the ceremony, and she was rightly very proud of her child and spoke about the hard work he put in over a year to get this special award.

Jarrod will officially be presented with the award by the Governor-General of Australia, David Hurley, in August. That is an outstanding achievement for a young person. He spoke about the things that he had to do to get this award, and he said there were four areas: adventurous activities, community involvement, leadership development and personal growth. It was particularly the community activities, where he participated in work with an organisation called Platform Youth Services, who look after homeless kids in the electorate of Lindsay, which impressed me a lot. I really want to acknowledge Jarrod for his outstanding achievement. The future is bright when we have young people like this doing this great work, and I wish him all the best in the future.

St Brendan's Church: 100th Anniversary

Mr PERRETT (Moreton) (16:15): I rise to extend my congratulations to Father Dan, Archbishop Coleridge and all of St Brendan's Church of Moorooka in my electorate on their centenary celebrations held last Saturday. I should declare a conflict of interest: St Brendan's is actually my local church. It's only about 50 metres from my home. It's where my parents got married back in the 1950s, and it's also the church where my mother was buried and where my sons are becoming Catholics through the various ceremony. So St Brendan's will always have a special place in my family history.

Established in 1919 as part of the Annerley parish, St Brendan's provided the opportunity for Moorooka Catholics to attend a local church. Local historian Mary McMahon has edited a comprehensive history of the Moorooka Salisbury Parish, with many of the contributions coming from local and former parishioners—it's a good read. Joan McGrath, a long-term Moorooka resident and local legend, recalls how her grandfather James Freney was part of a committee that met at his home in Keats Street to discuss their plans to build a local church. Her uncle James Curley bought the land that St Brendan's stands on from a local farmer.

The centenary celebration on Saturday was a fine one. We sat down for a delicious high tea with Father Dan and Archbishop His Grace Mark Coleridge. Thank you St Brendan's for the leadership, faith and comfort you've provided to our local community. I wish you another successful 100 years. And I do have to mention that St Pius X Church, a part of the Moorooka Salisbury Parish, also had their 50th celebrations on Sunday—yesterday—so congratulations to St Pius X Church on your 50th anniversary celebrations. I look forward to being there for your centenary.

Mr BROADBENT (Monash) (16:16): I hope the member for Moreton invited some Anglicans along to that function! On Saturday I was asked a question about the wellbeing of Bill Jeffs. Now, Bill Jeffs is one of the most amazing advocates for public education I've ever met. He was a primary school teacher at Korumburra Primary School, and he really gave it to me about public education. The last time I saw Bill Jeffs was actually at a function around education in Korumburra.

Bill Jeffs was one of 80 primary school principals in my electorate. And as it's getting far more difficult for principals of schools to deal with the issues of the day, not only their administration but also their interaction with parents, their need to educate their children and the responsibilities we're putting on them, I just want to give a great shout-out to primary school principals not just across my electorate but also across Australia, to say: this parliament really is generously appreciative of what you do every day.

We'd like to say to the Bill Jeffs of this world, and even all the retired principals: you've made a huge contribution. We thank you for that, but we mostly recognise those school principals that are doing it hard every day. Don't think you're on your own. Actually, there are lots of people, like myself and many members of this House—I'd say all members of this House—who keep you in mind in the decisions that we take and wish you every goodwill in the job that you do, and we do so on behalf of our kids.

Roe Highway

Mr JOSH WILSON (Fremantle) (16:18): It is mind-boggling that after 2½ years in opposition, the best the WA Liberal Party can come up with in terms of their vision for Western Australia is Roe Highway stage 8 and stage 9—a dead and discredited private toll road, a tunnel with no feasibility study that would be the longest in Australia and through which dangerous freight is not allowed, and a project that would drain billions of dollars from a budget that is only now recovering from the debt mountain left to us by the Barnett government. It is hard to believe that Roe 8 could really be the best idea they've managed after 2½ years of deep reflection. Their brilliant new vision is a 50-year-old road to nowhere—the same road that was the centrepiece of their 2017
The people of WA deserve better than the reheated leftovers of the Barnett government—a government characterised by arrogance, waste, debt and incompetence. Nothing encapsulated those failures better than Roe Highway stage 8. Since March 2017, the McGowan Labor government has begun delivering a 21st century transport network, which includes investment of more than $1 billion in five major road, rail and bridge projects in the Fremantle electorate. How is it that after 2½ years the WA Liberals have got nothing to show but an unhealthy obsession with the corpse of a 50-year-old road plan?

Mental Health

Mr LLEW O'BRIEN (Wide Bay) (16:20): As a Beyond Blue bureau speaker, parent, former policeman and someone who has to manage my own mental health, I welcome the Prime Minister's commitment to take real action on suicide and mental ill health. I particularly want to thank Tarsos and Tricia Barounis for telling their heartbreaking story recently about the suicide of their beautiful son, Yannis, a 17-year-old young man. I want to congratulate them for developing an online resource, 'Let It Out Now', to help tackle youth suicide. I also recognise our local paper, the Fraser Coast Chronicle, for giving this important issue such sensitive coverage.

In Australia, more than one million people experience depression and more than two million people experience anxiety conditions—that is, one in six women and one in eight men. Mental health conditions don't discriminate. Suicide devastates families, friends and communities. The Morrison government has committed almost $5 million to boosting mental health services, including $375 million for increasing headspace clinics in our country. I'm proud of the fact that we've recently delivered one in Gympie and there is one soon to come in Maryborough. There is no-one person that isn't affected by mental health in our community, whether it is yourself, a family member or a member of the community. I'm proud of the government for doing what it is doing.

Australian Defence Force Parliamentary Program

Mr NEUMANN (Blair) (16:21): It was my privilege to once again attend the ADF parliamentary defence program. This year I joined the Joint Logistics Command unit, South East Queensland, which covers RAAF bases at Amberley, Meeandah, Enoggera and Oakley. Amberley is based in the electorate of Blair. The mission of JLCU is to integrate, synchronise and deliver logistics capability to increase the ADF’s war fighting capacity. I want to thank a number of people who provided assistance to me there to increase my knowledge and education. Of course, Lieutenant Colonel Meegan Olding, the commanding officer, provided sage advice to me, as well as: Steven Robinson, the South Queensland regional manager of Linfox; Max Walker, JLU Manager of Broadspectrum; also Stephen Ling, who have I have known for many years and who is an old mate of mine, provided assistance.

These programs are very, very important for politicians. I have done many of them over the 12 years I have been in this place. They help you to understand and appreciate the professionalism, competency and capacity, the service and dedication, and the discipline of ADF personnel. I congratulate everyone associated with this program.

Superannuation

Mr O'DOWD (Flynn—Deputy Nationals Whip) (16:23): Today I would like to talk about a new idea for a superannuation fund to help regions: get super funds to invest a percentage of the funds they take out of the regions and return it to the regional and remote areas of Australia. This would boost the local economy, boost jobs in local communities, build better infrastructure and, furthermore, breathe life back into rural Australia.

Based on figures over the last 10 years, Flynn, my electorate, has pumped $2 billion into superannuation funds. This money ends up in all sorts of places. Probably 35 per cent goes overseas and is invested in other countries' infrastructure. Only $600,000 is returned to the regions. If only 10 per cent of super was invested back into rural areas, they would be much better places. Flynn would benefit by $60 million over three years and increase by $6 million each year. It is estimated it would create 670 jobs. There is a lot of money going out of the regions but very little coming back in. This has got to stop.

Human Rights

Mr GILES (Scullin) (16:24): I rise to talk about extraordinary young women who I have the very great pleasure of representing in this place. Their names are Ola and Zahara. They're sisters. They are both still at school. They come from refugee backgrounds. They are articulate, passionate and inspirational young women. They came to see me the other week about a range of issues, in particular, our response as a nation to conflict in Yemen, a conflict, shamefully, I knew less about than I should have. They wanted to speak to me more broadly about human rights, Australia's moral responsibility to be a leader in the world and to share with me their experiences—the experiences that formed them in Iraq and here in Melbourne's northern suburbs. They asked me
hard questions and they didn't let me get away with easy answers. I want to say here that I predict very big things for Ola and Zahara, and I know they will hold me, as their representative, very effectively to account. As Labor's multicultural spokesperson, I also want to make clear in this place that I take so much heart from this meeting, but all of us here must take on the responsibility of seeing more diverse voices in our politics, more diverse experiences reflected in our public policy and, especially, greater diversity in this place.

**Forestry**

Mr PASIN (Barker) (16:25): I rise today to acknowledge one of Australia's most sustainable and renewable industries: forestry. Our forest industries not only support many regional communities, providing income for tens of thousands of families, but also make an enormously positive environmental contribution. Each year, around 70 million new and renewable trees are planted to support our sustainable forest industries. Nationally, enough seedlings are planted annually to cover an area equivalent to 136,000 footy ovals, a fact I'll be celebrating this Thursday, which is National Forestry Planting Day. These are trees that, as they grow, absorb carbon from the atmosphere before they are harvested to create a range of sustainable and renewable fibre products, products that lock-up and store that carbon. Sustainable forestry plantings ensure Australia has a continual renewable resource that contributes to long-term carbon emission abatement. In fact, Australia's current plantation estate an estimated 258 million tonnes of carbon. And we want to do more. Our government is supporting industry to deliver a billion new plantation trees. We're investing $20 million in our National Forest Industry Plan, which will turbocharge our renewable timber and wood fire industry, tripling economic value by 2050. The message is clear: our forests and forest industries not only contribute to the economy and do some heavy lifting for the environment.

**Krueger, Mr Alan Bennett**

Kleiman, Mr Mark Albert Robert

Dr LEIGH (Fenner) (16:27): Earlier this year, Alan Krueger died. He was one of the leading labour economists of his generation, having done path-breaking research on minimum wages and employment, education, terrorism, health care, the opioid epidemic and the gig economy. He pioneered the Great Gatsby curve and wrote *Rockonomics*, published posthumously. He served as Barack Obama's chair of the Council of Economic Advisers, and, in my dealings with him, he was always generous, deeply engaged and willing to share his advice.

We also recently lost Mark Kleiman, a criminologist who worked on issues around drug crime, probation and policing. Mark's book *When Brute Force Fails* had a profound impact on me, showing, the importance of certainty over severity when dealing with people with short time horizons. He gave to evidence a parliamentary committee here in 2013 and was generous to me, as he was to many policymakers.

**Forde Electorate: Community Organisations**

Mr VAN MANEN (Forde—Chief Government Whip) (16:28): It's always a pleasure to rise in this place to speak about the terrific communities that we all live in. One of the reasons our communities are so great is that we have so many community groups that do so much good work each and every day. These community groups are all volunteer groups, which makes it all the more remarkable. I just want to name a new of the wonderful community groups of my electorate of Forde—and I'm sure I'll run out of time! These groups include the rotary clubs of Logan, Beenleigh, Upper Coomera and Ormeau; the Lions Clubs of Ormeau and Logan Village and our garden clubs at Beenleigh, Eagleby and Ormeau. I also mention the Peachey Community Gardens—which does an enormous amount to revitalize our local community, particularly along the Pimpama River and works very closely with the Ormeau Progress Association—and our Probus clubs in Logan, Beenleigh and Park Ridge. Last but not least, I acknowledge our army cadet unit at Meadowbrook, which is just tremendous in terms of the work they do with young people each and every day, and our navy cadet unit at Eagleby, which does the same. Both are tremendous organisations that continue to build and strengthen the capacity of the youth in our community.

**Vietnam Veterans Day**

Mr GOSLING (Solomon) (16:30): The Vietnam War was Australia's longest military engagement in the 20th century. Almost 60,000 Australians fought in that conflict, and we lost over 500. Vietnam Veterans Day is commemorated each 18 August because that was the date of the Battle of Long Tan, where 108 soldiers—young Australians from Delta Company 6RAR, supported by other Australian and New Zealander troops—resisted an attack of anywhere between 1,500 and 2,500 North Vietnamese and Viet Cong troops. It was one of the most extraordinary chapters in Australia's more recent military history.

There has been a film called *Danger Close: The Battle of Long Tan* produced about this battle, and it is screening in Parliament House tonight, so if anyone listening to this wants to come along, just ring my office and I'll sort you out a ticket. It's been getting great reviews. I'm working with a local veterans organisation in Darwin to put on a fundraising screening of the film on 8 August, with funds raised going towards local veterans...
organisations and first responder organisations. It's very important that we remember our past but also support those who continue to represent us.

**Braddon Electorate: Latrobe**

Mr PEARCE (Braddon) (16:32): If you're looking for a great winter escape in August, why not book a trip on the *Spirit of Tasmania*. Drive off the ship in Devonport and head 10 minutes down the road to the great town of Latrobe, known for the Axeman's Hall of Fame and the Big Platypus. The weekend of the 10 and 11 August is all about chocolate. This is Latrobe's 16th Chocolate Winterfest and it is a mouth-watering chocolate event for every sweet tooth, young and old. Why not try a chocolate high tea or be amazed and inspired to wear chocolate art. The mind boggles! Attend a chocolate masterclass with master Belgian chocolatier Igor Van Gerwen, design your own Smarties mosaic, or pit yourself against other budding writers in the chocolate-inspired poetry competition. The list goes on. Congratulations to mayor Peter Freshney, Michelle Dutton and all the crew at the Latrobe Council, everybody at the House of Anders, all the sponsors who have gotten on board, and the great people of Latrobe, for your contribution to such a magnificent event.

**Franklin Electorate: Infrastructure**

Ms COLLINS (Franklin) (16:33): The Hobart Airport roundabout borders both my electorate and the electorate of Lyons. Both sides of politics have made commitments around upgrading this bottleneck in southern Hobart on the eastern shore. Labor, of course, made the commitment first in the 2016 election, followed a month later by the government and the Liberal Party. This Hobart Airport roundabout is critical. The state government have made some wider lanes on it, but the important point here is that, in June 2017, the then minister, Mr Chesters, told us that construction would commence in 2018 and would be finished by late 2020, because there is a two-year construction phase.

Sadly, work still has not begun on this critical piece of infrastructure—not at all. Indeed, tenders were only called for earlier this year, just before the election in April. No tenderer has been announced and no work has commenced, so motorists in the south of Lyons travelling through my electorate to get to the city for work every single morning are blocked at this major intersection.

The state Liberal government and the federal Liberal government need to do better. They need to honour their commitments to the people of my electorate and the south of Lyons because these communities are stuck in traffic every day because these two governments can't get their act together and can't get this critical piece of infrastructure upgraded as they promised. This was a promise from 2016. Here we are in the second half of 2019 and it's still not even started.

**Chisholm Electorate: National Tree Day**

Ms LIU (Chisholm) (16:34): The Morrison government is taking proactive measures to promote new plantings either directly, through our 20 Million Trees Program, or indirectly, through projects in our new Environment Restoration Fund and, potentially, projects in our upcoming Communities Environment Program.

It was a pleasure to play a part in getting us to the 2020 target of 20 million new trees planted by joining the 1st Nunawading Scout Group, Blackburn Lions Club, Whitehorse councillors and staff, including Councillor Andrew Davenport, and local residents for a National Tree Day planting in Nunawading. It was heartwarming to see so many residents of Chisholm, including plenty of children, out on Sunday, planting trees and giving back to make the area in which we live a better place. Thank you to all those involved.

I also wanted to pay tribute to many of our local environmental groups who don't just come out once a year but are regularly attending to our local environment. I look forward to getting out and meeting as many of these groups as possible as the member for Chisholm.

**Newstart Allowance**

Ms CLAYDON (Newcastle) (16:36): In my electorate of Newcastle there are 5,157 people on Newstart. That's more than 5,000 people struggling just to survive and keep a roof over their heads, let alone find money for job seeking and attending interviews. The Morrison government's abject cruelty of doing nothing while people are being forced to live on $40 a day is nothing short of despicable.

Make no mistake: Newstart is so low it's driving people into deep poverty and making it damn near impossible to get out once they're there. Indeed, a recent ACOSS survey found a staggering 84 per cent of Newstart recipients go without a meal just to get by. That this could be happening in a wealthy, generous country like Australia is an absolute disgrace. It's no good for jobseekers, it's no good for employers and it's a disaster for regional economies like Newcastle—indeed, a recent Deloitte study found increasing Newstart would generate $8.5 million worth of economic activity in Newcastle alone.
When the Business Council, ACOSS, John Howard and the Reserve Bank are all singing from the same hymn book and demanding that Newstart be increased, only the most arrogant, entitled, out-of-touch government would refuse to listen. It's time to start listening, Mr Morrison. It is time to increase Newstart. Let's raise the rate now.

Burwood RSL

Dr MARTIN (Reid) (16:37): I would like to acknowledge the Burwood RSL sub-branch, which has recently celebrated 100 years of mateship, camaraderie and community service as they mark their centenary. I was fortunate enough to attend their centenary celebrations on 19 June this year at Burwood RSL. It was a significant milestone in our veteran community, and I particularly would like to acknowledge the sub-branch president, Mr Geoff Lazar, who extended the invitation for my attendance. Also in attendance were local councillors Raj Dixit and Joseph Del Duca; president of the New South Wales division of the Returned and Services League of Australia, James Brown; Rear Admiral Ken Doolan; and other distinguished guests. Dr Brendan Nelson, the director of the Australian War Memorial, joined us as the guest speaker of the event. His keynote speech touched our hearts and certainly honoured the role our local sub-branches play in our community. Congratulations to the Burwood RSL sub-branch for a fantastic celebration. I look forward to the sub-branch's continued work in our area and to joining their commemorative events in the future.

Sterling First

Ms MADELEINE KING (Brand) (16:39): Last week I addressed a letter to the federal Treasurer concerning a matter of grave importance to many residents in my electorate of Brand and across the wider state of Western Australia. I am disgusted and I am dismayed. Nearly a dozen constituents within my electorate have lost their life savings to a scam investment scheme sold to them by Sterling First. These vulnerable people have lost up to $200,000 each through being sold dodgy financial products by dodgy con artists. The Western Australian state government is currently looking at the state based issues surrounding this murky scheme. I am now calling on the federal government to raise the issue with the Australian Securities and Investments Commission as a matter of extreme urgency. It is disturbing to hear that the state government, as well as some of the victims of this scheme, notified ASIC of their concerns surrounding the issues quite some time ago, yet ASIC has clearly failed to act upon this information as the company has only recently gone into administration.

One can only wonder how many more people across Western Australia might have been taken advantage of by these white collar crims, the Sterling First group, had they not gone into administration. In fact, some victims in my electorate signed onto this deal as late as January this year. Members on both sides of this House need to realise that we need to work together to stop these dodgy scams rather than keep on handballing these issues to different jurisdictions.

Last Friday dozens of concerned people, dozens of people who were ripped off by the scheme, held a meeting in Mandurah calling on the federal government to act. I join them in calling on the federal government to stop dodgy schemes.

Parliamentary Friends of Diabetes

Mr RAMSEY (Grey—Government Whip) (16:40): Last parliament, along with the member for Moreton, I chaired the Parliamentary Friends of Diabetes. The Parliamentary Friends of Diabetes, which we've renamed the parliamentary enemies of diabetes, was formed in 2002 by Judi Moylan, who was the member for Pearce at the time and who has remained a strong advocate for diabetes since she left this place. We are joined in forming the new Parliamentary Friend of Diabetes by the members for Adelaide, McMahon, Leichhardt, McEwen, Hunter, Boothby, Bowman, Makin, Calwell, Forrest, Bennelong, Robertson, Oxley, Flynn, Lyons and Reid and by Senators Siewert, from Western Australia; Antic, from South Australia; Askew, from Tasmanian; Farrell, from South Australia and Senator Watt from Queensland. I thank those members for their interest and concern in diabetes.

We've had great success, the Enemies of Diabetes, since it was formed right back in 2002. Even in the last parliament we had the great new cabinet funding to support clinical trials and continuous glucose monitors.

I look forward to keeping on working with the diabetes family in Australia to bring about a continually better outcome than they have had in the past. There's a lot of new medical science around the corner that we are getting money out of our Medical Research Future Fund for. It's a great group to work with. They are a great community out there and I wish them all well.

Ryan Electorate: WANTZ Committee

Mr SIMMONDS (Ryan) (16:42): I rise to speak about the charitable efforts of my constituent Dr Joanna Tait and the WANTZ Committee. This is a fundraising committee who have sought no recognition, but I've taken it
upon myself to recognise them in this place because of the outstanding work they do. The fundraising committee was formed in 2003 from likeminded friends to provide some very practical assistance to our community.

Each year they choose a charity to support and raise funds for nominated equipment. They have raised over $2 million from 2003, their formation, to 2018. What's special about this fundraising committee is it is a committed group of local residents and 100 per cent of all the funds raised go directly to the charity that they have nominated. They take no wages and they cover the cost themselves of operating their activities.

Each year the highlight of their fundraising activities is their annual fundraising dinner. I was there last year at Customs House. It was a very, very enjoyable night. This year it is on the 24 August and they are supporting the Hear and Say centre. This is a perfect example of what I spoke about in my maiden speech of residents who are rolling up their sleeves for their community and giving back. I urge Ryan residents to support their charitable efforts. Again, I congratulate Joanna Tait and the whole WANTZ Committee for their selfless fundraising efforts.

**Brand Electorate**

**Ms MADELEINE KING** (Brand) (16:43): I'm really pleased to rise here today to say thank you to the people of Rockingham and Kwinana for re-electing me as the member for Brand in the recent election. The areas of Rockingham and Kwinana have been a vital part of the Western Australia economy for many years. The industrial zone in Kwinana drives the economy of Western Australia—ever since BP moved there in 1956, where my father was one of the first employees at the BP refinery.

My family have been in that district for a long time, since the fifties. I went to school there. I'm so pleased to be able to represent the schools, the people who go to the schools—the same schools that I went to. These include Safety Bay Primary School, Safety Bay Senior High School and Rockingham Beach Primary School. More widely than that. I know the member for Curtin in her first speech today mentioned the wonderful beaches of Cottesloe. I wouldn't want to accuse my sister-in-law of misleading the House, but it's fair to say that the beaches of Brand in Rockingham—say, Warnbro Beach, Safety Bay—are much nicer than the somewhat posher beaches of Cottesloe. Nonetheless, I have visited Cottesloe—of course I don't do that so often anymore, given I believe Shoalwater Bay beach is much better. But I'm sure there'll be a lot of toing and froing between Western Australian members as we continue to debate the best beaches of Western Australia. More importantly, can I thank all those in Rockingham and Kwinana who supported me in my election campaign—my branch members, my friends in the district and, of course, my family. Thank you very much for your support.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Gillespie):** In accordance with standing order 43, the time for statements by members has concluded.

**MOTIONS**

**National Disability Insurance Scheme: Early Childhood Early Intervention Approach**

**Mr CRAIG KELLY** (Hughes) (16:45): I move:

That this House:

(1) notes the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI) approach is an evidence-based, best practice approach to early childhood intervention for children aged zero to six years with developmental delay or disability, and there have been some challenges with rolling out the ECEI approach;

(2) welcomes the Government's announcement to reduce delays and backlogs in delivering early childhood early intervention supports through the NDIS; and

(3) notes that:

(a) a six-month recovery plan to be implemented by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) will include working with ECEI partners to secure additional resources to ensure children are able to receive early childhood supports in a more timely manner;

(b) the NDIA will provide a standardised interim six-month plan for children who have been found eligible for the NDIS, but who are experiencing significant waiting periods for a plan (that is, where the period between an access decision and getting a plan is greater than 50 days) and that these interim plans will be replaced by a full NDIS plan no later than six months after being issued;

(c) new participants who are not categorised as complex and who are not transferring from an existing Commonwealth, state or territory disability program will be given a standardised interim plan for $10,000;

(d) participants who are transferring from an existing Commonwealth, state or territory disability program, their interim NDIS plan and funding package will reflect their existing support levels, however, if that amount is lower than $10,000 they will also receive the $10,000 standardised interim plan for up to six months; and

(e) participants with complex support needs, will immediately be streamed to an NDIA early childhood specialist to develop their plan and appropriate funding package.
The Early Childhood Early Intervention approach, which is called the ECEI approach, is part of our National Disability Insurance Scheme. It supports children from birth to six years of age who have a developmental delay or a disability, as well as their families and carers. I emphasise family and carers, because it's very important that we give them support as well. Often the best way that we can help Australians with disabilities is to make sure we are supporting their families and their carers, because they are, ultimately, the ones who give people with disabilities the most support.

The NDIS is engaged with early childhood partners around Australia to deliver this approach, as the early childhood partners are experienced in providing early childhood intervention. However, we must be honest: there have been some challenges rolling it out. If we are going to fix things in this parliament, we have to admit where there are problems, so we can tackle them. The National Disability Insurance Scheme is probably one of the largest projects undertaken by governments in our nation. We want to give those with disabilities—which they are, unfortunately, either born with or which they have acquired through some injury or catastrophic event—the support that they deserve. This is a massive scheme. There's a lot involved in it, and there are teething problems. As the government, we admit that. But we also say 'We're going to get those problems fixed. We acknowledge them, and we're going to get them fixed.'

Therefore, this motion welcomes the government announcement to reduce delays and backlogs in delivering the Early Childhood Early Intervention supports to the National Disability Insurance Scheme. We note four specific things. Firstly, a six-month recovery plan, to be implemented by the NDIA, will include working with the Early Childhood Early Intervention partners to secure additional resources to ensure children are able to receive early childhood supports in a more timely manner.

Secondly, the NDIA will provide a standardised interim six-month plan for children who have been found eligible for the NDIS but who are experiencing significant waiting periods for the plan—that is, where the period between an access decision and getting a plan is greater than 50 days. These interim plans will be replaced by a full NDIS plan no later than six months after being issued. We do that because we have to also understand that every single child is different and, therefore, every single plan has to be individualised.

Thirdly, new participants who are not categorised as complex and who are not transferring from an existing Commonwealth, state or territory disability program will be given a standardised interim plan for $10,000.

Fourthly, for participants who are transferring from an existing Commonwealth state or territory disability program, their interim NDIS plan and funding package will reflect their existing support levels. However, if the amount is lower than the $10,000, they will also receive the $10,000 standardised interim plan for up to six months.

We've looked at this and we've acted. We understand participants with complex support needs. We want to make sure that they will be immediately streamed to an NDIA early childhood specialist to develop the plan and make sure that they receive appropriate funding.

The first way to fix the problem is to acknowledge it exists. Many of my constituents have come to me with issues with their NDIS plans and delays. We acknowledge their concerns. We acknowledge that more work has to be done. This is an example of the coalition getting on and doing the job. But we must remember that, ultimately, the only way we can continue to finance this into the future is if we have a strong and robust economy that can underwrite the NDIS plans and can underwrite what we are doing in early childhood early intervention. We can have all these programs, but unless we have a strong, vibrant economy we simply cannot have these programs in our nation. That is why I commend this motion to the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Gillespie): Is there a seconder for the motion?

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

Mr DICK (Oxley) (16:51): There's no way I'd want to second this motion. Once again, we're living in this Orwellian world where the government somehow thinks it should be congratulated for the mess that it's created with the NDIS. The member who spoke before me, the member for Hughes, wanted a pat on the back for this interim plan—he is leaving the chamber now. This is how the plan was welcomed by the sector:

Disability advocates say the Morrison government's new plan to reduce lengthy delays in the national disability insurance scheme should only be a stopgap measure.

So for all the fanfare and all the carry-on by this minister, we are seeing advocates—the people who represent people with disability—say it's a stopgap measure. You bet it is. We would not be congratulating the government for the mess that they have created in rolling out the NDIS.

There is no doubt that the NDIS was a landmark initiative for this country. It was developed and introduced by a Labor government. Sadly, it's been neglected by three successive coalition governments who have, among other
things, played political football with NDIA funding; placed on it a stifling staff cap, restricting the ability of the NDIS to service Australians; and, most recently, underspent on the NDIS claiming 'a lack of demand'.

The member for Hughes has good intentions in putting forward this motion, but he said, in his own words: 'There are teething problems. There have been some challenges with the roll out.' Is he kidding? Through you, Mr Deputy Speaker, are you kidding me? He should take a good look at the government he is a member of, because that's exactly where the problem lies. There is no shortage of residents in my community telling me on a weekly basis just how much of a debacle the NDIS has become under this government, and the people who suffer the most are the people who need the most help.

A fortnight ago I sat on the couch in the living room of a mother whose son suffers from several disabilities and severe behavioural and learning challenges. Not long into the conversation, she broke down in tears at the frustration and challenges she has faced, trying desperately to get the help her son and her family needs. This is not good enough. I felt almost helpless as I listened to her heart-wrenching and gut-wrenching story about how much she loved both her sons but had struggled to find the help she needed through the NDIS. She told me of the endless paperwork trails, the lack of accountability and transparency and the constant changing of the people she had to talk to just to find the simplest of answers. In the days following, she sent me a list of other problems she'd encountered, including funding being cut without any explanation to families, portals not showing breakdowns of funding allocations and no explanation of how the funds were calculated, and a severe lack of training for NDIS staff to understand her situation and her needs.

Just last week, my office received a visit from two other local residents who shared similar experiences with the NDIS. Their feedback included the exploitation by companies and service providers who dramatically increased prices to people on NDIS plans and a lack of transparency in understanding the practices and procedures of the NDIS to help their disabled sons. This sort of feedback is being received by every single member of parliament. I have no doubt that all members—everyone—on this side and the government side are hearing this. I welcome the announcement by the government and the minister of a 'stopgap' plan to resolve delays and backlogs for children with disability in accessing ECEI, or Early Childhood Early Intervention, support through the NDIS, but this is too little too late. Reports say that on average it currently takes 127 days for a child to receive a plan. That is more than four months. Most parents don't have four months to wait for the support they need. Once again, it is left to Labor to show the leadership required in this space. That is why the first thing I did upon being re-elected as the member for Oxley was to hold an NDIS feedback forum with the newly appointed shadow minister, the honourable Bill Shorten, to hear residents firsthand about what the concerns are. We could have held this forum over several days, so much was the feedback from residents. Following this, I wrote to the member for Fadden, the minister responsible for the NDIS, seeking a meeting to table this feedback and work in constructive ways to solve the many problems I had. But I have not had one response from the minister. If a member of parliament is writing to the minister responsible and they're ignored, what on earth is happening out in the sector? It is not good enough. I want to meet with the minister and put those concerns directly. If they want to fob me off to a departmental officer or even a ministerial staff member, I'll take anything. I know the minister's office will be listening to this speech today. Listen clearly: people want to meet with your office to ring the alarm bells and raise the concerns. Pick up the phone and start listening to people. It's not good enough that when members of parliament raise these issues they're completely and utterly ignored by this government.

Mr ANDREWS (Menzies) (16:56): I'm pleased to be able to second the motion from the honourable member for Hughes and say some words in support of it this afternoon. The reality, as we all know, is that the National Disability Insurance Scheme is a work in progress. About half the total number of expected participants are on the scheme. That means that there's going to be a huge ramp up in terms of participation over the next 12 to 18 months. There are challenges that we all recognise in relation to this. I say this from the perspective of having chaired the Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme in the last parliament—I want to refer to one of those reports in a moment—but also of having had the privilege of being elected to chair that committee in this current parliament. I mention the committee because since the inception of that committee it has worked in a bipartisan manner. In the last parliament, all of the recommendations that came forward from the committee came forward with the support of all the members of the committee, regardless of their political background in this place. I pay tribute to the deputy chair in the last parliament, Senator Alex Gallacher, the Labor senator from South Australia, and other members, including the member for Fairfax, for example, the former member for Jagajaga, Senator Siewert and Senator Carol Brown, who will take over as the deputy chair in this current parliament. I mention them across the political divide because that's an indication of the extent to which, when a committee is sat down and looks at the challenges involved with the National Disability Insurance Scheme and the setting up and operation of the agency, we've been able to work in a very constructive and bipartisan manner.
I mention that because one of the first reports in the last parliament, tabled in December 2017, dealt with the very topic which the honourable member for Hughes has brought before the chamber today, namely the question of early intervention and early childhood services. It was clear that there was work to be done in that regard, and I commend the government's announcement in relation to the matters which the honourable member for Hughes has mentioned in this place today. The committee made some 20 recommendations in that report, all of which were accepted by the government and some of which we see in the matters brought before the chamber by the member for Hughes being implemented by the government in relation to the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

We can certainly all agree on one thing: early intervention is significant, early intervention is critical, early intervention works. In that context, prevention is always better than having to deal with the consequences of failing to put prevention measures in place. When we're dealing with children, the earlier that those intervention measures can be put into place, the more likely is a successful outcome. You sir, Mr Deputy Speaker Gillespie, would know that from your professional experience in a past life, a different life before coming to this place. We all know that intervention is important and that prevention is important. Often it is the poor cousin in terms of the services which are provided, but where we can intervene from a very early age, that have important consequences. Take, for example, a child with hearing loss: the sooner services can be provided for that child with hearing loss then the more likely that that child is going to be able to function in their childhood, in their adolescence and, indeed, in their adult life in a way which is commensurate with anybody else within the society in which we live.

The measures which have been announced of putting additional resources into early childhood supports, of funding this with interim plans so that early intervention can take place from the very earliest time is very important in the matters which are before the parliament at the moment in this motion and which were examined in some detail by the parliamentary committee.

I won't go through in the time available all the recommendations, which were made in a bipartisan manner in relation to this subject by the parliamentary committee, but we're all pleased that they were adopted in principle by the government and we see in the interventions by the government to improve the policy now to ensure that the National Disability Insurance Scheme works in a way which we want it for. There is enormous goodwill for the scheme. It is a work in progress. There are still a great number of challenges to meet, but if we can work together in the way in which the committee has, and the government has done in this announcement, then we can bring about a better outcome for people with disability in Australia.

Ms McBride (Dobell) (17:01): The only response to the motion of the member for Hughes is that this government is failing children and families through its maladministration of the NDIS. It is about time this government took proper responsibility for the distress and anguish it is causing parent carers. The early childhood intervention approach described in the motion doesn't resemble in any way, shape or form the experience of parent carers in communities across Australia. The NDIS continues to be one of the top reasons families seek out assistance, and I know this is the case in electorate offices across the country. Many of those crying out for help are the parent carers of young children, who, thanks to this government's NDIS failure, are struggling to secure the support their child needs now. Let's just recount this government's NDIS failures to date: underfunding the NDIS to the tune of $1.6 billion to prop up their own budget position; refusing to lift a staffing cap that is causing delays and barriers to access; and marginalising those with disability who should be at the centre of the NDIS.

Today I will share the experience of one family in my electorate on the Central Coast of New South Wales. This case is yet to be resolved. I'm hopeful that these new measures will go some way to help Sophie and her parents, but they are not optimistic. Sam Stasinowsky has decided to speak out in the hope that sharing her story will help others. Three years ago, her daughter Sophie was born with complex congenital heart disease requiring open heart surgery. Complications resulted in Sophie's vocal cords being paralysed, causing issues with feeding, breathing, speech and sleeping, and endocarditis, a bacterial infection in her heart. In February this year, Sophie was diagnosed with global development delay and, more recently, with autism and an intellectual disability. Sophie's preschool and speech therapist encouraged her mum to call the NDIA to ask for an access request form so she could be assessed for the NDIS. Sophie's mum said she spent hours on the phone, but NDIA staff refused to provide the access request form. She left her details with a service provider, who told her they had a 12-week waiting list for the access request form. In July, she found out that no-one had even looked at her application. The NDIA contact centre said she would have to wait two more months to be eligible to make a complaint. Sam says:

We had spent all our savings and everything we could spare on reports and therapies. We had run out of money and had to cancel Sophie's speech therapy and preschool days.

This was when Sam, in frustration and despair, came to seek my help. Sam's worried that many carers unable to pay for the therapy sessions and reports required to even apply for the NDIS will not get access to the early intervention they desperately need. Many others have to give up work to care for their loved ones while waiting for NDIS plans and services.
Sam says it is important for people to know how hard it is. She said:

The part that has been hugely frustrating is that they didn't give me the correct information or explain the steps clearly when I first called in February. Now I have received the official brochure and the first step in it says "call the NDIA to complete an access request form over the phone" but, back in February, I called two centres and both told me "No".

Last week, Sam received notice from the NDIA that Sophie would receive some basic funding while her full plan was being assessed. That's the good news, but, unfortunately, this family is still being made to jump through hoops due to the maladministration of the NDIS. Sophie's parents decided to apply for equipment that her preschool had recommended for use at home. The NDIA said they needed an occupational therapist report before they could even assess her need for the equipment. The OT report cost another $170, and then the NDIA said no to everything. This young family spent another $170 they could not afford only to be told no once again. They will review the decision, but that will take more time and resources that they don't have.

My question to this government is: what happens to people who can't scrape the money together to pay for the reports and assessments that the NDIA is requiring? What happens to children who don't have someone to speak up for them? Who will advocate for them when the system says no? Even with the early intervention measures outlined, the government's handling of the NDIS is punishing parent carers and will continue to do so until the government addresses the delays and backlogs in the NDIS; lifts the staffing cap, which is causing delays in accessing urgent services; ensures there are enough qualified workers in the sector so that people get the support and care from people well trained to be able to step them through the process; fixes the plagued IT system with its known problems; and appoints a new CEO who has knowledge or lived experience of disability.

This is urgent for Sophie, for Sam and for children like them across Australia and it must be fixed.

Mr FALINSKI (Mackellar) (17:06): It is always distressing to hear stories of people who had bad experiences with the NDIS or Centrelink, especially when it involves a child. The contribution of the member for Dobell to this debate was very moving and, if there is anything that I could do to assist that family, I would be more than willing to try. I don't know that I would succeed, but what has happened to them is not good enough.

Having said that: the people working at the NDIS are doing the best they can. This is an audacious program and an audacious system that we have set up. It was the idea of those opposite and came out of a Productivity Commission report, but what it is trying to achieve is a national scheme that looks after some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our society, whose vulnerabilities and disadvantage are specific to each case. This was one of the bravest things that any federal government has attempted to do, and I am proud of the efforts of this government, whether it be under the Abbott prime ministership or the Turnbull prime ministership, to bring the scheme into being. It was announced by those opposite, but it has fallen to those on this side to bring it about.

In that regard, I congratulate the member for Hughes and the member for Menzies for their contribution to this debate. I also wish to note the contribution of the member for Oxley, who has always given his full-throated support advocacy to those he represents; and the member for Dobell, who brought so much passion and a personal story to this chamber. No doubt the member for Lalor will later give us her usual self-effacing contribution to this debate, and we look forward to that, as is appropriate.

Today the member for Higgins gave her first speech in the main chamber. She is a paediatrician. She has seen some of the hardest and toughest cases that our society has to throw at any doctor. She made this point that stuck with me. As a doctor—I know that in a previous life you too were a doctor and I am sure you share the sentiments—she never wanted to stand at the bottom of the cliff, waiting for the bodies to arrive. She would much prefer to be at the top of the cliff, stopping them from falling off. And I think that's what the government's program in early childhood intervention is all about. It's about keeping people away from the edge. This approach is evidence based. It's not new. The analogy is the best I have heard, but the approach is evidence based and not new. It is best practice. It is the best-practice approach to early childhood intervention for children aged zero to six years with development delay or disability. The member for Hughes and the member for Menzies both spoke at length about the contribution that any program can make when they reach someone before the problem escalates. The member for Menzies pointed to someone whose hearing may be impaired and the member for Dobell spoke of the potential that any program can make when they reach someone before the problem escalates.

There have been some challenges—there is no doubt about that—and many members in this chamber have spoken of them. There have been some challenges with rolling out the ECEI approach. In some areas, there have been longer than ideal wait times for children. These wait times are obviously unacceptable. We as a government have made it a clear priority to turn this situation around, and it is being turned around. We have started work on a six-month recovery plan, announced by the minister on 26 June, with key initiatives, including working with partners to secure additional resources to ensure children are able to receive early childhood supports in a timelier
manner. For children who are experiencing significant waiting periods for a plan—that is, where the period between an access decision and getting a plan is greater than 50 days—the NDIA will provide a standard interim plan for six months. These initiatives are what will make this better.

Ms RYAN (Lalor—Opposition Whip) (17:11): It’s not often that I pay homage to the member for Hughes, but today I rise to support the member for Hughes and to thank him for his advocacy in this particular space around early childhood education intervention and its relationship with the NDIS. The intervention, so to speak, is important, and I welcome the new approach. I say that, however, having seen over the last eight months, in the last area for the NDIA rollout in Victoria, that lessons learned five years ago were not addressed and that in the west of Melbourne, we have had to live the same experience as those who have gone before us in this rollout. This is particularly upsetting for me as an educator when I think about those children who have been getting intervention through state based programs who find themselves approaching school and find that everything is going to be ripped away from them and their families at the most important point—when they're accessing formal education in our school system.

So, as much as I welcome this new approach, it would be lax of me not to point out that this government is, to say the least, tardy. To say what I really think: they are absolutely cynical in their approach to the NDIS and in their lack of care, or their carelessness, about the intervention for our youngest Australians who are living with a disability and trying to transition into our education system. I say that because—and you've heard the stories—we're all living with the inconsistency of the rollout. We're all living with the inconsistency in the way people are being treated. To give you an example from my electorate, I sat recently with a family of an adult male who suffered a stroke. He is paralysed down one side and has major cognitive issues, obviously. Rehabilitation got him to a certain point. That has plateaued and is likely to degrade over time. He has been rejected on his NDIS claim. Even though his report clearly stated that there were short-term memory issues, it was rejected on the basis that he didn't answer a telephone call to his mobile phone. I sat with another family who have a child with cerebral palsy whose paperwork clearly says the child is non-verbal who were asked to present at the office. The man with the stroke was never asked to present—if he had been, people would have been able to see his incapacity—but the child with cerebral palsy, who is wheelchair-bound and non-verbal, is asked to present so that they can hear what she's got to say about her situation. This is appalling, and it is incumbent on this government to get their mind in this game and get this fixed.

In terms of the early childhood intervention, I met earlier this year with Noah's Ark. This is an independent organisation providing early childhood intervention services to children with disabilities, and other additional needs, and to their families and carers. It's the largest early childhood intervention service in Victoria, operating from 19 centres across metropolitan and regional Victoria. To say that they were enraged by the fact that the western suburbs of Melbourne were faced with exactly the replicated problems that they had seen across the rest of the state is putting it mildly.

I was pleased to be able to assist in that process to ensure that the solutions that have been found for other parts of the country were again found for the western suburbs of Melbourne. But we shouldn't have had to take that action. The lessons should have been learnt. If this area had had a minister with their mind on the job and across the detail, we would not be seeing this issue after issue after replicated time and time again, as we try and implement what can only be described as a life-changing policy.

This government has been careless. This government has been inconsistent. This government has been cynical. It has held the NDIS to ransom over budgetary processes. It has underfunded things. But worse than all of that, it has not allowed the NDIA rollout to deliver to the people in our communities to whom it was promised—promised by the former Prime Minister Julia Gillard, promised by the member for Maribyrnong and promised by the former member for Jagajaga. This government needs to get on and deliver it.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Gillespie): 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

Vision Australia Radio Funding

Ms CHESTERS (Bendigo) (17:16): I move:

(1) notes that Vision Australia's radio broadcast is at risk of ending at the end of 2019 due to a lack of funding;
(2) acknowledges that:
(a) this organisation is receiving some Government funding, but more is needed to cover running costs; and
This is a very important motion. I welcome it being debated today. I welcome the government members and my colleagues who will be contributing to this particular debate and this motion.

The motion speaks for itself. It notes quite clearly that the Vision Australia broadcast is at risk of ending their service at the end of the year due to a lack of funding. This has been brought about because of the NDIS. The previous debate was about the NDIS. We've heard speeches in the parliament today in the 90 second statements about the NDIS. This is another casualty if the federal government does not increase its funding for Vision Australia Radio.

Who are they? They have about 700,000 listeners across Australia. They have 800 volunteers who help deliver local content through 10 stations, based in Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth and regional Victoria, including my own hometown of Bendigo. This service is vital to people who are vision impaired.

In this motion we also recognise that the changes to the NDIS have made it difficult for this organisation to go forward. Yes, they receive federal government funding. They receive a grant from the government from the communications department to help run the service but it is drastically short.

The rollout of the NDIS has stopped the block grants that they used to receive through various funding sources, whether they be state based or federally based.

There isn't the capacity under the NDIS for individuals to subscribe to Vision Australia to keep part of their package to help support this project going forward. I am pretty sure that most Australians would agree that they weren't aware that one of the unintended consequences of the rollout of the NDIS would see services like Vision Australia cease.

This is an opportunity for the government to step in. It is an opportunity for the government to increase funding to Vision Australia, to this vital service, to ensure that it keeps going.

I acknowledge that we want the states to have a role to play. It's also an opportunity for the government to engage state governments in how they can help support this radio service going forward. Let's not let it be another casualty of the NDIS. Let's fix this by increasing its funding.

Vision Australia have reached out to me and to many here to bring us into the studios to meet the volunteers and to talk to their listeners. It wasn't the first time that I have actually spoken to the listeners through Vision Australia Radio. Having had the opportunity a number of times over the years, I'm always struck by the professionalism and the pride of the volunteers and the fact that they take the time to read out local stories. It is so critical that people in regional areas get to engage with their local stories.

At about one o'clock every day they read out local articles, snippets from the Bendigo Advertiser, helping people who are vision impaired who haven't been able to read the paper that day keep up to date with what's happening. They are also quite often involved in broadcasting or talking about local events to make sure people know what's happening in their town. This is a vital service that helps people with a vision impairment stay connected and stay engaged.

The 800 volunteers, including the 50 in my electorate, really value what they do. This service is reliant upon volunteers. About 15 hours a week are produced locally in Bendigo, and it's about the same for all regional areas. This is the local content. But volunteers alone cannot keep this service going, and Vision Australia have outlined where they need the extra funding. They need extra funding to cover broadcasting infrastructure and network costs. They need extra funding for leasing, building utilities and maintenance. They need extra funding for employee costs. These are the basics that they need to keep the service going.

This is a vital service, and I'm hoping that by bringing this motion to the parliament today to highlight the challenges that they have we can see bipartisanship on this issue. I've reached out to the ministers, both the Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts and the Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme, and encouraged them to meet with Vision Australia and to find the funding to fix this gap. I welcome all the contributions that are being made today to show our support for the Vision Australia Radio service.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Gillespie): Is there a seconder for the motion?
Mr BROADBENT (Monash) (17:22): I second the motion. I seconded the motion and support the motion because this is a very important issue for regional Australia, and I commend the member for Bendigo for drawing this to the attention of the parliament. I've been blessed by having a centre for vision impaired persons for many, many, many years in the association of the centre for disability in Pindari, which has supplied the exact services the member for Bendigo has just described—volunteers reading local news and local events on the radio, which is very important.

I too, along with my colleague the member for Narracan, Gary Blackwood MLA, met with Vision Australia the other day on their roadshow, which would have gone to Bendigo, to Ballarat, to Gippsland and across the southern states, where Vision Australia provide one of their many services. This radio service to vision impaired people is a service that doesn't only go to the 7,000 people that the member for Bendigo mentioned. There's a whole lot of cheats out there who are fully vision aware, who have perfect sight, but listen to this radio program to get the local news and to get local events to know what's going on. So, yes, we have 7,000 people listening, but it affects far more than 7,000 people because it affects the families around the 7,000 vision impaired people. We're talking about thousands and thousands of people who benefit from Vision Australia Radio.

A long time ago in this parliament, before the member for Bendigo was here, there was a member called the member for McMillan, which is an electorate that no longer exists. He stood up and said, 'When you introduce the NDIS—having a long background in disability services and chairing one of these organisations for more than 10 years—there are going to be problems.' And everybody said: 'No, there won't be. We'll sail through. There won't be any problems.' Well, the problems are now storming home to meet whoever's in power—whoever's in government. We have found there are going to be difficulties bedding down the NDIS. No-one's complaining about the price. No-one's trying to withdraw funding that is there and available from families. We're trying to deliver that. So why are we here going on about Vision Australia? Why does Lisa Chesters have to come in here and say, 'We've got a problem?' We have got a problem.

The question is: when the states handed over all responsibility for the NDIS to the federal government, did they hand over the money for the block grants, or did that disappear in the ether? I don't know. If I knew that, I'd be able to say, 'Come on, Daniel Andrews, come on, state premiers—stump up.' But I don't know whether that was a calculation in the equation. If I knew, I could say. I said to my parliamentary colleague Gary Blackwood MLA, the member for Narracan, 'This used to be your problem.' He said, 'Now it's yours.' Which is true. The federal government is taking responsibility for the NDIS, and vision impaired people come under the NDIS. There are parts of the NDIS where, very clearly, we have a responsibility to vision impaired people—there is no doubt. That service has been provided, but it's a different service to what was happening before, because even the states knew that there had to be a block grant component. In the NDIS, to my knowledge, there is no block grant component.

So, we need a meeting between the communications department, NDIS and the states. Well, the states are saying: 'No. You got it. It's yours. You play the ball.' My problem is I don't want the $700,000 shortfall to interrupt at any stage the services that Vision Australia are supplying. I put to them: 'Are you top-heavy? Are you spending in areas you shouldn't be spending? Do you need to cut costs yourselves?' I think they said, 'That's a reasonable question, and we're looking at ourselves.' But the bottom line is that to supply the radio service they're going to need nearly another three-quarters of a million dollars. That used to come in block grants. There is no facility in NDIS for that block grant to come. So, we have a problem. We will address that.

The member for Bendigo has written to both ministers, asking them to meet with Vision Australia. I've put out that call to those ministers too: meet with Vision Australia. I said, 'After you've had the meetings, you come back to Lisa Chesters and Russell Broadbent and others. Talk to them and tell them what happened at the meeting,' and then we'll look at the issue once again.

Mr GORMAN (Perth) (17:27): My great-grandfather Arthur Stidwell lived in Gosnells. He caught the train to the Perth train station every day from Monday and Friday. He would then get on the Midland Line and go to Maylands for work. He was a huge fan of Ben Chifley, and he was completely blind. My grandmother Joan would read the newspaper to him every single morning. She was the service—in his home, for him—that now thousands and thousands of Australians get to have the privilege of through Vision Australia Radio.

My grandmother Joan wrote in her family history a bit more about his life working at the Maylands blind institute, which sits in the heart of the Perth electorate. She said, 'Dad was a good provider for his family, travelling each and every day from Gosnells to Maylands to work at the blind institute. He could have stayed home and lived on the invalid pension, but he chose to work as it meant more money for his family. He was a hair drafter. That means that he used to pull hanks of horse hair from the manes and tails of horses through beds of wicked looking steel spikes with needle sharp points to tease it out, later curling and cleaning it by different methods, including immersing it in boiling water.'
The Mainlands blind institute no longer exists in its current form. It is now home to a beautiful visual art—the WA ballet.

So much else has changed since Arthur Stidwell worked in Maylands. Employment opportunities for those with disability have increased. The disability support pension is far more adequate, although improvement could always be made. We have the National Disability Insurance Scheme and our education system is far more integrated. So, to go backwards by closing a service like Vision Australia would be a small cut with a very, very big impact. We have spoken a lot in this place recently about freedom of the press. That also implies that people have proper access to the press—that they can actually engage with the reporting on their government, their community, their nation.

Others have already done this, but I think it's important to go through some of the history of Vision Australia's radio service. It started as Radio for the Print Handicapped in the 1970s. It was first funded by the Fraser Liberal government—what a great achievement of the Fraser Liberal government it was to fund that service—in 1981, which was International Year of Disabled Persons. They handed over the cheque and this service started to go national. In 1988 it was granted an AM licence and free use of Commonwealth broadcasting facilities. The regional stations, which the member for Bendigo and others have highlighted, started in 1997, 22 years ago. The radio service is, in fact, one of those great examples of the power of government and community working together to create something for very little cost but with a huge impact for those who rely on it. If Vision Australia Radio 990AM were to close in Perth, people would lose access to Bible readings and media, including The West Australian and the stories of The Australian. They wouldn't know what Newspoll was today if they relied on this radio service as their primary source of news. The Australian Financial Review would not be available to them. And this radio service also dives into more niche areas of media, including Crikey and The Conversation.

There were always going to be challenges transitioning to the National Disability Insurance Scheme, but, when we talked about those transition challenges, we imagined they were going to be big difficult challenges that would be hard to solve. Finding $700,000 to continue this service is not a big complex policy problem; it's something that the minister could resolve this evening. I'll never believe that the NDIS is truly fully funded if services like this are the sorts of services that start to close because we failed to transition from, admittedly, a system that had had its time to a system that will be far more adequate, although i

I commend the member for Bendigo for moving the motion and the member for Monash for seconding it. The member for Bendigo is a strong voice for people with disability and also a strong voice for people who work in disability services. The government should urgently resolve this policy challenge. There is no reason why Vision Australia's radio service should close. It provides a great service to my electorate of Perth and it's a great service for regional communities across Australia. Again, I commend the motion.

Mr LAMING (Bowman) (17:32): I'm delighted to be talking about the importance of Vision Australia's work. We've got many passionate colleagues here that are looking at a particular service provided by Vision Australia Radio and those who rely on that service. Before we consider how we fix a problem, we need to, as the member for Monash pointed out, understand what actually brought us to this point. What we've seen increasingly with the arrival of the NDIS is a scurrying, predominantly by state governments, to find ways to throw into the overall NDIS as many services as possible, as briefly related to disability as possible, as a way of making sure that half of them get funded by Canberra. And you can understand that the government would do that if it possibly could.

The second question is to look at the direction of Vision Australia and whether they're the only group that can provide this service or whether there can be support through normal channels, like community radio and other services that should be looking after those who have poor vision. In this parliament we've got the Parliamentary Friends Group for Eye Health and Vision Care, and I really encourage every one of my colleagues to come along and support what are some of the largest events held in this building by a friendship group—that is, eye health and vision care. Enough of that advertisement!

If we're going to be investing more money—the extra dollar—into health care, the question is going to be, at the margins: where is it best spent? If we're going to step back and take a health lens to this, the question really will be: is the money best spent in radio by Vision Australia or in early intervention and picking up vision problems with kids? Giving some credit to the other side of the chamber, we know that the early preschool checks that were implemented by then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd had the problem that the healthy kids with worried mums turned up for the checks and we couldn't get the high-risk kids to be checked. The question with eye health, of course, is that the sooner we find a problem, like most forms of early intervention, the better the prospects are of success. Those who are most likely to benefit from the service are least likely to attend for a lot of reason that we collectively refer to as complex. But in New South Wales they actually did try to do this. Eight LHGs in metro Sydney and seven in regional New South Wales got together and said, 'Look, of the 90,000 children that are going to need some form of preschool screening for vision, let's set up a true universal vision test and just see how it goes,' and it's now famously known as the StEPS program. Let's remember that in the state-Commonwealth
arrangement that we have here one jurisdiction is stepping out and trialling what has not been found to be cost effective in the rest of the world. Sure, New Zealand has trialled it—New Zealand does a lot of stuff that we don't do—and some provinces in Canada do universal screening. But most of the rest of the world doesn't do it, so we need to have the answers.

What they found when they offered screening to everyone and used a universal approach was that with the 90,000 children they found that 80,000 of them managed to be screened. That is an impressive achievement. Of those that got a full assessment, around 9.7 per cent were referred on for second checks and 9.6 per cent had definitive pathology that needed follow-up. When they broke up that group of four-year-olds in New South Wales, we found that there were those with amblyopia, which of course is a cause of vision loss in one or both eyes; those that needed refraction; then a small category with other conditions.

When you're going to do any form of additional expenditure, I'm encouraging the mover of this motion to take a more global view. It is not just a matter of harassing a level of government about whether a service is delivered. Asking where the dollar is best spent is a really responsible element of evidence based policy that we should be adhering to. What we have seen in the Steps program is an assiduous effort to do it. They have identified how many cases were picked up, how many staff were required to do it. You work on what's called positive and negative predictive value. That's basically saying that if you have a positive finding using a clinician, how many of that proportion genuinely had the condition? In negative prediction you're looking at those who were cleared. This is an even more important point when talking about vision care. Among those whom you've examined and determined are clear of conditions, how many genuinely don't have a condition? Because, clearly, telling someone that they're well when they're not is a big concern.

The cost economics are fairly complex. We want states, like Victoria for instance, to make the case financially that this is where money in eye health and vision care should be spent. I trust that Vision Australia is coming to us and saying that they would like to continue the radio service. I would go straight back to Vision Australia and ask for the evidence.

**Ms ROWLAND** (Greenway) (17:37): I want to thank the member for Bendigo for bringing this very important motion to the parliament about Vision Australia Radio. This unique and long-running service is relied upon by people in our community who are blind, have low vision or a print disability, whether through age, a health condition or lack of literacy skills. Labor is deeply concerned about warnings from Vision Australia that it will be forced to close a number of its radio services at the end of the year as a result of a funding shortfall associated with changes that relate to the NDIS. Currently the Vision Australia Radio network incorporates 10 community radio stations across Australia. According to McNair survey figures from January this year, Vision Australia Radio has an average of 701,000 listeners per month. Each of these listeners tunes in for more than 10 hours a week on average. Without a solution, only four of the stations will remain, and the closures will severely reduce the ability of many thousands of people to access information in their preferred format.

Vision Australia Radio receives support, including government funding through the Community Broadcasting Foundation, sponsorship and philanthropic donations. What's more, the network survives thanks to the time and dedication of more than 800 volunteers who provide more than $2.4 million worth of value to the service. I acknowledge and thank them. Despite all this, Vision Australia Radio can no longer sustain its much needed community service given that shortfall. The listeners and volunteers deserve a government that will examine all funding options as well as options to alleviate operating costs. A number of Labor members will meet and have met with Vision Australia, and Labor has written to the communications minister and the minister with responsibility for the NDIS with these concerns. We call on the government to meet with Vision Australia as a matter of priority and explore all options to ensure that these vital radio services continue into the future.

Equality of access to media is a fundamental human right. Blind and low-vision Australians aren't getting a fair go. Already they miss out on audio description on TV, and now many of the Vision Australia Radio services they rely on face the threat of closure. Now in its third term, this government has failed to ensure delivery of audio description for blind and low-vision Australians on free-to-air television. Audio description is an additional feature that describes the visual elements happening on screen that sighted people take for granted. Australia is the only English-speaking country in the OECD yet to provide TV audio description. This is shameful.

Labor is a longstanding supporter of equality of access to media. In 2010 we initiated the investigation into access to electronic media for the hearing and vision impaired. In 2012 we legislated for captioning to improve access to TV for deaf and hearing impaired Australians and funded a 13-week trial of audio description on the ABC. In 2019 Labor took a policy to implement audio description to the federal election. Meanwhile, this government has delivered nothing other than a further trial of audio description and a report that they have sat on since 2017. It is now well overdue for this government to act when it comes to ensuring TV services in Australia are accessible via audio description. For six years the engagement of this government on disability issues in the
communications portfolio has been disappointing. On all the evidence, their approach seems to lack a plan to make communications more accessible. That's after six years in government.

The National Relay Service is another case in point. The NRS is an essential service which enables Australians who are deaf, hearing impaired or speech impaired to make and receive telephone calls—again, something the overwhelming majority of Australians and we in this room take for granted. It was founded on principles of access and equity, and it is important these principles are preserved. The recent NRS tender outcome poses many challenges as it will seemingly require NRS users to stop using CapTel and migrate to an alternative service. Last week I received a briefing on these challenges associated with this decision. One aspect that deeply concerned me was that the briefing did not adequately explain what users of the CapTel services themselves considered the impact of migrating services would be. The plan for engaging with the NRS community and providing transitional support for service migration remains unconvincing and unclear. Australians with a disability deserve better. They deserve better from this government. How the NRS transition is managed will be an important test.

In conclusion, I again want to thank the member for Bendigo, who is a passionate advocate for all people needing services to enable them to access the media and enable them to access communications that we take for granted. Again I pay tribute to the volunteers and all the supporters associated with Vision Australia.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr McVeigh): There being no further speakers, the debate is adjourned. The resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

IDCARE

Mr WALLACE (Fisher) (17:42): I move:

That this House:

(1) notes that:

(a) according to IDCARE, in 2019 they will provide support to over 50,000 Australians and New Zealanders who have experienced identity takeover, cybercrimes, scams and cyber bullying;

(b) in 2018-19, IDCARE's call centre provided approximately 53,400 hours of specialist identity and cyber security counselling support to Australian residents; and

(c) Australia is being targeted by international organised crime and we need a strong approach to educating people on how they can protect themselves;

(2) recognises the commitment by the Government to prioritise cyber security initiatives as part of the Cyber Security Strategy 2016 and the Action Plan that outlines the steps the Government will take to achieve Australia's cybersecurity goals by 2020; and

(3) acknowledges the need for continued investment, support and education to protect Australians from being victims of international organised crime.

Today I rise to talk about people like Bill and Jean from Queensland. I won't say their surname. They recently found themselves victims of a cybercrime. I'm going to struggle to speak about this issue without using unparliamentary language. After innocently clicking on a Facebook ad that promised to deliver long-term financial returns for as little as $250 up-front, Bill and Jean were scammed out of over $300,000 of their life savings and their home. The harsh reality is that Bill and Jean are just one of many. Australians are increasingly being exposed to identity, romance and telco crimes as offshore crooks get smarter and more cunning in their ability to catch us out.

IDCARE is a joint government industry initiated community support organisation which was launched by the coalition government in 2014 to support the community at the frontline of identity crime scams and cybercrimes. Under the leadership of the managing director, Professor David Lacey of the University of the Sunshine Coast, IDCARE operates a phone counselling service offering support and practical guidance to people who report cybercrimes and scams. Demand for IDCARE services has increased fourfold since 2015. By the end of 2019, they will have provided support to around 50,000 people, and they are on track in coming years to reach 100,000. On the Sunshine Coast alone, one in 330 people will contact IDCARE to seek assistance in dealing with a scam or cybercrime activity. Nationally, one in 800 people will call upon the services of IDCARE.

The ACCC's Targeting scams report found that, in 2018, Australians lost $489.7 million to scams, and I'd suggest that's conservative. This report also identified that scammers are increasingly using technology and applications like Facebook to increase their reach and efficiency to develop new scams. Instances of impersonations of the Australian Tax Office also rose by 900 per cent in 2018 through the use of robocalls. I've been a recipient many, many times, with the calls threatening warrants for my arrest if I do not act urgently by calling a particular number to clear my purported debt to the tax office. It makes my blood boil to see these crooks trying to stealing money from hardworking and, often, retired Australians. Scams, cybercrimes and identity crimes impact every Australian. Even my own dad nearly became a victim when he responded to a sales ad for a vintage
MG sports car. It was thanks to the suspicions of the bank teller that this was identified as a scam. As it turned out, the teller was right, and it was right that she sounded the alarm. Fortunately, financial institutions just like the one my dad uses are now taking a much more proactive approach to dealing with instances of cybercrime, which will go a long way towards intercepting dodgy sales transactions.

The Morrison government is making strong progress in this space and is committed to providing funding to establish education tools and programs so our community can protect itself against cybercrimes. On 29 April 2019, the Morrison government announced $156 million to protect older Australians, small businesses and national security assets from the risk of cyberattacks. This included investing $50 million to create a Cyber Security National Workforce Growth Program to invest in creating a cyber workforce; $40 million to establish a countering foreign cybercriminals capability within the Australian Cyber Security Centre, drawing on the expertise of the AFP to combat the increasingly sophisticated organised cybercrime gangs; and $26 million to support the Australian Cyber Security Centre. According to David Lacey, we need to talk about these crimes when they happen. David says, in his experience, many people feel ashamed and embarrassed that they have become a victim. These crooks are clever and cunning, and we need to do everything we can to stop them.

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

Mr Simmonds: I second the motion.

Mr WATTS (Gellibrand) (17:47): There are few better examples of how this tired, third-term Abbott-Turnbull-Morrison government has given up on governing than cybersecurity and the Cyber Security Strategy highlighted in this motion. Cybersecurity matters to our economic prosperity, our national security and the health of our democracy. In the modern world where all of the foundational systems of the society in which we live rely on digitised control systems and connectivity, the stakes couldn't be higher. Indeed, it sounds hyperbolic but Alistair MacGibbon, the former head of the government's Australian Cyber Security Centre, wasn't wrong when he described this area as the greatest existential threat we face as a society today'. Cyberweapons or internet weapons are now being used as tools of geostrategic influence every day, and we have seen exploits of international targets as widening as nuclear enrichment facilities, energy grids, oil companies, international banking systems, film studios, journalists and, most infamously, the democratic institutions of the United States. And Australia has not been immune from this.

The Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission estimates that the annual cost to Australia of cybercrime alone is over $1 billion in direct costs, with some estimates putting the real costs as high as one per cent of GDP a year—about $17 billion. We've seen breaches at the Bureau of Meteorology, the CSIRO and the ANU, as well as recent attempts at attacks on our major political parties and our parliament. It's a big deal. So what's this tired, third-term government doing to protect us from this significant national security threat? As the member for Fisher noted in this motion, in 2016, former Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull launched a four-year Cyber Security Strategy to much fanfare. I must admit, though, to being a bit surprised when I saw reference to the strategy on the Notice Paper today because, since Malcolm Turnbull's departure from this parliament, this strategy has been politically orphaned. Three years into the four-year plan, many of the initiatives in the 2016 Cyber Security Strategy have gone the way of Turnbull's ideas boon—they fizzled out through lack of willpower and commitment. Most obviously, the dedicated ministerial position for cyber security created in 2016 bit the dust in Prime Minister Morrison's first ministerial reshuffle, coming just weeks after significant changes to the internal structures of the government's cyber operations in 2018—namely, the establishment of the Australian Signals Directorate as a statutory authority, with the Australian Cyber Security Centre as part of it. This absence of political leadership of directly responsible political leadership was significant.

Cybersecurity is hard but, contrary to what the layman may assume, the most difficult challenge is not the technical challenge; it is actually the governance and cultural challenge. The most difficult bit is not the software or the hardware; it's the wetware—the people using it. The absence of ministerial engagement to drive the culture change necessary to underpin our cybersecurity has led to drift across the objectives of this strategy. To take a few examples, the strategy committed the government to an annual review of its progress to hold itself accountable for driving this cultural change. Three years into the four-year strategy, how many times has this occurred? Once.

One of the things this government is known for is failures of accountability, particularly when it comes to the Minister for Home Affairs' department. After the first review, a review which received decidedly mixed responses from stakeholders, we haven't seen another one since. We haven't seen any follow-up reports on the 2017 ASX cyber health report. We haven't seen any follow-ups to the Australian Cyber Security Centre's 2017 cyber threats report, despite the statement in the 2016 threats report, which said, 'The government is committed to continuing to publish material in this vein'.
What has been the result of this drift in leadership? While our agencies like the Australian Signals Directorate continue to do world-class work and Mike Burgess’s recent work in publicising the ASD’s mission and thinking has been very welcome, unfortunately, since the Minister for Home Affairs took responsibility for cybersecurity, he has applied the same diligence and attention to this space as he did to his failed leadership challenge. He has been more interested in splashy headlines and new and exciting offensive capabilities in the cyberspace than doing the basic boring fundamental work of keeping the Australian government secure and cyber resilient. In July this year, the ANAO noted that over the past five years it had undertaken performance audits of the cyber resilience of 14 government business enterprises and Commonwealth entities and found ‘only four entities, 29 per cent’ had complied with mandatory government requirements for information security, and that the regulatory framework had not driven sufficient improvement in cybersecurity. That is auditor speak for get your act together. It is time the Abbott-Turnbull-Morrison governments started giving cybersecurity the attention it deserves.

Mr PITTY (Hinkler) (17:53): Can I congratulate the member for Fisher for bringing this motion before the Federation Chamber. Before I get to the substance of the motion, I’d say to those opposite: I don’t understand this fascination with the member for Dickson. I mean, he is the Minister for Home Affairs. He has been around a long time. Perhaps you could wonder why it is you are on the opposite side and not on this side. However, in terms of this motion, if people ask whose side are we on, we are on the side of the Australian people. Whose side are we on? We are on the side that will stop scammers in this country. We are on the side that will stop online bullies. We are on the side of Australians just like Violet.

Violet Burley was approached by telephone from a man who allegedly called himself Michael. He told Violet she had a problem with her Telstra account and she needed to go to a store that sold Google Play gift cards and purchase four $50 cards. Violet, being a long-term Telstra customer, went and did that and returned to her home. Fortunately, she was intercepted before she could actually provide the numbers to this scammer. This is the type of scam which has been around for a while but happens constantly. In fact, one of my staff received a call not an hour ago for this exact scam here in the parliament. It is people like Violet who we are standing up for. It is for people like Violet that we must ensure, as things move in the cyberspace, the government moves with them in defensive positions.

On one night, Violet also received 42 calls from these scammers wanting the serial numbers from the gift cards, obviously so they could take the money and use it. That is 42 calls for a woman who is 86 years old. Clearly this is dreadful. Once again, I thank the member for Fisher for putting this PMB before the Federation Chamber. According to Scamwatch, more than $5 million was lost in Australia last year because of these scams. Clearly that is unacceptable.

I will go through some of the things we have done and provide advice for those who might be listening to or watching the broadcast, but we need to crackdown on online bullies. I have been public about this. I am on the record any number of times in terms of social media and I do not see the necessity for someone to have a pseudonym—a name which is not them. Our digital life has become one which is our life. I think that you should be identified online just as you are in reality, as when you set up a bank account. It should be exactly the same. Look at what online bullies are doing particularly to our youth.

The people in this place, members and senators, get used to this. It's an unfortunate position, but we get this sort of stuff all the time. I just thought I would grab a quick quote from the last 24 hours from an alleged Elizabeth Maher on Twitter to me: ‘My goodness, what a dog of a politician Keith Pitt is. He is a low-life piece of work’. As someone who turns 50 next month, I've been around the block a few times. I know that that is just nonsense and I'm not too concerned about what some coward might say online from their house without the courage to front up or make a phone call. But can you imagine the effect that it has on a young girl who might be 13 or 14, who is developing, who is going through a difficult time of life? Imagine what it does to their confidence and their levels of anxiety. I continue to see no purpose in having fake names online and I think we should act to do something about that.

In terms of action, we already have the Australian Cyber Security Centre. For those who are listening to the broadcast, you can go to the web site, which is www.cyber.gov.au. There is a wealth of information to help those Australians protect themselves from cybercriminals. Obviously, we have Scamwatch in place, which is a great resource. I am sure others in the room certainly get a lot of calls with regard to scams. This is, unfortunately, a regular and ongoing problem. The reason it's ongoing is that these scammers have been successful. They are taking millions of dollars from Australians. In fact, it has happened to my own family. It's quite easy when an individual might be paying dozens of bills to find one which looks like a Telstra card bill and, unfortunately, throw in your credit card number to pay that bill. Fortunately enough, it was a few hundred dollars. But, for someone like Violet, who I spoke about earlier, that is an enormous amount of money for an age pensioner.
So we continue to crack down. Scamwatch is a great website for those who might want information about what scams are out there, and the Office of the eSafety Commissioner is a wonderful resource for parents, children and anyone else looking for advice or information about staying safe online. I have the opportunity for a plug in the few seconds I've got left. There is a parent online safety seminar being held in my electorate in Bundaberg Wednesday night at 7.00 o'clock by the Carly Ryan Foundation. I would suggest to anyone out there concerned about what their children may need in terms of protection online that they take the opportunity to come down to the Office of the eSafety Commissioner.

Mr BYRNE (Holt) (17:58): Tonight I rise to speak to the member for Fisher's motion on the growing threat posed by cybercrimes, cyberscams and cyberterrorism. I wish to start by commending the work of IDCARE, which is the Australian New Zealand national identity and cyber support service. In 2019 IDCARE will provide support to over 50,000 Australians and New Zealanders who have experienced this identity takeover, cybercrime, cyberscam and cyberbullying. In fact, on the note about identity crime, in December last year, the Australian Institute of Criminology published their reports on the impact of identity crime, revealing that the total annual cost to the economy was $2.65 billion.

To narrow that down to my area: local residents in my electorate of Holt experience cybercrime. As an example, a constituent may receive a call from a person or entity purporting to be from a government service like the Australian Taxation Office or Medicare. It may be people pretending to be from a bank or they may experience a cybercrime simply by wrongly responding to an email. As an example, earlier this month I was dealing with a constituent who had suffered from an ATO scam. They had received a text or an email and they had responded to it. They felt when it was explained to them that it was a scam. They were very humiliated for making a mistake when responding to that email. This is a very common occurrence. It happens from young people that serve me coffee that ask me to things in the morning to the people that assist us in our lives and different areas. It can also be challenging for people from migrant backgrounds, in particular, when experiencing a cybercrime.

Having a service such as IDCARE that can be referred to by the internet is a great resource, and a social-proofing exercise. I would like to support the service, and support its aim of providing critical support for people confronting identity and cybersecurity concerns. The internet is a great connector. It's a great economic tool and it's a great communication tool, but the downside of that tool is that many Australians are affected by identity theft, internet banking fraud, tax fraud, travel fraud, relationship fraud, and other cybercrimes like extortion.

While I have this opportunity, I congratulate the Australian Federal Police on their work in responding and assisting people affected by cybercrime. The AFP always recommends that if someone is affected by an online crime or fraud, the incident should be reported to the Australian Cybercrime Online Reporting Network, and to the Australian Cyber Security Centre—and that's important information for people who may be listening to this broadcast, wondering what to do.

The AFP and others also recommend that people regularly check the Australian Cyber Security Centre's website, because it provides useful information on how to better secure yourself or your business online. The internet, our computers, smartphones and other devices are crucial to our way of life, but it is important that people continue to feel safe using these devices and tools, and not to have to endure the cost of cybercrime. As Deputy Chair of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security, I see examples of and I am briefed about cybercrime, cyberterrorism and cyber espionage, as well as the misuse of people's data by tech companies, cyberterrorists and, as I've said, state-sponsored cyberterrorism. It's an ongoing challenge.

One thing to point out: our security services regularly provide advice to the public about electronic tools that would constitute 'cyberhygiene', such as encouraging Australians to regularly update their software and devices, have strong passwords, have two-factor authentications, and exercise the same judgements online that we do in our everyday life. An everyday example that's been provided to me by the head of a security service is this: 'Think about it in terms of using electronic devices. Everyday life examples would be that we wouldn't give our bank account details or passwords to a complete stranger, so why would we be giving it to a complete stranger online? If the offer online is too good to be true, then it's not safe.'

It's interesting to note, when we're talking about the large social media companies and about the value of data, that there's a program on Netflix called The Great Hack. It basically details how, in 2017, data was proclaimed to have surpassed oil as the world's most valuable asset. What that means is that, as the world's most valuable asset, of course it is going to be targeted by people seeking to access that asset through means fair or foul. That's why I'm happy to speak to this motion. It is something that people need to be aware of. Information is stored, but it is vulnerable. We should continue to support governments' efforts to keep people safe online.
Ms SHARKIE (Mayo) (18:03): I would like to congratulate the government on its commitment to prioritise cybersecurity initiatives, and particularly thank the member for Fisher for bringing this motion to this place. I also acknowledge the very real need to continue to invest in public education to prevent international scams, cybercrimes and identity theft.

One recent case of identity takeover, or theft, in my community involved a small businessman whose email system was infiltrated and monitored by a criminal for several months before $80,000 worth of fake invoices were sent to clients, who deposited money into the criminal's quite legitimate bank account in Australia. This crime has had a devastating impact on a small business and on a regional community. Public education is important, but I know that my electorate would like to see more done to track down and shut down international scam operators. Whilst I appreciate that passing laws that cannot be enforced by another country is a futile exercise, many of my constituents have told me they'd rather see the Australian Federal Police cooperating with other jurisdictions to raid scammers overseas, instead of raiding Australian journalists.

As stated before in this chamber, my electorate has the oldest median age in South Australia. It's actually the sixth-oldest in the nation. The Victor Harbor and Goolwa region in particular has quite an elderly population, with an average age of 58 years, compared with the national average, which is just 37 years. Unfortunately, having an older demographic comes with some consequences for cybersecurity, because older residents are more vulnerable. Having a landline makes you more available to opportunistic phone scammers, who go fishing for vulnerable victims. Thanks to technology, scammers are able to impersonate or even hijack legitimate Australian landline numbers to trick people into believing that they are from the Australian Taxation Office or some other legitimate Australian agency. The most recent scam-call blitz in my community has been the fake NBN technician. Criminals call landlines and tell unsuspecting residents that the NBN rollout is finished and that their landline will be disconnected immediately if they don't hand over control of their computer remotely or, if there is no computer, if they don't deposit a sizeable sum of money into a bank account.

Recently, my office was contacted by a couple in their 80s who lost more than $5,000 of their life savings when they gave remote access to their computer to an NBN scammer. It is easy to do. They went to their bank and were told that because they had allowed access to the computer they had given consent and they could not get their money back. There is a legal argument that this was consent by fraud, but this couple isn't about to spend several thousand dollars that they don't have on a lawyer to try and get back $5,000. Unfortunately, this couple's case is not isolated. Last year Scamwatch received 83,247 reports of scams, with a loss of more than $30 million, in which the reporter was contacted using a telecommunications network. Of these reports, 16 per cent, nearly 14,000, were made by people aged over 65 years. Collectively they lost $7.7 million. Scamwatch says reports do not indicate any specific targeting of a particular age group but, instead, suggest scammers attempt to make contact with as many potential victims as possible by a range of communication mediums. Across all communication mediums, the age group that lost the most amount of money, a total of $24 million, was that aged 55 to 64 years. It would appear that the age groups with the least amount to lose and those with the least experience with modern technology are those most at risk.

There is a book entitled The Little Black Book of Scams, which I share with my community. We share them at our community shows, at all of our community events. Can I say to all members: please have these available. Your office will be inundated with requests for them when you have them. It's about education. I call on the government to run a paid advertising campaign in mainstream media so that people know what scams there are, particularly as it's tax time. Technology is rapidly changing. We need to support people with these changes, but we also need to send a message to international criminals that they cannot target our most vulnerable with impunity.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr McVeigh): There being no further speakers, the debate is adjourned and the resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

National Integrity Commission

Ms SHARKIE (Mayo) (18:08): I move:

That this House:

(1) congratulates the Government on its commitment to establish a Commonwealth Integrity Commission to investigate and prevent corruption in the public sector;

(2) congratulates the Opposition on its commitment to establish a National Integrity Commission to investigate and prevent corruption in the public sector;

(3) notes the major and significant contribution that a robust and well-functioning integrity commission can make to sustain and reinforce public confidence in the integrity of Australia's democratic government, parliament, and public service; and to help control corruption generally in Australia, in line with our international obligations;

(4) notes that to achieve these objectives, the design and implementation of a robust integrity commission should include:

FEDERATION CHAMBER
(a) a broad jurisdiction to investigate and help prevent any serious or systematic abuse of entrusted power for private or political gain ('corruption') at the Commonwealth level, including but not limited to criminal offences;

(b) the ability to self-initiate investigations;

(c) the ability to receive, investigate or refer information about corruption from any person, including directly from Commonwealth staff or other whistleblowers;

(d) improved measures for the protection of whistleblowers in the Commonwealth public sector and more generally;

(e) the ability to hold public hearings for investigative purposes, for any corruption concerns within jurisdiction, where in the public interest to do so;

(f) the other powers needed for effective investigation, including to question people, compel the production of documents, seek warrants to enter and search premises, make public reports including findings of fact and recommendations, and refer matters to relevant prosecutors;

(g) the power and responsibility to properly coordinate the Commonwealth's role in a national anti-corruption plan, working with state and territory agencies, other regulatory agencies for the private sector, and civil society;

(h) the power and responsibility to lead comprehensive corruption prevention policies and procedures across the Commonwealth public sector, procurement and service delivery;

(i) full jurisdiction over Commonwealth parliamentarians and their staff;

(j) the creation of the commissioner(s) as an independent officer of the Commonwealth Parliament, appointed by and reporting to a bipartisan joint standing committee of the parliament, and only terminable on address from the parliament for proven misbehaviour or incapacity; and

(k) sufficiently well-resourced funds and personnel; and

(5) calls on the Government to work towards implementing an integrity commission that adheres to these key principles.

A federal anti-corruption commission or integrity commission is overwhelmingly supported by the Australian public that this parliament seeks to represent. According to polling from The Australia Institute, 80 per cent of those surveyed support the establishment of an anti-corruption commission, with only six per cent opposed to it. Two-thirds of people said they described lower levels of trust in the federal parliament and a third of respondents said that there were very low levels of trust.

Australians know that we desperately need an anti-corruption commission with broad jurisdiction to investigate and help prevent any serious or systematic abuse of entrusted power for private or political game, yet 12 months ago the government opposed a federal anti-corruption commission. With the support of the crossbench, the former member for Indi, Cathy McGowan, renewed the spotlight on the long-running campaign to make our federal leaders properly accountable and to ensure that they and we have the integrity of our decisions subject to full and proper scrutiny. Under growing pressure the government was convinced. Even if they have come to the party a little late, it's a welcome addition. I and my Centre Alliance colleagues also welcome the initial consultation of the government's proposed Commonwealth Integrity Commission model, and we encourage the government to continue its public consultation as the model develops.

I recognise that we are in the early stages in the process and that we currently only have a broad outline of the government's proposed model for an integrity commission. However, what's on the table at the moment falls far short of a genuine, fully functional, independent anticorruption body—one with teeth. Centre Alliance is keen to work with government to make sure that we address these shortfalls.

The detail of this motion outlines the principles that Centre Alliance views as fundamental for an integrity commission to be effective at investigating and preventing corruption in the federal public sector, including the parliament and the ministry. All of the principles are crucially important. We want an anticorruption body with teeth, as I said, to help restore trust in our parliament and bring out the best in Australian democracy. I wish to focus on three of those principles in particular in my remaining time here today.

Firstly, the commission must be able to hold public hearings when the commissioner deems it appropriate. I have listened to the predictable howls that any public meeting will lead to a star chamber, the notorious English court of the early modern era. However, the key distinction is that unlike the Star Chamber, an anticorruption commission would only be able to make findings of fact and recommendations and would not be permitted to make findings of guilt. If a public hearing has a real or perceived threat to a person's reputation, that can easily be addressed by allowing an independent commissioner to determine on balance whether it is more appropriate for a public or private hearing to proceed. It should also be noted that the possible use of public hearings would not detract from the impartial, independent role of the judicial system to prosecute alleged offences. Where a person has a criminal case to answer, they will get their day in court.
Secondly, the commission needs to be able to initiate investigations itself, including by way of complaints directly from the public. That is why we need to have whistleblower protection even stronger in this place. If the government acts as a gatekeeper to investigations of corruption, the gate will only open when it suits them.

Thirdly, the commission needs to be adequately resourced in order to do its job properly. The current government budget appears only to be allocating $42 million a year to a commission, although Transparency International indicates that around $100 million a year is the quantum needed to ensure that we have a robust commission. While Centre Alliance is not wedded to a specific amount, suffice to say that the commission should not be starved of funds.

So I say to the government that the Australian people will thank us if we can get this anticorruption commission right. Let us make it a true commission of integrity and ensure that it adheres to the practical and legal principles that would allow us to restore faith and hope in the integrity of our democracy.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr McVeigh): Do we have a seconder for the motion?

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

Mr Leeser (Berowra) (18:13): Australia is one of the six oldest continuous democracies in the world. We have multiple mechanisms for keeping power in check and preventing corruption. We pride ourselves in this country on an independent judiciary and the benefit, as we know, of fair, regular, free elections and a robust and searching media that holds both elected officials and agencies to account. We have independent authorities and independent regulators. We have good reason to celebrate the health of our democracy.

But the work on greater transparency is always ongoing. In the last few years there's been significant investment in a range of mechanisms to deal with the prevention of corruption and fraud. In 2015 our government announced $127.6 million to establish the Serious Financial Crime Taskforce. The following year we committed an additional $15 million to the Fraud and Anti-Corruption Centre within the Australian Federal Police. In December 2016 we released our first National Action Plan under the Open Government Partnership. In 2018 we endorsed the second action plan, which, among other things, will enhance the transparency of political donations and funding and expand open contracting and due diligence in procurement.

The Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority was established in 2017, which strengthens public accountability about the expenses parliamentarians use. I think of the work that the intelligence and security committee has done in relation to the Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme, which provides a mechanism for registering when foreign agents and so on want to have an influence on the political process in this country.

In December last year the government announced that it would establish a Commonwealth Integrity Commission. That commission will enhance the existing integrity arrangements across the federal public sector and Commonwealth law enforcement agencies. If we're committed to meaningful measures to ensure corruption can't take root in our federal institutions, we need to make sure that we get the design of this commission right.

I'm from New South Wales. The experience of my state demonstrates that we need to approach this issue cautiously. The Independent Commission Against Corruption in New South Wales has, by any measure, a mixed history. Under ICAC's watch Eddie Obeid and Ian Macdonald were able to misuse their positions, as members of parliament and ministers of the Crown, to carry out numerous corrupt actions, and ultimately they both went to jail.

Labor was in office for 16 years. During their years in office this corrupt conduct went unchecked despite the presence of ICAC in New South Wales. It wasn't until they'd actually left office that these men were pursued. Yet ICAC, through its processes of public shaming, managed to destroy the careers of two honest and upright premiers in Barry O'Farrell and Nick Greiner.

If someone's broken the law and acted improperly it's absolutely right that the law should catch up with them, that they should be punished. We need to ensure that our agencies have the necessary resources to investigate and prosecute when appropriate. However, we have got to be very careful that the Commonwealth Integrity Commission doesn't repeat the mistakes of ICAC, which can destroy a person's reputation even if that person is never ever prosecuted. It risks shaming and destroying the careers of good people while missing the mark on those who are genuinely corrupt.

Before ICAC was introduced, a Labor icon, the former New South Wales Treasurer, Michael Egan, warned about exactly this. He said, 'The government has no mandate to set up a star chamber. It has no mandate to deprive the citizens of this state of basic civil liberties such as a right to natural justice. It has no right to invade the confidentiality of proper solicitor-client relationships... It has no right to set up an "Australian gestapo", as the President of the New South Wales Bar Association has aptly described it.'
These same words of caution should sound regarding the Commonwealth Integrity Commission. The motion that the member for Mayo has put forward suggests that a commission that has the potential to generate show trials, instead of doing the meaningful work of preventing corruption, risks undermining rather than enhancing public confidence in the process. A body with wideranging powers outlined by the member for Mayo would be a confused body and should pose very real questions about the separation of powers.

Public hearings do not enhance public confidence in our institutions in relation to these corruption commissions. Rather, they achieve the opposite. The suggestion of corruption when it's misplaced can undermine confidence in appropriately giving the public a belief that good leaders can't be trusted. A person's reputation built over a lifetime can be unfairly tarnished in an instant. Unfortunately, mud sticks. That's why in designing a new Commonwealth Integrity Commission it's important that we avoid the pitfalls of the New South Wales Independent Commission Against Corruption.

Dr ALY (Cowan) (18:18): I would like to start by commending the member for Mayo for this motion. I agree with the member for Mayo that the majority of Australians would like better and more robust oversight of our Commonwealth public sector, and particularly our Commonwealth parliament.

There is something within this motion though that I have to question, because the motion starts by congratulating the government on its commitment to establishing a Commonwealth Integrity Commission. I have to question where that commitment actually is, because I haven't seen that commitment.

Just this week, Australians have again witnessed what can at best be described as questionable behaviour that a federal integrity body would have had the imprimatur to monitor and investigate. Within the LNP ranks, we've got the minister for energy who continues to refuse to answer questions about his meetings with the environmental department that involved his personal interests. Rather than answer to an inquiry, the minister and the Prime Minister, who is actively working to protect him, produced a letter written six months after a meeting and addressed to someone else to try to claim that the minister was not, in fact, acting for his own interests. I don't believe that the Australian people will be fooled by this. If we had a federal integrity body, we would not have to pursue these issues in parliament. A federal integrity body would have the mandate to fully investigate this mess. This government would like to hold others to account. We often hear them talk about the big stick. I'm still trying to figure out exactly what that 'big stick' means. But it doesn't seem that they're very good at holding themselves to account, unfortunately, because it's not just this week that has exposed possible breaches by this government. Over the past few months, we have seen scandal after scandal after scandal.

There is the awarding of a contract costing taxpayers almost a quarter of a billion dollars to Paladin Holdings in a closed tender process conducted behind closed doors. And when questions are asked about the issue, the response of the Minister for Home Affairs, who is responsible for this, is to refuse to comply with the Senate order to produce relevant documents. Apparently, this minister believes that Australians don't deserve to know exactly where their tax dollars are spent and whether such contracts represent value for money. Then there's what has become known as 'watergate'—the Australian version—again implicating the minister for energy and the former agricultural minister, who signed off on an $80 million purchase of water entitlements from a company of which the energy minister used to be a director and which is also a Liberal Party donor. And these are just a couple of examples of the double standards shown by this government time and time again. They are quick to use their judgement of others. They are quick to pull out their so-called big stick, particularly when it means they can distract us from what's going on in the coalition party room or behind closed doors.

It's pretty clear to me that this government is not serious about integrity. And I must say that I do not agree with the member for Berowra that the current suite of arrangements is adequate for ensuring oversight. Things like the Serious Financial Crime Taskforce and the fraud centre that the member mentioned, among others, just do not speak to the significant issue of the possibility of misconduct or corruption by Commonwealth employees and, particularly, by members of parliament. They just don't speak to that. We certainly do need a federal integrity body. As I said, a federal integrity body would be able to investigate and monitor the kinds of things that we have seen coming out of the LNP government over the past few months. If the government is actually serious about this, where's the legislation? Where is the legislation being pushed through as a matter of urgency this week before we adjourn? It is nowhere to be seen. I think it's very clear that this government is actually quite terrified of what a Commonwealth Integrity Commission could expose.

Ms STEGGALL (Warringah) (18:23): I rise to speak in support of the member for Mayo's motion. As the member notes, both the government and opposition have publicly committed to establishing a Commonwealth Integrity Commission, thereby recognising and accepting the need for such a body. I congratulate both sides for their commitments, and I do note that, in the 2019-20 budget, the government allocated $104.5 million over four years to establish the commission. These are all steps in the right direction, because there have been a string of issues raising political integrity in recent years. They include the $444 million contract granted to the Great
Barrier Reef Foundation without a tender or due diligence; a $420 million contract awarded to the unknown Paladin Group, again without tender or competition; past and present politicians helping Liberal Party donor Helloworld win a $1 billion contract for federal government travel; and the appointments of former politicians and ministerial staffers to the AAT by the government.

Meanwhile, Labor is also under fire for the influence of unions over its policy and direction. Members of the federal government have the opportunity for nepotism and favouritism in appointments and the granting of contracts, the misuse of confidential information, conflicts of interest, misuse of entitlements, decisions that favour political donors and crossover appointments between industry lobbying and parliament. Yet, there is no criminal sanction against any of these actions.

Currently, such conduct is self-regulated by parliament and rarely results in real action or investigation. Of 2,200 people surveyed by Griffith University in mid-2018, 62 per cent believed politicians were using their position to benefit themselves or family, and 56 per cent thought that they were favouring businesses and individuals in return for political donations or support. The results also show strong support for the creation of a federal anticorruption body, with two-thirds supporting the idea. The second National Integrity System Assessment produced by Griffith University and Transparency International Australia in April 2019 further confirms that trust in public institutions is under unprecedented pressure, much of it driven by concerns about corruption.

Australians have an expectation that the Australian parliament and public service meet the highest standard of integrity. We urgently need an effective, national anticorruption body, and the current government's proposal falls far short of what is needed. Sixteen of Australia's most senior judges have recently set out a model for what is needed. They say that a national anticorruption body must be an independent, well-resourced statutory authority with broad jurisdiction to investigate any conduct that undermines honest and impartial public administration. It must have the investigative powers of a royal commission—including the powers to hold public inquiries—and the powers to make findings of fact and referrals to the DPP. It must have appropriate parliamentary oversight. The former member for Indi proposed a national integrity commission along those lines.

Instead, the government has proposed a watered down version that is seriously flawed. Under the government's proposal, investigations would be limited: to criminal conduct only—not the conflict of interest, misleading conduct or secret deals that need to be stopped; to where there is a reasonable suspicion only, which, in legal terms, is so high a bar that nothing would be investigated; to public officials only—not the people attempting to influence them; and to referrals of the public agency itself, when most whistleblowing is from within an agency. These limitations mean that there would rarely, if ever, be a full inquiry. The ability to hold public hearings would be severely curtailed, even though the power of hearings that are held in public was clearly evident during the recent royal commissions, especially into the banking industry. Australia must have an anti-corruption body with real teeth. The government should take heed of the principles outlined in the motion and draft legislation accordingly.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr McVeigh): There being no further speakers, the debate is adjourned. The resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

Education

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this House:

(1) recognises that:
   (a) Australian school students who commenced preparatory school when the Coalition formed government are now entering their final semester of primary school;
   (b) Australian school students who commenced high school when the Coalition formed government have transitioned to earning or learning through tertiary or vocational education; and
   (c) the future opportunities of these young Australians have been curtailed by the inability of the Government to address the educational needs of Australian students;

(2) notes that since the Coalition formed government:
   (a) one of their first acts in government was to cut $30 billion over the decade from projected school funding;
   (b) they failed to restore cuts to public schools;
   (c) the literacy and numeracy of Australian school students has fallen;
   (d) there has been no action by the Government to improve school standards;
   (e) there has been no action by the Government to provide support to students, parents, teachers and principals;
   (f) Australian Vocational education and training (VET) students are paying more for their courses;
(g) Australian apprenticeships and on-the-job training opportunities have declined;

(h) the threshold for student loan repayments has been reduced, so that VET and university students are now commencing to repay their student loans when they are earning barely more than the minimum wage;

(i) university places have been capped;

(j) penalty rates, relied on by many students trying to earn money while studying, have been cut, resulting in more time away from their studies; and

(k) nothing has been done to address the disconnect between higher education courses and industry demand for skills; and

(3) calls on the Government to urgently implement measures to:

(a) support public education in Australia through fair funding and reversing the cuts;

(b) address the falling standard of literacy and numeracy of Australian students;

(c) make sure university and TAFE is affordable for all Australians; and

(d) ensure that young Australians have the skills required for our future workforce needs

Ms VAMVAKINOU (Calwell) (18:28): I am very pleased to rise to speak on the private member's motion moved by my colleague the member for Moreton. In recent times there has been a lot of discussion and debate about the opportunities and the prospects for baby boomers and the millennials. The nature of the debate at times has become a case of resentment and blame by one group for the other. This is understandable, as millennials face mounting burdens of cost associated with getting an education—a lack of affordability of university and TAFE education and training and mounting debt for university graduates—and then, of course, difficulties in finding employment, and even, as we've heard on many occasions, the difficulty—almost impossibility—of buying a house. Young people today point to the generations before them and feel aggrieved. Many refer to even my own generation as the lucky generation. Of course, my generation—and others before me—did start off on a low base and had to fight for our rights for a lot of things, including affordable education.

Education is the building block to every Australian's life. It's what gives us the ability to function and contribute in our modern society and to build or nation's social cohesion and prosperity. Without access to an affordable and relevant education system, my generation, at a critical time in our post-Second World War nation-building, may never have realised its full potential and therefore gone on to make the contribution it has made. Affordable education and the opportunities it affords were vital for my generation, and it's absolutely important and vital to our generation today.

Labor's understanding of education as the great enabler is marked by some of the greatest and most significant reforms by successive Labor governments since the Whitlam government swept into power in 1972. The most recent landmark reform in education in Australia came from the Rudd and Gillard Labor governments, with the Gonski funding reforms. In commencing the 46th Parliament we enter the third consecutive term of a coalition government. An assessment of this government's record in education and training is what the member for Moreton's motion aims to do. This motion lays bare in great detail the extent and impact of the coalition's cuts to schools, universities and TAFEs—cuts that have resulted in the future opportunities of young Australians being curtailed by the inability of the government to address the educational needs of Australian students.

For almost seven years now, Australian schoolchildren who are either learning or earning through the school, tertiary or vocational education system have been system suffering from underinvestment because of significant cuts, leaving young people in despair about their future employment prospects. The coalition government's achievements—or underachievements—in relation to cuts include the slashing of $30 billion over the past decade from projected school funding. Literacy and numeracy in schoolchildren has fallen. There hasn't really been any action from government to improve school standards. The dismantling of our TAFE system has let to VET students paying a lot more for courses. Apprenticeships and on-the-job trainings have declined. They've capped university places.

All around, the basic failure of the government to address these issues has meant that the people in my electorate have been very adversely affected. Calwell continues to be home to a large number of old and new migrant communities. My constituents, like generations before them, rely on education systems that are affordable and accessible and relevant to the demands and requirements of today's society. Coming largely from non-English-speaking migrant and refugee backgrounds, like my generation before them, my constituents need to have access—access is the key word—to the best-quality education if they are to realise their potential and go on to make their contribution. It is, after all, something we keep encouraging them to do, especially during citizenship ceremonies. We value education highly in Calwell and we aspire to give ourselves and our children the best possible opportunities. This is a time when globalisation has challenged us with opportunities and possibilities but also with changes that have left many people behind. The coalition government's years of cuts and neglect have
been detrimental to my community, which is also, by the way, experiencing a youth unemployment rate of 25 per cent in some cases.

There is evidence of this government's neglect and lack of preparedness in the findings of a recently released report from the Productivity Commission, which recommends that the school system needs to greater prepare young people with stronger literacy and numeracy skills so they can succeed at university or broadly in the Australian community.

Mr Burns (Macnamara) (18:33): This is the first time I'm speaking in this chamber as the new member for Macnamara, and there's no better motion to be debating than my good friend the member for Moreton's motion on schools. It's a shame that we seem to go from Labor speaker to Labor speaker because the government simply isn't interested in speaking about schools. I note in the chamber we have my good friend the member for Berowra, who has spoken on the motion but who seems to be without friends on this one. That is certainly noted in the first speech.

I wanted to start my remarks on this motion—a really important motion—by talking about a school close to my home, Glen Eira College. Glen Eira College is a fascinating study in the difference between cutting funding to education and providing investment to schools. When I was in year 7, Glen Eira College wasn't an option for my family. It was a school where a lot of students had a range of behavioural difficulties, behavioural issues. It was a school with, quite frankly, a drug problem, and it was a school that had about 250 students who basically didn't have any other choice. It was a really difficult choice for a lot of parents. Over time, that school has been Invested in, has had some outstanding principals and teachers, and the culture of that school has completely changed. Now it is a school that I would be so proud to send one of my children or my daughter to—I only have one child, and I'm glad I have got this on the record as well. But it is a fantastic school and one we can all be proud of.

During my time at university, I also worked as a teacher's aide inside the classroom. It was clear at that time that you only needed to spend an hour in the classroom to see that, with 21 different students running around, there were 21 different lessons going on. That requires the effort and the attention of outstanding people and those people are our teachers. They put so much time and effort into making sure each and every student has what they need to get a great education. I think that is what goes to the heart of this motion.

In 2013, Julia Gillard had an idea that schools should be funded on the needs of the child to learn. It was the National Partnership Agreement; we all know it as the Gonski reforms. It was a profound idea that in Australia a school is not funded based on its postcode or its achievement but on what we need to provide Australian schools in order to make sure our students can get the best education. We all remember, going into the 2013 election, the famous lines by the then opposition leader Tony Abbott, who said there would be no cuts to health, no cuts to education, no cuts to the ABC or the SBS, and we saw nothing but slash, slash, cut, cut, cut.

Leading into this election there was also a further reform of the National Partnership Agreement by the current Prime Minister, where a deal was done with the Catholic and independent schools to return some of that funding by the initial National Partnership Agreement back to the Catholic and independent schools. To be frank, I supported that move. I think there are a number of those schools that absolutely needed that funding. But that doesn't mean that you shouldn't be providing that funding to our public schools. And quite frankly, I think it is un-Australian to have a situation where we are putting funding into our private and independent schools and not putting it into our public schools.

In McNamara, my electorate, we had a situation where the Labor Party was coming to the election with a vastly different set of commitments to the coalition. It was going to mean another $11 million to schools in my electorate, which included $580,000 extra for Albert Park Primary School, $460,000 for Caulfield Junior College, $840,000 for Elwood Primary School, $590,000 for St Kilda Primary School and the list goes on. That is all funding for more teachers' aides, smaller class sizes, literacy and numeracy support, and a range of other things to give teachers the support they need in order to provide for the needs of each and every student.

It wasn't just for teaching and learning outcomes; we also came with a range of building upgrades that I was pleased to support for Ripponlea Primary School, Windsor Primary School, Glen Eira College and Port Melbourne Primary. We came with a very full and ambitious education plan. One of the many frustrations of the election was that, while obviously we didn't get everything right and we accept this result was the choice of the Australian people, I was really proud to campaign for our ambitious schools policy. I commend the motion of the member for Moreton to this place.

The Deputy Speaker (Dr McVeigh): There being no further speakers, the debate is adjourned and the resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

Infrastructure

Consideration resumed of the motion:
That this House:

(1) congratulates the Government on:
(a) the extensive urban and regional infrastructure investment of $100 billion announced in the 2019 Budget; and
(b) its focus on national freight challenges, congestion busting and road safety;
(2) recognises that every state of the Commonwealth is benefitting from the Government's infrastructure program; and
(3) commends the Government on providing the infrastructure that will build our future and generate growth for our economy.

Mr PERRETT (Moreton) (18:39): I rise to speak on the motion put forward by the member for Boothby. The member for Boothby's motion congratulates the Morrison-McCormack government on its 2019 budget announcement of $100 billion of infrastructure investment—the so-called infrastructure pipeline. One hundred billion dollars is a lot of money—I am starting to sound like a scene from an Austin Powers movie. It would buy a lot of infrastructure—I would give the member that—but promising to build infrastructure is not the same as actually building it. The Liberal and National parties have a dismal record of actually building infrastructure. They are good talkers, bad builders. They have spent $5.1 billion less on infrastructure than they promised over their first six years. Calls from the RBA governor, economists and the state coalition treasurers to bring forward infrastructure investments have fallen on deaf ears. The Treasurer has a tin ear when it comes to bringing forward infrastructure investment. These are not left wingers that are calling for this. The Liberal-National governments have abolished the $3.9 billion Building Australia Fund set aside to fund critical nation-building infrastructure. They talk up their $100 billion infrastructure pipeline, like an Austin Powers character, but unless they actually build something, it is just a pipe dream.

My constituents in Moreton know only too well what it is like to endlessly wait for urgently needed infrastructure. In question time last week I asked the Deputy Prime Minister when work would begin on eliminating the Boundary Road level crossing at Coopers Plains in my electorate—a piece of infrastructure that has been needed for 50 years. The Deputy Prime Minister couldn't answer my question. He answered many other questions that I didn't ask, like how many workers will receive a tax cut; what infrastructure is promised in other parts of Brisbane; and what infrastructure was completed in my electorate seven years ago. That was the Mains Road and Kessels Road intersection upgrade. That was funded by Labor and built by Labor and I even got to cut the ribbon on that one. But the Deputy Prime Minister couldn't answer the questions that my constituents actually wanted answered: 'When will work begin on eliminating the dangerous level crossing at Boundary Road in Coopers Plains?'

The Liberal-National government announced in April that it would fix this level crossing as part of its $226.25 million dollar congestion-busting infrastructure fund. The Coopers Plains crossing is one of—wait for it—one 13 other projects promised to be built from this one fund. When it was announced, no funding amounts were attributed to any of the 13 projects individually. Federal Labor committed $73 million to upgrade the Coopers Plains crossing prior to the election. In response to a media inquiry last Friday, the Deputy Prime Minister's office confirmed that $73 million of the congestion-busting fund would go towards upgrading the Coopers Plains crossing. Thank you, Deputy Prime Minister, that's great news. Finally there is some federal funding earmarked for the project from the LNP, albeit one-third of the whole fund. How we will build the other 12 projects remains to be seen. That leaves $153 million to be spread 12 ways. Good luck with that for the other electorates in South East Queensland.

During the election I called for the Coopers Plains crossing upgrade to be funded by a three-way split between the federal government, state government and Brisbane City Council. This was very fair: one-third, one-third and a third. However, to date the Liberal National Party Brisbane City Council has flatly refused to fund more than 15 per cent, notwithstanding that the LNP council funded 50 per cent of the crossing upgrades on the north side—one in Geebung and another one 50 per cent funded in Bracken Ridge. There's a different set of rules for the north side of the river compared to the south. Perhaps the Deputy Prime Minister can have a word with his Queensland LNP colleagues. Maybe the Liberal National Party appointed lord mayor—not elected by the people—could find an extra 18 per cent to fund his third.

My concern is this: how long do my residents, my constituents, have to wait for work to start on this very dangerous crossing? Commuters run the gauntlet of the rail boom gates every day. Even the most careful of drivers can get caught out. I can think of nothing more terrifying than being stuck between the boom gates with a train roaring down the Beenleigh line towards me, yet that is what drivers risk on a daily basis.

The Cross River Rail project has already commenced, and that will mean more trains travelling through the Boundary Road crossing to the Gold Coast. Many locals have indicated their frustration at the Deputy Prime Minister's sidestepping of my question last week. One local, who tragically lost a family member at this dangerous
crossing, communicated to me that he was insulted that the Deputy Prime Minister was not taking the issue seriously. During his meandering answer the Deputy Prime Minister offered to visit Coopers Plains rail crossing, and I will take him up on that offer.

Mr SIMMONDS (Ryan) (18:44): The member for Moreton is a little misguided. I particularly liked the bit where he blamed Cross River Rail for creating more train congestion and then tried to duck shovelling the solution onto the Brisbane City Council, when it is his own Labor Deputy Premier in Queensland who could put some money into it. Yes, previously, the Brisbane City Council has stepped up to the mark to provide funding to remove open level crossings, but this is historically a state responsibility, but again he lets the state government off the hook. This is the problem. This is why the Queensland state government's level of infrastructure investment is below the historical average. Federal Labor members come in here and try to duck the responsibility of this kind of infrastructure, which is state infrastructure, onto Brisbane City Council, which is already funding a record $3 billion every year in new infrastructure. I would like to congratulate the Morrison government on $100 billion of investment, as outlined in this motion for infrastructure.

We know that new infrastructure an upgraded infrastructure is not an end in itself. It's about creating connected communities and about getting families home sooner and safer. This federal investment, as I was just saying, is so important, particularly when state governments aren't pulling their weight. The Queensland state government, particularly the Treasurer and Deputy Premier, Jackie Trad, are not pulling their weight when it comes to investing in infrastructure. Their failure to make decisions is crippling, and their lack of investment is absolutely neglectful. Take, for example, the Brisbane metro project. This is something that could significantly improve our public transport in the Brisbane metro and urban area. The federal Morrison government has put $300 million towards it as part of that $100 billion investment outlined in this motion, and yet the Brisbane City Council, who is undertaking the project and funding the rest of the project, had more than 270 meetings with the Labor state government in Queensland, and still the Queensland state government is no closer to approving this project. They don't have to put in any money; it's fully funded by the Morrison government and the LNP council, and yet the state government cannot make a decision to get out of the way and let money be spent on improving public transport in the Brisbane metro area.

Centenary Motorway is another one— a classic example of a state piece of infrastructure that they have allowed through chronic underinvestment to get to the stage where it is costing people time with their families and a lot of money in congestion. We have seen it go on Infrastructure Australia's priority projects for the very first time. I'm delighted that, as part of the Morrison government's $100 billion investment, $10 million will go into funding a business case so that we can start to understand the major project that would be required to upgrade the Centenary Motorway, which will be important for my electorate of Ryan. But, again, this is something where the Queensland state Labor government needs to step up to the plate.

I spoke about Moggill Road, through the heart of the Ryan electorate, during my maiden speech. Again, millions of dollars are lost in delay costs on every kilometre of that corridor every year. As part of the $100 billion investment, but, more importantly, the $4 billion Urban Congestion Fund, we've seen a $25 million commitment to the Indooroopilly roundabout, which goes towards the project, in conjunction with the Brisbane City Council's support. They are undertaking the project. And $12.5 million has been invested as well in the Kenmore roundabout by the federal government. Unfortunately, here we see the compare and contrast between the LNP-led Brisbane City Council, who is getting on with the job of supporting the federal government funding and getting the project done, and the funding we provided for the Kenmore roundabout, where we're yet to see any action from Minister Bailey or the Queensland state government. I won't hold my breath. I hope to work with him collaboratively, but so far his record hasn't been good on getting projects out of the too-hard basket and getting the funding to get on with them.

There is $11 million as well in the Urban Congestion Fund for the Ferny Grove car park upgrade. This will allow us to achieve more park-and-ride car parks in Ferny Grove. The success of this $4 billion Urban Congestion Fund will see us in good stead in the future.

Mr THISTLETHWAITE (Kingsford Smith) (18:49): The Liberal-National Party's approach to infrastructure development is perfectly represented by one project in Sydney. That is the Sydney south-east light rail project. The Berejiklian Liberal government said this project would cost $1.6 billion. It's actually going to cost the New South Wales taxpayers $2.7 billion due to a $576 million settlement with the contractor because the government provided dodgy advice on the first hand. The project is more than a year overdue. So we've got over a billion dollar blow out in the cost of the project and it's more than a year overdue. That is representative of the Liberal-National coalition's approach to infrastructure development.

You can't trust the Liberals when it comes to developing nation-building infrastructure. While they're busy congratulating themselves on making announcements, many of their projects at a federal level remain years away.
The coalition's so-called $100 billion infrastructure pipeline is nothing more than a pipe dream. Of course, less than 30 per cent of the infrastructure program is budgeted for the next four years. For many of the projects, the shovels are far from ready, and it follows a poor record of spending—$5.1 billion less on infrastructure than promised over its first six years in government, and that included $100 million worth of projects in its Black Spot Program, $154 million for the Bridges Renewal Program and more than $900 million in its Western Sydney Infrastructure Plan. Funding has been provided for all these projects, but milestones haven't been met. In many cases, projects haven't even started, and yet the coalition talked such a big game in the recent federal election on infrastructure. But the Australian people are now rightly concerned by this government's refusal to bring forward some of those infrastructure projects to boost what is a floundering economy and protect and create jobs in Australia.

The government continues to ignore calls from the Reserve Bank of Australia, economists and state coalition Treasurers to bring forward infrastructure investment. The government needs to look at fiscal stimulus in the economy, and infrastructure is an important part of doing that. The benefits are clear: stimulating a sluggish economy, boosting productivity, improving road safety and busting congestion. Not only has the government ignored these calls; it consistently fails to deliver funding that is allocated in its budgets. And while the rest of the nation remains hard at work, the government is calling in a sickie and putting the real nation-building projects off for another day.

Instead, it's only action on infrastructure in this term has been abolishing the $3.9 billion Building Australia Fund set aside to fund critical nation-building infrastructure, not to mention the fact that this government is undermining the role of Infrastructure Australia, the body that was set up to take the politics out of infrastructure development in Australia and stop the process of one side of politics promising something and then the other side getting elected and cancelling it, and then the other side promising something and then the other side getting elected and cancelling it. Australians are sick and tired of it. It's costing our nation billions of dollars and foregone productivity improvements through this process. That's why Labor established Infrastructure Australia, to take the politics out of it to ensure that independent experts were assessing and ranking infrastructure projects in Australia. Well this government, by moves such as abolishing the Building Australia Fund, is undermining that independence and putting at jeopardy proper infrastructure development in our economy.

Cuts to public transport investment have resulted in worsening traffic congestion. That's eroded Australians' quality of life and reduced productivity by restricting the movement of freight around our cities and towns. Our nation is crying out for a comprehensive infrastructure plan. We need it now, not in the forward estimates years. We need to tackle urban congestion, boost the productivity of our freight and logistics sector, save lives on our roads, unlock the full potential of our regions and drive economic growth in the years ahead. And the government should stop congratulating itself for just making announcements. We need shovels in the ground, projects started and jobs for Australians. It should be working with the states to find out why so many projects for which money is available simply aren't being built. Australia needs action now to help create economic activity and jobs in the short-term while boosting productivity over the longer term.

Mr RAMSEY (Grey—Government Whip) (18:54): I thank the member for Boothby for bringing this important motion forward. I must say it gives me an opportunity to talk about some of the great progress we're making on works in the electorate of Grey. In the last few weeks we've seen some of the unprecedented infrastructure investment in the electorate of Grey get underway. Tenders have been called for the duplication of the Joy Baluch AM Bridge—and it always seems, Deputy Speaker Hogan, that you are in the seat when I talk about Port Augusta, and so you are tonight!—and there is the Port Wakefield flyover and the lane duplication project there.

For years in South Australia we wondered what it would be like to have governments in both Adelaide and Canberra that understood the true value of the economic power that lies beyond our city borders. The advent of aligned Liberal governments is delivering a huge dividend for South Australia, and it is an overdue reward for the thousands of people who live beyond our city's boundaries, working, caring for our country and providing the all-important export income for our nation.

People are beginning to see projects roll out. Just recently we've seen the completion of the new Rocky River Bridge on National Highway near Crystal Brook. For years, motorists have breathed in each time they've met another car and trucks have had their mirrors touch as they pass. Fortunately, their journey will now be much safer. Under the same grant process we've installed extra passing lanes south of Port Augusta and between Port Augusta and Whyalla. People in the Clare Valley and northern regions are eagerly awaiting the delivery of the federal government's election commitment of $44 million to upgrade the very poor Horrocks Highway. The state government has committed an extra $11 million. Likewise, users of the Barrier Highway linking Adelaide to Broken Hill will have a safer road after a commitment of $50 million from the federal government, which I expect
to be matched in the same ratio by the state. Eyre Peninsula roads will also benefit from a combined $32 million commitment from both governments for road works to help deal with the closure of the 100-year-old narrow gauge railway line. More is committed to the Eyre Highway as well as $64 million to begin the installation of dual lanes on the Augusta Highway north of Port Wakefield. Overall, the federal government is providing very nearly $500 million in Grey for major road works, and that is expected to be boosted to about $600 million by the state contribution. I thank state minister Stephan Knoll for working so closely with me on these projects.

Sometimes, federal contributions to councils get low notice, but the bulk of local road funding comes from federal governments. We've increased the Roads to Recovery Program by 25 per cent and extended the SA specific Supplementary Local Road Funding program, which the member for Barker and I fought hard to retain. This is a real equity issue, and they're very important funds for our local country councils. In May I had the pleasure of opening the Kyancutta to Mount Wedge section of bitumen, linking Wudinna to Elliston by sealed road. Others in the past have included the Balumbah Kinnaird Road and the Maitland to Clinton Centre roads, all paid for under the Roads to Recovery Program, and they are good examples of the use of these funds being big steps forward in the regions.

In Grey alone, the Building Better Regions Fund program has delivered more than $35 million for community projects over the last five years. A further $20 million has been allocated to new expanding industries in the Upper Spencer Gulf in the Regional Jobs and Investment Packages and millions more on roads through the Black Spot Program. Remote air strips in Yorketown, from Yorketown to Marree, have had serious attention as well as the most recent commitment being a million dollars to seal the Peterborough airstrip.

The federal government has also made a commitment of $10 million to match the state government's $10 million, with $5 million to come from growers, to replace 1,600 kilometre of the 2,200 kilometre 100-year-old dog fence in South Australia. This will be an investment that will pay dividends for the next 80 to 100 years, just as the last investment has. That fence is leaking dogs terribly at the moment. I was up at Marree only a few weeks ago and I spoke to a grower up there who lives on the inside of the fence. He expects to run sheep but has lost 1,700 sheep to dog attacks in the last 12 months. So it's a very serious problem and the time has come: the fence is worn out and needs replacing, and we are delivering on that program.

This list is far from exhaustive but it's a clear demonstration that we, as governments, believe in our regions. The Liberal governments in both Adelaide and Canberra are such strong assets to the rural and regional people in South Australia.

Ms WELLS (Lilley) (18:59): I rise to speak on the motion by the member for Boothby, which I'm advised congratulates the government on their commitment to building infrastructure as part of the 2019 budget. While I was at the Sandgate swim club diving trophy night on the night of the 2019 budget, I am surprised to hear that we are due to congratulate the government on their infrastructure investment because, as far as Lilley went, there were spinifex rolling across the desert with respect to new announcements and new funding for our part of the world.

I can tell you that, as the Labor candidate for Lilley at the time, one of my top priorities during the election was fighting for infrastructure upgrades on Brisbane's booming north side, where we have many working families moving in, young families trying to set up their lives and raise their kids, and see that the support and infrastructure that they need to do that is there, or at least planned to be there. At the moment, neither of those things are the case from this third-term LNP government. The 2019 budget was a major disappointment on that front.

Let me articulate again now, in case it wasn't clear at the time, what northsiders are telling us about what they need from their federal government. They want to spend more time at home with their families and less time stuck in commuter traffic. I'm proud to say that federal Labor is well aware of this. We listened and we tried to act during the campaign. We supported a number of projects that would reduce traffic congestion on the north side. You can divide these up amongst public transport and road projects. With respect to public transport, we announced that we would fund two park and ride upgrades, firstly the one at Northgate, which was first promised by a government in 1993. These people have been waiting a very long time between drinks—of cordial, obviously—for their park and ride upgrade. I took the present Leader of the Opposition, the member for Grayndler, along to show him the issue at the Northgate park and ride. It is simply that there are something like 350 car parks—off the top of my head—but something like 750 commuters that come every day to use that park and ride, from as far as way as Redcliffe on the peninsula in the member for Petri's electorate. We promised that we would fund $7 million towards a multi-storey car park to alleviate this problem. Unfortunately, that commitment was not matched by the LNP government.

FEDERATION CHAMBER
The second park and ride we committed to was Geebung park and ride. This is another booming, gentrified part of the world—they do very good coffee at Fox Coffee there, if I may put in a quick plug. We put $4 million into upgrading the park and ride at Geebung, though I must advise that there is no polo club to speak of. Something I will be working on as a priority, as the new member for Lilley, is getting a Geebung polo club up and running! However, despite there being much last-minute discussion around park and ride upgrades for other parts of the world, there is no such luck for the people of Lilley from this third-term LNP government. With respect to the vital infrastructure projects, particularly with respect to park and ride upgrades, let's see the plan. What's coming down the line?

As I was coming in, I heard the dulcet tones of the member of Ryan discussing the Cross River Rail project. I can understand why he would be sensitive on that issue, because it is something Brisbane City Council has failed to fund, budget after budget after budget, despite both state and federal Labor committing billions of dollars—I think off the top of my head something like $5.3 billion—to get it up and running. For people who don't understand Brisbane—I don't know why you wouldn't take more of an interest in the best place in the world—but for people that don't understand infrastructure in Brisbane, let me say that Cross River Rail is vital. At the moment, we have one crossing for rail from north to south. Until we get a second, through developing and delivering Cross River Rail, it is a choke point, which means that we cannot put more services along the lines for commuters during peak times. At the moment services are straining under the load. Until we add a second crossing it isn't going to get better. It's a big project, it's an expensive project, but it's a vital project. That's why we believe in it. When we do it, someone who lives in Deagon or Sandgate or Shorncliffe will experience a train coming along every six minutes on the Shorncliffe line. That is revolutionary stuff. To be able to access a train every six minutes during peak commuter times on the Shorncliffe line would make such a big difference to the people who are commuting in and out of town. That is why we support it and why I continue to beseech the government to support us in coming on board with Cross River Rail.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: There being no further speakers, the debate is adjourned and the resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next day of sitting.

Federation Chamber adjourned at 19:04